

THE AUSTRALIAN



TAFE TEACHER

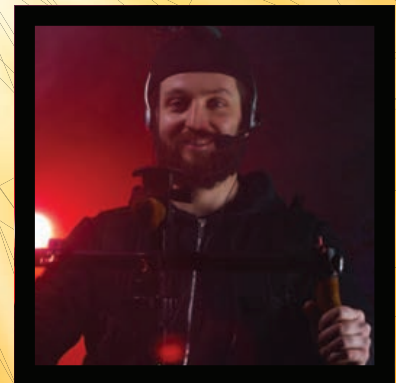
● VOL 55/2 ● WINTER 2021

Supporting the early childhood sector

Navigating currency
and competency

Upskilling a region





**It's time to step up
and build our future**

rebuildwithtafe.org.au

Contents

05

EARLY CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION



09

INTEGRATED
TERTIARY SECTOR



SKILLING THE BAY

Features

05 **EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**
Rebuild with TAFE

09 **INTEGRATED TERTIARY SECTOR**
Fruitless flight and wishful thinking?

13 **CURRENCY, COMPETENCY
AND CONFUSION**
Navigating the three Cs

15 **CDP TO BE SCRAPPED**
Making way for wage justice
and employment

16 **SKILLING THE BAY**
Gordon TAFE at the forefront

20 **A DYING TRADE**
The future of patternmaking

22 **THE IMPACT OF COMPETITION**
For colleges in the UK

25 **TRICKS OF THE TRADE**
Goodbye to the internal foreigner

Regulars

04 **PRESIDENT'S
REPORT**

27 **AROUND
AUSTRALIA**



The Official Journal of the TAFE Division
of the Australian Education Union

VOL55 • NO.2 • WINTER 2021

Australian TAFE Teacher (ISSN: 0815-3701) is published
for the Australian Education Union by Hardie Grant Media.
The magazine is circulated to all TAFE members of the
AEU nationally.

Hardie Grant

MEDIA

Hardie Grant Media,
Ground Level, Building 1, 658 Church St, Richmond 3121
Tel: (03) 8520 6444 • Fax: (03) 8520 6422
Email: tafeteacher@hardiegrant.com

AEU and subscription enquiries:
Australian Education Union Federal Office,
PO Box 1158, South Melbourne Victoria 3205
Tel: (03) 9693 1800 • Fax: (03) 9693 1805
Email: aeu@aeufederal.org.au
facebook.com/AEUFederal
@AEUFederal

Editor Susan Hopgood
Publisher Fiona Hardie
Account manager Hannah Louey
Art director Dallas Budde
Design Natalie Lachina
Printer Printgraphics Printgreen
Circulation: 11,000

Copyright rests with the writers, the AEU and Hardie Grant
Media. No part of this publication may be reproduced without
the prior permission of the copyright holders. The opinions
expressed in the magazine are not necessarily the official
policy of the AEU.

Your national TAFE Council Executive members:

Federal TAFE President
Michelle Purdy

Federal TAFE Secretary
Maxine Sharkey

ACT Karen Noble
aeuact@aeuact.org.au • 02 6272 7900 • aeuact.org.au

NSW Philip Chadwick
mail@nswtf.org.au • 02 9217 2100 • nswtf.org.au

NT Vacant
admin@aeunt.org.au • 08 8948 5399 • aeunt.org.au

QLD Dave Terauds
qtu@qtu.asn.au • 07 3512 9000 • qtu.asn.au

SA Vacant
aeusa@aeusa.asn.au • 08 8172 6300 • aeusa.asn.au

TAS Simon Bailey
support@aeutas.org.au • 03 6234 9500 • aeutas.org.au

VIC Elaine Gillespie
melbourne@aeuvic.asn.au • 03 9417 2822 • aeuvic.asn.au

WA Gary Hedger
contact@sstwa.org.au • 08 9210 6000 • sstwa.org.au

www.aeufederal.org.au

From the president

The focus on skills training in the federal budget sounds like welcome news for TAFE, with a suite of measures promising to address crippling workplace shortages in the aged care sector and to boost digital skills and apprentices.



Michelle Purdy AEU Federal TAFE President

Analysis by the AEU shows that the vast majority of the money for skills training is likely to go straight into the hands of private providers, just as it did last time.

Making the money dependent on the JobTrainer scheme means that for states and territories to receive the money, they have to agree to match it with their own investment and then make the money available through a competitive tendering process.

Private providers will inevitably start targeting this large pool of available funding. We are at risk of seeing a raft of newly developed certificate I and II courses rushed to market that don't include any assistance with foundation skills or wrap-around support services. While these courses may get students into the job market quicker, employers may find without the extra support they receive at TAFE, their new recruits are not quite job ready. Making this federal government scheme no good for students, no good for employers and no good for the children and elderly that they will be caring for across Australia.

Liberal governments are finding ever more inventive ways of chipping away at TAFE by funneling public money and assets into the pockets of private providers. Whether it is in the form of selling off a TAFE campus to Racing NSW, as the NSW government is doing; or closing campuses and preventing TAFE from delivering successful and in-demand courses while allowing private training providers to use TAFE facilities and freely giving away TAFE teaching resources, as they are doing in South Australia; or turning TAFE into a Government Business Enterprise, as in my home state of Tasmania.

Rebuild with TAFE

That's why the AEU's Rebuild with TAFE campaign is so important. We need to fight to keep TAFE as the public provider of choice. If governments are really serious about addressing skills shortages, they would invest in TAFE as the only way to roll out high-quality skills training on a large scale. With the large numbers of skilled Australians we need now and into the future, it's impossible for a patchwork of small private providers – mainly operating in profitable metropolitan areas – to make an impact on a national scale.

Of course, high-quality training can only be provided by attracting and retaining high quality staff. Yet too many highly qualified and committed TAFE teachers and support workers have been lost to the system through more than a decade of continuous and far-reaching funding cuts. Rebuilding with TAFE needs to be founded on a commitment to safe, secure and well-paid jobs.

National TAFE Day

There's lots to talk about on National TAFE Day, which is fast approaching on Wednesday 11 August. I hope that everyone has plans to celebrate TAFE and showcase the great work that is going on, which doesn't always get the attention it deserves.

Pull out the posters from this magazine and stick them up in your office or get in touch and we'll send you a few posters – or even a sticker for your rubbish bin to show your neighbours you care about publicly funded education.

In the meantime, stay safe and be assured that the AEU continues to lobby government on your behalf to make the education workforce a priority for vaccination. ●

“Too many highly qualified and committed TAFE teachers and support workers have been lost to the system through more than a decade of continuous and far-reaching funding cuts.”

To support a high quality early childhood education and care workforce we must rebuild with TAFE

A strong TAFE sector is the only way to provide the necessary vocational education training at a scale that fills workforce shortages with skilled and capable educators in the early childhood sector.

The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) predicts the sector will need an extra 30,000 educators and 9000 teachers by 2023.

The recent Federal Budget provided long awaited certainty on preschool funding, as well as changes to child care subsidies, which are aimed particularly at helping more women return to work when they want to. While extremely beneficial, these measures should also be supported by proper workforce planning to ensure that the sector has the workforce needed for the future.

Teachers and educators working in preschool, kindergarten and long day care services, as well as family day care services must meet the qualification

requirements set under the National Quality Framework – which range from Certificate III through to Diploma and Bachelor degree qualifications.

With the demand for educators, in particular, skyrocketing TAFE is well placed to provide the vocational education and training needed to support and deliver the qualified personnel to meet this increasing demand right across the country.

Preferred choice

As the leading provider of vocational education in Australia, TAFE supports the delivery, training and assessment for students undertaking Certificate III, Certificate IV, Diploma and in some locations Bachelor qualifications required for early childhood educators



“TAFE also has targeted support programs for Aboriginal students and migrants, which goes a long way to making preschools and other early childhood settings more culturally safe and inclusive ...”

and teachers under the National Quality Framework. The federal government's National Workforce Strategy must recognise TAFE as the solution for addressing the workforce shortage. There is strong evidence that TAFE is the preferred choice for most employers thanks to its stellar reputation in the sector.

Liz Ingram, Head Teacher of Early Childhood Education at Tamworth TAFE explains “TAFE has a sound reputation among Early Childhood employers. TAFE Early Childhood Teachers work diligently and collaboratively with local Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services in their community to ensure the provision of quality work placement opportunities for student educators. This gives TAFE students the edge and makes them the preferred

choice time and again over students from private providers.”

“By studying through TAFE – students have access to the guidance of dedicated and professional teachers who are passionate and experienced in the early childhood sector and who deliver the training in a holistic and personal manner, catering to the students’ individual needs and also linking students to relevant support services throughout their learning journey”.

Job ready

It has been demonstrated time and again that the quality of the early childhood and care sector is inextricably tied to the quality of training provided to those who work in it and this is what gives TAFE graduates the edge.

For Michelle Purdy, Federal TAFE President and Support Services Worker at TasTAFE, ensuring students are

job ready is more than just gaining essential industry experience. “TAFE is the full package. All TAFE students can take advantage of support services that assist students who may need extra support with their literacy and numeracy skills. We also offer dedicated support in English language for migrants who may need it. TAFE also has targeted support programs for Aboriginal students and migrants, which goes a long way to making preschools and other early childhood settings more culturally safe and inclusive when they complete their qualifications.”

The support and encouragement of dedicated teachers made a real impact on one of Liz Ingram's students who studied for a Certificate II and enjoyed it so much she enrolled at the local TAFE to continue the pathway onto a Certificate III in early childhood and then a Diploma in early childhood studies, which quickly led to a job in the sector. After a long career in childcare she returned to TAFE to do her Certificate IV in Training and Assessment and now teaches the next generation of educators at TAFE.

She is just one of the many committed students that Liz Ingram has taught over her 22 years teaching. Ingram wants to see TAFE properly funded and resourced with more highly qualified staff who are adequately supported.

“Our passion is education, that's why we've become TAFE teachers. It's very disappointing to have that passion continuously knocked out of you as a result of not being able to get funding,” Ingram says.

National Strategy

AEU Federal President Correna Haythorpe wants the federal government to launch a coordinated effort to put TAFE at the forefront of an urgently needed early childhood education workforce strategy.

“TAFE's regional footprint would enable governments to target local needs effectively ensuring that students can study and potentially work in their local communities. Leaving the creation of a major pipeline of workers to the whims of a contestable market won't address shortages” she says.

“But first the federal government need to restore the more than \$3 billion funding cut from TAFE and training since 2013, including the nearly half a billion cut in 2018 and 2019 alone.”

ALL CHILD CARERS



\$953

Weekly pay



Very strong

Future growth

CHILD CARE WORKERS



96,300 workers

Employment size



Medium

Skill level rating



49% Full-time

Full-time share



40 hours

Average full-time



33 years

Average age



97% female

Gender share

Information sourced from Job Outlook (an initiative of the Australian Federal Government)



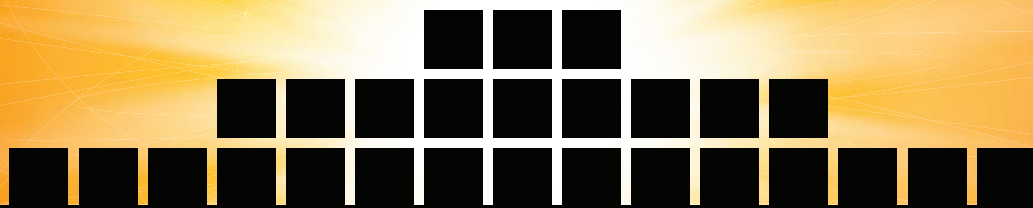
The Early Childhood sector is clearly in need of an effective national strategy for workforce renewal. Only TAFE can provide the wrap around support that is needed to lift completion rates and only TAFE has the nationwide and regional presence to train educators where they are most needed.

It is not only the early childhood education and care sector that would benefit, childcare workers are a lynch pin of Australia's economy. As the pandemic has proven, without access to childcare, participation for parents in the workforce is stymied. A strong early childhood education and care sector supports Australians in work and boosts productivity. Indeed, unlocking the productivity gains that come from increasing women's workforce participation would increase Australia's GDP by \$60 billion over the next twenty years according to KPMG.

Restoring funding to TAFE will create a triple dividend for Australia: a skilled and capable workforce to address current and future regional shortages, increased workforce participation to boost the economy and improved early learning outcomes for Australian children.

"To continue providing students with high quality learning opportunities that give them the necessary theoretical and practical skills, it is vital that TAFE is properly funded by all governments," says Ingram. "Governments must also recognise the pivotal role of Early Childhood Education as a vital influence on a child's formative years. Such recognition must influence and shape future policies that grow a skilled Early Childhood Educator workforce, with sufficient educators to meet the demand." ●

**EVERYONE
DESERVES
A HIGH
QUALITY
EDUCATION**



##RebuildWithTAFE

Integrating VET

**An integrated tertiary sector in Australia.
A fruitless flight and wishful thinking?**

Article by Bruce Mackenzie

In May 2020, in an address to the press club, the Prime Minister said that Australia's confusing and inconsistent VET system was leading too many students into universities. Trade and skilled jobs, he argued, need to be recognised as an equal to a university qualification, not looked down upon or seen as second best.

Marooned and isolated

One could argue with the Prime Minister's logic however it is true the VET system in Australia is struggling to remain educationally relevant with participation across Australia on a steep decline. VET is marooned and isolated. It has only a tenuous connection with the school sector, and a similarly weak connection with universities, which have colonised more and more of the skilled paraprofessional occupations once a part of VET. Degrees are now the name of the game.

VET'S curricular, (curiously called training packages) is based upon the assumption that students are being prepared for specific jobs. Jobs that apparently don't require literacy, numeracy or digital competence – the underpinning skills not only for occupational mobility but also for further study.

Educational values seem to have disappeared. Teaching staff require only minimal training and administrators none. Most disturbingly, flagship institutes – TAFEs – that



have built a strong and internationally competitive system over decades have either disappeared or regressed.

TAFE institutes have no remit to construct curriculum to meet the needs of their students. They have become training institutes only. Its broader educational role has been lost. They, as part of the VET system, have been subject to outrageous ideological experiments and have been discouraged from evolving into comprehensive applied tertiary institutions that offer high quality qualifications at the upper secondary, VET and higher education levels. Weak institutions provide a fertile ground for centralisation, regulation, inflexibility and, ultimately, irrelevance.

Contrast TAFE's position with universities which are politically powerful and enjoy a significant degree of independence, are self-accrediting, and by VET standards extremely well-funded. They have been encouraged to grow and prosper.

How has this situation arisen?

Until 1990, we had a network of colleges of advanced education. They were encouraged to offer applied degrees linked closely to industry. Many of these colleges were successful. They focused on part-time adult study as well as open access and support for education disadvantaged groups. Today, they are pretty much forgotten and all have been subsumed into "research" based universities.

In 2010 it was decided to create a higher education system primarily in public universities that had uncapped student places funded by the Australian government. The government was persuaded to buy the spurious argument that Australia's future prosperity depended on significantly increasing enrolments in research only universities.

Similarly, around 2010 federal and state governments decided to exponentially expand VET, with a market-based ideology, and encourage private providers to compete with public providers for government funding. The disaster that unfolded is without doubt the most scandalous in Australia's educational history and ruined VET's reputation and standing in the community.

Marginal benefits

The return from these initiatives has been marginal. Australia's productivity levels have fallen to such an extent that in 2019 they were below 1970 levels. This has been accompanied by wage stagnation, underemployment and over qualification. Equity, in terms of student type, has at best been incremental.

From a community and educational perspective, the decisions (in 1990 and 2010) not to commit to a binary system of higher education has proven to be a disaster in terms of access and success for non-traditional students at the undergraduate level.

Australia now relies on migration to meet its middle level skilled workforce needs. Universities, VET and ACFE compete with each other for students.

VET institutions with no resources and no encouragement to develop a higher education capability and become primarily responsible for lower level qualifications. The vast majority of its students are enrolled in certificate three or lower courses. Courses that by international standards are at or below year 12 level.

Does it matter?

Does it matter if we leave VET as it is, a residual component of tertiary education?

Australia is a large-scale trading nation that is impacted by the global forces. Structural reform, whether that be economic, environmental, welfare or social change, can only occur if we have an educated, skilled population.

Tertiary education can be a driver of structural change. A resilient, balanced



“A resilient, balanced tertiary sector is a vital component to the restructuring efforts of government.”

tertiary sector is a vital component to the restructuring efforts of government. Restructuring, so necessary in a community impacted by global forces, in areas such as aged care, climate change, social and industry policy.

Unrestrained growth in one component of the sector can be a significant cause of skills shortfalls, a blockage to structural change and persistent social and economic inequality.

Urgent reforms

From a student perspective, reform is urgently needed.

Our universities serve many people well but they have no connection with a diverse group of the student population and little or none with industry. One has to wonder about priorities when some have had more international students while local students cannot easily access applied higher education. Their educational aspirations are stymied by inept tertiary structures. Many VET foundation programs at Certificates I

and II are poorly conceived, have high attrition rates and weak outcomes.

Australia's upper secondary education system serves no other purpose, despite stated objectives, than to funnel year 12 students into universities.

Non-university bound students have few options and, based on available data, the options are producing terrible outcomes.

A recent report in Victoria into upper secondary school pathways (VCAL) for non-university bound school graduates found that one in three graduates go into short-term precarious employment, none into universities and only 20% into VET.

Our current tertiary arrangements are sub optimal, doing a disservice to many, stifling opportunity and are well below world standards.

What reforms?

There is no shortage of opinions to strengthen VET – it is a hotly contested area.

For over two decades (1970s–mid-1990s) TAFE institutes, supported by government policy, underpinned the evolution of a dynamic, relevant and enterprising VET sector. Despite the efforts of some, they remain the cornerstone of vocational education today. But they have not evolved and, like the sector, are in decline. The starting point for reform is TAFE.

Internationally, reforming governments in highly successful economies have developed integrated tertiary sectors. In brief, what they have done is to connect VET with upper secondary education and with higher education.

They have created two robust tracks in their upper secondary education:

1. An academic stream for those wishing to go into higher education at a research based university
2. A technical /professional stream for those wishing to go into employment and /or further study in applied higher education at a “professional university”.

Some of the characteristics of the professional/technical stream are that they are:

- underpinned by applied learning and adult education principles
- organised around robust broad based occupational clusters e.g. health and science
- literacy and numeracy are core components developed contextually and are assessed
- work placement is mandatory and assessable.

Australia could similarly restructure Certificates 1–3 into one qualification as part of the upper secondary technical stream and require TAFE institutes with world class facilities and industry connections to coordinate and offer the technical stream. The Victorian pathways report (referred to earlier), suggests a broadly similar strategy with TAFE institutes as the centre piece.

In the OECD, in addition to the development of a separate professional track for upper secondary education, alternative universities have been created that offer applied, flexible, adult focussed short cycle programs as well as full degrees targeting



“Internationally, reforming governments in highly successful economies have developed integrated tertiary sectors.”

adults, disadvantaged students and professional stream students.

In an Australian version, a similar university would offer lower level vocational qualifications, which would underpin higher education. Graduates from the technical professional stream would have direct entry.

This concept, if developed in Australia, would see TAFE connected to higher education and upper secondary education. TAFE would offer the technical stream, or coordinate it with approved other providers, such as some secondary schools.

It means that some TAFE institutes would evolve to become professional universities. Others might create a consortium and offer higher education in a governance arrangement, not dissimilar to the UCLA model.

Structural change such as has occurred in the OECD and UK would mean curriculum reform. Our unwillingness and inability to reform curriculum is damaging to industry, community and students. Core skills, especially literacy, numeracy and digital competence, will bring far greater rewards and mobility to

1. J Firth *Review into Vocational and Applied Pathways in senior secondary schooling*. Victorian Government, 2020, p86-88,116.
2. B Mackenzie *Fit for Purpose? Tertiary education in Australia*. Mackenzie Research Institute. 2019

“When immigration resumes skill shortages will persist because we have never been able to attract enough highly skilled workers.”

the individual and better outcomes for industry. This is especially so in dynamic contexts when dramatic shifts in the economy can create obsolescence of existing skills and abilities.

How likely is this to happen?

It depends. The proposed integrated model clarifies commonwealth and state responsibilities and funding. The states have responsibility for Certificate 1–3 (upper secondary education) and the commonwealth the balance.

Skill shortages abound, especially in key areas such as health, business and building and in higher middle level occupations. When immigration resumes, skill shortages will persist because we have never been able to attract enough highly skilled workers.

Universities, with their preoccupation on full-time 18–22 year olds, are unlikely to be attracted to part-time adult students or those who don't have

an ATAR. Professional universities, as described, will assist in meeting non-traditional student demand.

From a commonwealth perspective, it's a positive long-term strategy and for the states it strengthens upper secondary education and clarifies funding responsibilities.

However, reconciling state and territory differences on anything is very difficult even if it is in the wider interest.

From a student perspective, let's hope it's not too difficult. ●

BRUCE MACKENZIE was the chief executive of Holmesglen TAFE, one of the nation's biggest providers of vocational training, for 31 years. He is now a member of the advisory board at Mackenzie Research Institute, which was named in his honour.

**While you're
invested in others,
we're invested in you**



**Premier Package
Home Loan**

1.99%

3 year fixed rate¹
Per annum. Owner Occ.
LVR 80% or less.

3.10%

Comparison Rate²

Q Bank First Home Loans

Interest rate effective 1 May 2021. Interest is calculated daily. Check website for current rates. 1. Credit criteria applies. Minimum loan amount \$50,000 and only available to owner occupied loans with LVR 80% or less. Premier Package annual fee of \$390 applies. 2. Comparison rate calculated on a secured loan amount of \$150,000 for a term of 25 years. WARNING: This comparison rate is true only for the example given and may not include all fees and charges. Different terms, fees and other loan amounts might result in a different comparison rate. Fees & charges apply. T&Cs available upon request. Victoria Teachers Limited. ABN 44 087 651 769. AFSL/Australian Credit Licence Number 240 960.

bankfirst
invested in you

The three Cs: currency, competency and confusion

Currency and competency continue to be a hot topic for TAFE Teachers and it was high on the agenda of the AEU National TAFE Council AGM, which was held by video conference in April.

Article by Michelle Purdy

The regulation around proving industry competency is an ongoing nightmare for TAFE Teachers across all states and territories. Our panel of educators fielded questions and comments while wading through the confusion.

Who decides what is relevant and current?

Scott Green of TAFE Queensland kicked off the debate explaining that in Queensland, vocational educators are required to maintain their professional and vocational competency and currency by both national regulation and the TAFE Queensland Educator Certified Agreement 2019.

TAFE Queensland is making improvements to the tracking used by educators to demonstrate currency of industry, and VET skills and knowledge, which will also comply with the regulator ASQA's RTO standards. Initially, in some areas educators didn't have access to clear benchmarks to describe what was needed to demonstrate currency. Obviously, skills and knowledge must be directly related to the training and assessment that educators deliver and it can be evidenced in many ways.

For instance, you may demonstrate currency of industry skills and vocational competency in the units you teach if you hold the qualification being delivered and have recently engaged in a relevant industry work placement



to update your knowledge and skills with the latest techniques, processes, technologies and resources currently used in this industry. This 'Industry Release' is one activity you can use your professional development entitlement for, while informing your course delivery and aligning it with the needs of industry and the community.

Educators must also demonstrate VET currency to include areas of knowledge and practice of vocational training, learning and assessment inclusive of competency-based assessment. To this end, all TAFE Queensland educators were mandated to complete the TAE40110 Cert IV Assessment & Training upgrades to include TAEASS502 Design and develop assessment tools (Release 2) and TAEELN411 Address adult language, literacy and numeracy skills (Release 2), unless they held a higher qualification.

It would be great to have a national standard for currency that we all agree on

The benefits of having a clearly defined framework to guide and encapsulate those activities in which educators can participate in to maintain their industry currency and VET currency makes a lot of sense, especially when it comes to meeting ASQA audit compliance, where the ground rules are always changing.

Scott explained that there is a continuing debate between QTU TAFE Council members and TAFE Queensland, about introducing a weighted points system to this initial guide to further facilitate ASQA audit compliance. This concept has been met with some resistance, as the proposed scheme is not a one size fits all. It would be interesting to look to other countries that use a point system effectively to see if there is policy that could be borrowed.

As a collective we should demand that TAFE management honour our minimum professional development entitlements and provide a career pathway and industry opportunities to encourage all educators to extend themselves in a concerted effort to address the competency and currency issues. This would better support and engage our students while meeting TAFE's quest to be reinstated as the premier public provider, and complying with ASQA RTO requirements.

Teachers need assistance as there are too many mixed messages about how it is to be completed

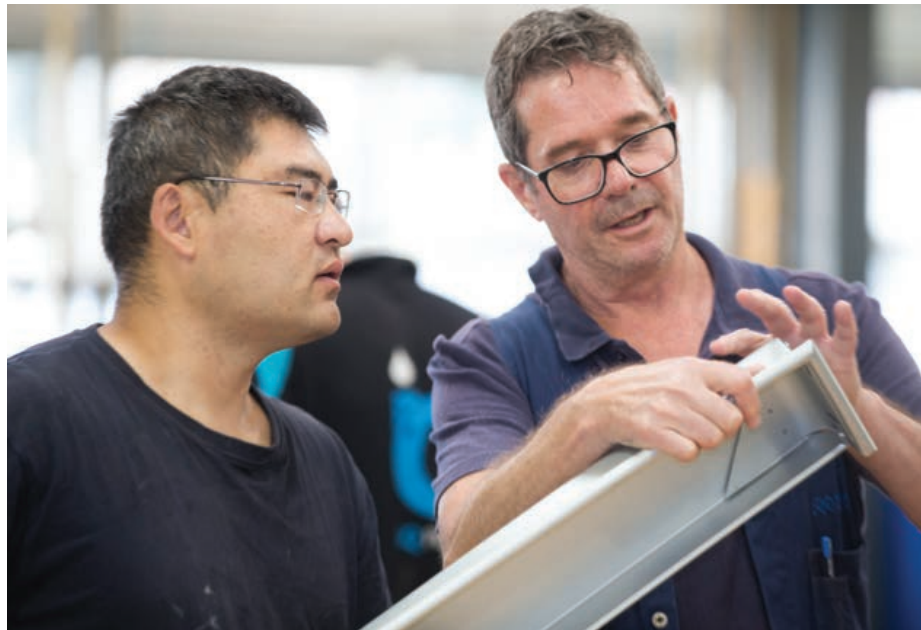
Paul Whitehall from New South Wales compared compliance to the gift that just keeps on giving. Just as one box is completed, another one is offered up. He suggested an acronym that might be helpful – RADIO:

- **R**eflections (write them)
- **A**ctivity (name them)
- **D**emonstrate Currency/Competence (Word document)
- **I**mpact on class/workshop (write them)
- **O**utcome (explain them on teaching and assessment)

Paul agreed that the process is daunting, overwhelming and onerous with far too many documents and videos/photos to upload. Anecdotally teachers spoke about colleagues paying to attain new credentials not knowing that within a year they will have to upload currency evidence to support those credentials.

The mixed messages abound with some teachers saying they needed to provide evidence of a minimum of three currency activities and others had to produce evidence of five. The process needs to be clarified so that compliance can be demonstrated easily.

Teachers also raised the challenges of trying to find time to return to industry when being timetabled to teach without a break. There has been very little evidence of management providing access for Return to Industry which makes teacher compliance more difficult. Many teachers agreed that the stress and strain of the additional workload to achieve compliance is impacting their wellbeing.



“Many teachers agreed that the stress and strain of the additional workload to achieve compliance is impacting their wellbeing.”

We need to look at how other states, countries and other industries do currency

Jan Lau from Western Australia explained that they have received funding from the Department of Training to look at buying or constructing a system that would allow a much more consistent, straightforward and stream-lined production of the necessary documents.

WA did not buy an off the shelf system to track teacher currency and competency but instead designed a bespoke system. The design team was very open to listening to the brief that came from the group of SSTWA lecturers who attended the sessions. They understood how useable the system needed to be and they are at a point where it is being trialled. There are a lot more things that need to be bedded down but they hold on to the hope that this system could be effective.

They are hoping to have training and professional development information loaded on to employee records that will be transferred on to a database. When they go to prove currency and competency for a particular unit they will select an item and drop it in.

Winding up the session Maxine Sharkey, Federal TAFE Secretary said, “it’s obvious that systems (and perhaps TAFEs themselves) are not ready for recording teacher currency and competency.

“We must not lose sight of the fact that TAFE once had the responsibility to ensure that they employed the best from industry and provided teaching qualifications. They have abrogated their responsibility and that is why we are where we are today.” ●

MICHELLE PURDY is the AEU Federal TAFE President.

CDP to be scrapped

The CDP is set to be abolished, but the campaign for wage justice and proper employment continues.

Article by Darcel Russell

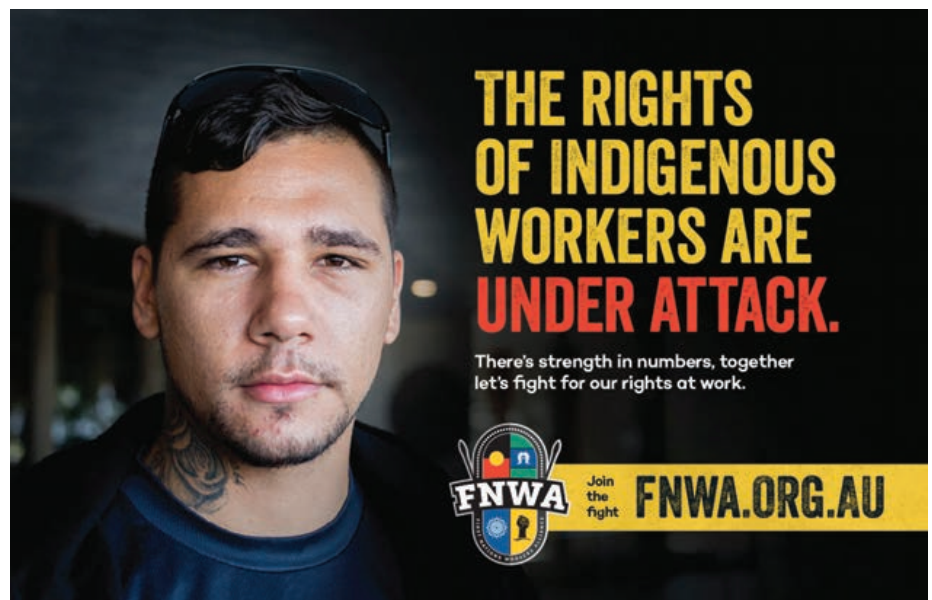
A small glimmer of hope presented itself in what was otherwise a featureless federal budget for First Nations peoples when it was delivered by the federal treasurer in May. Eschewing any flashy public announcements, the new cost measure sat neatly and quietly on the budget pages. Four short words titled New Remote Jobs Program, now encompasses the federal government's new commitment to overhauling the harsh and punitive Community Development Program (CDP).

"This is a significant win for CDP workers and the unions and unionists who have supported the First Nations Workers Alliance Wage Justice campaign for CDP workers," says Lara Watson, ACTU Indigenous Officer and FNWA convenor. Launched in Townsville on 19 June 2017, the FNWA Wage Justice Campaign works with CDP workers and remote First Nations communities to abolish the federal government's punitive and racist CDP remote jobs program.

While Watson has welcomed the changes, she is also cautious. "We know there are many journeys we need to take together and our Wage Justice campaign isn't finished."

The FNWA is taking a firm stance to ensure that the CDP is not replaced with another 'remote jobs program.' Key to this is ensuring "investment in sustainable, permanent employment, jobs on country and delivery of apprenticeships & traineeships that lead to employment," says Watson. In addition, the FNWA will focus on ensuring that, "the replacement doesn't cause harm to First Nations CDP workers and impact negatively on communities as a whole."

The FNWA will monitor the federal government's promised process of



co-design as described in the federal budget papers. "We are vigilant," says Watson. "Government plans to pilot a new program at the end of this year. It gives us a sense that there is something already waiting when very little consultation and co-design has happened. We will see."

The FNWA is firm on the view that any co-design process should be with the communities that will be forced into an employment program, not with Indigenous people chosen by government. "We saw with the old Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) that communities had the capacity to self-manage and administer employment programs, which were more successful than the current CDP."

Active engagement has been critical to the campaign's success to date. As Watson says, "This reform was not delivered because government 'listened'. It's because of the tireless work of CDP workers, people in remote communities, unions, their members and the First Nations Workers Alliance

have put in over almost 4 years."

A quintessential activist and campaigner, Watson is back on the road with the FNWA in early June to kick-start the next phase of the remote community campaign in Barunga. "We will be talking to people and letting them know about the changes to the mutual obligations conditions for CDP workers," says Watson. "It is now voluntary and people will not be breached for not showing up." The FNWA will also discuss future plans for employment in remote communities. "We want to know what people want to replace CDP with and what jobs are needed in communities." And there are also plans to celebrate the wins achieved by the four year Wage Justice campaign. "We won because CDP workers campaigned and voted to end CDP."

"In the meantime, we need support. We need union members to show we aren't going anywhere while CDP workers need a voice." ●

DARCEL RUSSELL is the AEU Federal Aboriginal Education Officer.

Skilling the Bay: Workforce ready in a transitioning regional economy

An economy in transition will need a new education and skills mix. Geelong's Skilling the Bay put Gordon TAFE front and centre of their place based response to changing global economic forces and resulting structural transformation.

Article by Carley Brennan

Geelong's evolving economy

Historically a major economic centre and one of the fastest-growing regions in Australia, Geelong is a city experiencing strong population growth of approximately 2 per cent per annum. A region built 'off the sheep's back' and once world-renowned for its wool classing industry gave way to a thriving manufacturing sector supported by the Ford Motor Company, Alcoa smelter and the rolling mills. The city also hosted the heavy maintenance facility for Qantas and Target's headquarters for over 92 years. For the past ten years, however, the region has been undergoing significant structural and economic adjustment with these organisations closing or relocating, which has also impacted a myriad of small to medium enterprises in the supply chain. Faced with thousands of displaced workers, a rapidly changing global economy, the emergence of automation and advancing technology, Geelong found itself as a region in transition – but a region in transition to what?

It was against this backdrop that Skilling the Bay was established.

Since the inception of Skilling the Bay, it is evident that the Geelong region has benefited from the growth of some industry sectors and the emergence of new ones as it has transitioned to a more diverse knowledge-based



economy. In this climate, Skilling the Bay, together with the VET sector, is leading the conversation to develop a sustainable workforce.

A leading role for TAFE

Led by The Gordon Institute of TAFE, and delivered in partnership with Deakin University and the Victorian Government, Skilling the Bay became operational in 2012. This unique regional initiative was established to address the economic and industry changes through an education and skills lens. The initial task was to investigate and deliver education, employment and skills initiatives to support Geelong businesses and workers transition to a new economy, supporting the transition of large numbers of displaced workers to more diverse and sustainable employment opportunities.

As Skilling the Bay was established, it became evident that a changing economy could not be sustained, or grow with the existing education and skills profile. The region was confronted with lower educational attainment rates than its metro neighbours. With only 45 per cent of the population having completed Year 12, as opposed to 55 per cent in Melbourne, the regions retention rates fell below Victorian averages. When you coupled this with high youth unemployment sitting at 15 per cent in 2011, rising as high as 20 per cent in 2014 and some suburbs already experiencing significant disadvantage, it was clear the region faced substantial education and skills challenges.

Informed by consultation from the beginning, Skilling the Bay identified three clear goals to guide its work:

1. Raise education attainment (including STEM disciplines and digital technologies)
2. Increase workforce participation through training and re-skilling
3. Grow existing and emerging industries through targeted skills development.

An Advisory Group comprised of regional leaders from industry, education and community sectors oversees the delivery and progress of these core goals and the initiatives and projects that stem from them.

With an initial government investment of \$1.8 million, Skilling the Bay has evolved in stages.



“As Skilling the Bay was established, it became evident that a changing economy could not be sustained, or grow with the existing education and skills profile.”



“From the beginning, the Advisory Group recognised that achieving the core goals would require a long-term strategic approach, along with resources, commitment and continued collaboration with delivery partners and stakeholders.”

Stage one was a development phase, focused on building an evidence base to inform a strategic response to the challenges ahead. A jobs summit was held, and a priority actions report developed. A demonstration project was also delivered to develop and pilot a short Nano-fibre production plant in Geelong's Advanced Fibres precinct.

Stage two centred on implementation and delivery, the emphasis being on support for transitioning workers. In this phase, the Geelong Workforce Development Centre was established to support retrenched workers and their families with one-to-one career support services. This model formed the basis of the introduction of Victoria's Skills and Jobs Centre, now situated state-wide.

This stage also saw the development of pathway programs to the growing health and community sector to attract more young people through SBAT and VETiS pathways and created bridging programs to bring workers into the sector from other industries. Significant industry collaboration occurred, and new training products developed, including a course in composite manufacturing to help build and maintain workforce capability for the emerging carbon fibre sector in Geelong.

Adopting a future focus, **Stage three** further emphasised developing 21st-century skills, increasing STEM and digital technology capabilities for students and teachers and developing entrepreneurial skills to arrest the

trending decline in STEM subject enrolments and create 'employers of the future' for our region.

Throughout each stage, Skilling the Bay continued to support place-based education to employment programs in two of the region's most disadvantaged suburbs. This resulted in high course completion rates (70 per cent average) and higher than national average transition to employment rates of 47 per cent. In real terms, Northern Futures and the Opportunity East programs assisted over 300 people to gain employment.

Initiatives were designed to fill gaps in traditional education, employment and skills pathways in our region – we did not seek to duplicate existing programs or initiatives.

Our approach

From the beginning, the Advisory Group recognised that achieving the core goals would require a long-term strategic approach, along with resources, commitment and continued collaboration with delivery partners and stakeholders. This collaborative effort has seen a wide range of initiatives delivered in conjunction with 11 core partners, 26 secondary schools, the Geelong Tech School, and more than 185 industry partners. Consequently, Skilling the Bay evolved to lead a collaborative effort which brings together education providers, community organisations and industry to deliver targeted initiatives to ensure

that whether one is a transitioning worker, a school leaver or a long-term unemployed person, one can see a pathway into 'decent employment' (as described by the United Nations Sustainability Goals). The initiatives also ensure that a changing regional industry mix can access a skilled and educated workforce to grow and thrive.

Embedded within The Gordon TAFE, the project governance and operational responsibility carried by The Gordon has ensured consistent management of initiatives and projects, including a continuous improvement approach to program delivery. A robust Performance Measurement Framework enacted from the outset saw all programs measured against benchmarks, targets and KPIs. The framework is not static, and throughout, a continuous improvement approach to delivery was adopted. Where a program did not hit the mark, we changed tact or concluded them.

Results demonstrate that 85 per cent of students now place a higher level of importance on STEM and digital technologies, and 70 per cent intend to enrol in digital tech and STEM subjects. Teachers who have undertaken our programs report 76 per cent improved digital tech teaching capability – important as there are very few teaching in this area.

Year 9 Students partaking in our Tertiary Futures program experienced ten days at The Gordon, undertaking five vocational preview courses and five days of employability skills. The survey results indicate; 88 per cent of students have a better understanding of different tertiary courses and pathways; 72 per cent place a higher level of importance on completing a qualification after school, and 78 per cent are more committed to their studies.

The program designed to grow a pipeline of new entrants to the health and community services sector and open broader career pathways has seen an average of 200 enrolments in VET in Schools and School-Based Apprenticeship and Trainee courses per year since 2014, with a 91 per cent completion rate for accredited programs and 85 per cent intending to pursue a career in the field.

The changing industry profile, the emergence of Industry 4.0, automation and advancing technology is driving employer demand for a higher skilled workforce (and this trend will continue). However, it is not just technical skills that are in



demand; employers seek 21-century employability skills such as problem solving, critical and creative thinking, collaboration, digital literacy and resilience. Thus the challenge is how to work closer with industry to educate and train for these essential skills and provide opportunities for people to apply them in context in the workplace through placements, work experience or industry immersion programs.

Beyond the horizon - learning and opportunities

Skilling the Bay has developed a model of coordination, collaboration and partnerships. Learnings and insights can be gained from the latest report, the Geelong Education and Workforce Profile 2011-2021, available at the Skilling the Bay website: <https://www.thegordon.edu.au/stb/about>

Essentially, our research shows that while Geelong has managed the transition to a more diverse economy reasonably well, we still face persistent challenges, and some people are being left behind. These complex issues are already being amplified in the wake

“... employers seek 21-century employability skills such as problem solving, critical and creative thinking, collaboration, digital literacy and resilience.”



of COVID-19. More work needs to be done if we want to develop a thriving, prosperous region for all. Despite the report being written in a considerably different landscape, the findings and recommendations remain relevant and provide a mechanism for us to look beyond the horizon to rebound and rebuild more successfully in a COVID-adjusted environment as we manage the significant employment and skills challenges ahead.

This presents a tremendous opportunity for the VET sector to not only respond to changing workforce demands, but to lead the conversations about the changes ahead to supporting social and economic recovery.

As they say, "Change is inevitable – how we prepare for it is open for discussion." ●

CARLEY BRENNAN is Skilling the Bay Manager at Gordon TAFE.

A dying trade that is still in great demand?

The engineering patternmaking trade in focus.

Article by Dr Jesse Adams Stein

It is often assumed that digital technologies have replaced traditional trades, and skilled tradespeople must simply retrain and be 'agile', and catch up with the new technologies. But when you take a close look at manufacturing processes, and speak to workers and employers, it becomes apparent that technological tools alone will not save what is left of Australian manufacturing. Industrial craft still exists, and it still matters.

Right now, shortages in skilled trades are holding back local manufacturers, and without the capacity to hire from overseas, Australia has a real problem. A concerted governmental focus on re-funding TAFEs would go a long way to addressing these skills shortages, as well as providing a much needed boost to the development of Australia's long-neglected trade skills. Secondly, once apprentices enter the training system, they need to be adequately supported by government as they complete their training, particularly if it involves some online distance education, as well as travel to training facilities.

The Australian foundry sector is a case in point. Foundries are factories where castings are created by melting metal, pouring it into a mould and leaving it to solidify. A great deal of machinery and equipment is dependent upon castings and the industry sector is dependent on them. The work of foundries goes



beyond engineering for rail and roads and extends out to agriculture, building, freight and transport, power transmission, public utilities and irrigation sectors, to name just a few.

Yet for many years, Australian foundries have experienced difficulty finding qualified tradespeople and apprentices in moulding, engineering pattern-making and affiliated trades. The challenges of COVID-19 have resulted in a boon for local foundry production, but, as explained by Joe Vecchio, Secretary of the Australian Foundry Institute, it is difficult to expand production, due to a lack of skilled workers. Some businesses have resorted to using unskilled labour and

providing in-house training.

While attempts have been made to revive foundry apprenticeships in Victoria and NSW, via a flexible training method, currently the only dedicated training site for foundry skills is TAFE Queensland, at Acacia Ridge.

Over the past five years I have focused my research on the Australian foundry sector, and more particularly, the trade of engineering pattern-making. Engineering patternmakers use technical drawings to construct a 3D pattern (a bit like a model), which is used to produce a mould for metal casting or plastics production. Traditionally a refined woodworking trade, patternmakers make patterns for

objects as large as the buckets on the end of bulldozers, and as small as the moulds for glucose jube lollies.

Patternmaking represents a particularly interesting problem: it is largely considered to be a dying trade – and it is unfathomably small in numbers – and yet foundry and patternshop employers are desperate for skilled patternmakers, and find it very hard to secure them. With only four apprentices currently undertaking engineering patternmaking apprenticeships at TAFE Queensland, the problem will only worsen in the next five years. Similar challenges are faced in toolmaking.

So what can we do?

The decline of these trades isn't a natural result of market economics or automation. The market demand is there. It was a political choice to ignore these skills, and it can be a political choice to revive them.

Moving into the future, the survival of engineering patternmaking – among other trades – must be taken seriously, rather than written off as already redundant. If funded and prepared adequately, apprentice training could be revived at a state-based TAFE level, with an emphasis on merging digital fabrication skills with traditional craft knowledge.

New research: a catalyst for change

Academic research has the potential to not only shine a light on issues in society, it also inform the thinking of policy makers and leads them to solutions. Of course, there needs to be political will for change in the first place, but I'm encouraged that the Australian Research Council has agreed to fully fund my application

for a three-year research project that will focus on skilled trades, and their relationship to Australian design and local manufacturing production. The project is an ARC Discovery Early Career Research Fellowship (DECRA), and it is titled Australian Design, Trades and Manufacturing 1945-2007: Connecting Histories.

The essence of the project is this: histories of Australian design and histories of Australian manufacturing are usually considered separately. This separation does not reflect the collaborative activity that occurred between the Australian design and Australian manufacturing sectors in the second half of the twentieth century. During this period, designers had a distinct and evolving relationship with manufacturing tradespeople, which manifested in product development, production and educational contexts, particularly TAFEs and technical institutes.

The project is unique because it turns attention to the specific relationship between Australian designers and manufacturing tradespeople, covering the period 1945-2007 (post World War II to the 2007-08 Global Financial Crisis). How did Australian designers' work gradually transform with deindustrialisation, globalisation and technological change? And what happened to the local manufacturing tradespeople who previously had close ties to a local design sector?

At the essence of this inquiry is a focus on knowledge-sharing, between designers and tradespeople. How did people communicate? What were the shared understandings? How did people shift in their employment pathways, between manufacturing, teaching, and creative fields?

CALL FOR INTERVIEWS:

Australian working lives in Manufacturing, Trades, Education and Design

DO YOU HAVE A CAREER background that has shifted across and between trades training, manufacturing, vocational education and/or creative practice? Maybe you started in an apprenticeship, worked in manufacturing, then taught at TAFE? Maybe you worked in a technical support role in Australian manufacturing and then shifted to set design or commercial art? Or perhaps you used to work in the rag trade, then retrained when the local textiles industry dissolved? Would you like to tell your life story (as oral history), and have it recorded with the National Library of Australia? If you think you have a story to tell, please email jesse.stein@uts.edu.au, with a short summary of relevant life history details (300 word max).

This is not merely a case of bringing 'Group A' and 'Group B' together, but an investigation into a productive space in which skilled makers of all kinds worked collaboratively. As with my previous research, this project will involve oral histories and archival research, as well as a podcast.

TAFE teachers have been at the forefront of the shifts between historical and contemporary contexts and I'm sure will have many stories and much to say on industrial craft, manufacturing, repair, skill loss and human redundancy in the face of economic and technological change. Stories that will be a vital link and need to be heard. ●

DR JESSE ADAMS STEIN is a Senior Lecturer and DECRA Fellow at the School of Design, University of Technology Sydney.

“The decline of these trades isn't a natural result of market economics or automation. The market demand is there.”

The impact of competition in England

The Association of Colleges in the UK is debunking the lazy assumptions that more competition leads to more choice, better quality and greater efficiency and that supply-side planning gets in the way of 'what is needed'.

Article by Eddie Playfair

Several years ago the Association of Colleges (AoC) in England was invited to participate in some research commissioned by the government into post-16 education and training market for school leavers. Our CEO David Hughes was interviewed and joined others from the sector in a workshop designed to assess how well the post-16 sector in England operates as a market. He spent most of the interview and the workshop questioning the premise of the research because there are so many fundamental characteristics of education that are clearly not like any market.

The report acknowledged that post-16 does not operate as a market for the obvious reasons that government is the main purchaser, people do not consume education in the way they do other goods and services, nor do employers and because competition is mainly on quality and not on price. Despite that, the report took over 150 pages to 'investigate the effectiveness of the further education market through an economic lens'.

We don't blame the company contracted to carry out the work, and

the overarching question the work aimed to answer is an important one: 'Ultimately, the question that government would like to be able to answer is whether the further education market is delivering the most appropriate outcomes for learners, employers and the economy more generally.' And to be fair, one of its main conclusions is interesting: that the market approach leads to 'more choice for general courses than they do for more specialised courses.'

The rest of the report was a fairly painful read as it tried to offer recommendations that use the fundamentals of a market to improve efficiency – within a setting which the report itself recognises is not like a market. It was quietly published and had little impact. It didn't help that the report landed at a time of fierce cuts to post-16 funding.

Subsequently, AoC published its own report, *The impact of competition in post-16 education & training* based on analysis of the true nature of the current quasi-market in post-16 education. The report debunks a number of lazy assumptions – that more competition leads to more choice, better quality and greater efficiency and that supply-side planning gets in the way of 'what is needed'.

“... there are so many fundamental characteristics of education that are clearly not like any market.”

Education policy in England has been strongly shaped by a drive towards greater marketisation for at least a decade, and arguably longer. In post-16 education this has resulted in a combination of provider autonomy and competition, high audit and regulation burdens, declining funding levels and the proliferation of new providers.

We started our research from the belief that people, communities and businesses are best served by strong, well-resourced colleges with clear missions, working collaboratively with others within a wider network.

We identified four key dimensions of a successful system: sufficiency, efficiency, quality and equality, each of which has its own challenges, benefits and metrics. Our assumption was that the further education system will be making its best possible contribution where it can provide local learners with the 'sweet spot' combination of a sufficient and efficient curriculum, delivered to the highest standards of quality and enhancing equality of access.

We defined the dimensions as follows:

An effective further education system is one that delivers the best possible outcomes given the available inputs. Outcomes are defined in terms of learners gaining skills that support their future career progression, and employers being better able to access the skills they need to realise their business plan. In each case, the decisions and factors involved go well beyond the remit of a college.

At the system level, economists speak of productive and allocative efficiency. Productive efficiency is the kind we traditionally mean when we talk about something being 'cost effective': producing goods or services at the lowest cost with maximum outputs given available inputs. Allocative efficiency is about whether we're producing the right kinds of things and whether we could improve matters by delivering a different mix.

Sufficiency refers to the extent to which all students have access to the full range of approved options for them regardless of where they live. An effective system doesn't just 'deliver qualifications', but has to meet the required variety in level, content and mode if it is to facilitate learners' life chances. At the local level, learners need a sufficient curriculum; enough



recognised options for all those who qualify for them, delivered efficiently while ensuring an element of student choice and good quality. Productive efficiency without a sufficient curriculum would mean that a college is doing too few of the right things or too many of the wrong things and, as a result, the system cannot achieve allocative efficiency.

Quality refers to the 'official' measures of success which will often include student retention and course completion rates, value-added, successful progression and employment. Equality measures will include the extent to which the educational offer includes all learners and provides opportunities for progression at all levels and to all types

of student, helping to overcome barriers to access and to challenge deep seated systemic inequalities and disadvantage.

The English post-16 landscape

The English post-16 landscape has a number of features which have determined the impact of markets on provision.

The absence of any single national or local planning process: the educational offer is shaped by individual providers' intelligence, assumptions and aspirations and they often operate without reference to the plans of others.

A complex web of overlapping accountabilities, pulling in different directions, which can create incentives for risk avoidance and compliance-driven behaviours which are not

conducive to collaboration and innovation. Greater stability and trust would reduce the need for external intervention.

As a result of funding reductions, colleges have rationalised and become highly efficient but the push to encourage new market entrants has cut the returns on investment and the proliferation of smaller providers has kept average provider size down and led to less choice and worse outcomes.

The expansion of the long 'tail' of small providers, leading to smaller volumes, smaller class sizes and more low-viability provision. As smaller providers have persisted, larger provider provision has become more marginal. The funding squeeze for all providers has drained the resources available to maintain organisational capacity, including a broad curriculum; staff recruitment, retention and motivation and investment in support services.

Findings and recommendations:

Most of this work was completed before the COVID-19 pandemic. While labour market demand will have changed, the number of providers on the supply side has not radically changed.

Among other things, we found that the number of subjects on offer per provider is lowest in areas of high competition and that providers' financial health tends to be worse in areas where competition is high.

We recommended a whole-market and place-based approach which incentivises coordination between providers to address insufficiency, inefficiency, inequity, poor quality or any combination of these. We considered what type and scale of coordination might be appropriate while sustaining an environment of autonomy, accountability, trust and stability for providers. This would require:

- *a single post-16 commissioning process for all providers, to replace the multiple drivers which often pull in different directions.*
- *clear conditions for funding, market entry and continued market presence based on strong local co-ordination.*
- *greater investment in anchor institutions as hubs to protect necessary specialist and 'minority' provision.*



“The funding squeeze for all providers has drained the resources available to maintain organisational capacity, including a broad curriculum; staff recruitment, retention and motivation and investment in support services.”

We think that students would benefit from stable leading 'anchor' institutions and that rather than undermining their leadership within the system, we should be aligning incentives in such a way that market leaders can drive the coordinated outcomes we seek.

Our preferred approach would be a place-based coordinated market which accepts the trade-offs between accountability and autonomy, trust and competition. It would involve a common approach to commissioning across post-16 learning and allow a mix of leadership and collaboration between providers to emerge. It would also need to support different regional economies to flourish with their own ways of doing things, affording greater flexibility on both the supply and demand side. Different areas have

different histories, and their leading institutions having evolved over many years. Great anchor institutions already exist, they combine strong ties with their area with large size and a strong social mission, and their market power can be matched with market responsibility. ●

EDDIE PLAYFAIR is a Senior Policy Manager at the AoC. The AoC represents England's post-16 colleges which account for some 2.2 million students, 700,000 of whom are full time 16-18 year-olds; well over half of all publicly funded learners in this age group. The impact of competition in post-16 education & training is available here.

Tricks of the trade

The sad demise of the internal foreigner.



Article by Neil Hauxwell

Once upon a time, a long, long time ago, when Victorian TAFEs cooperated and didn't even have to advertise on television, there evolved a practice called by some 'The Internal Foreigner'.

It worked like this: let's say the carpentry department at a TAFE was installing some new benches, and they needed some metal brackets to anchor the benches to the concrete floor. One of the teachers would say: "Hey, I'll ask Mario in fabrication if he can make some for us" and Mario would probably fit in the bit of extra work, perhaps recycle some steel and the job would be done without two purchase orders and three trips to the hardware store to get an item that only just did the job.

It's worth noting that the system had many of the features beloved of disciples of neo-liberal economics. It was 'market driven' and allocated resources efficiently. Mario could equally have replied to the request with "Sorry mate, but we're setting up an NC cutter for a new CAD unit and I haven't got time to scratch my arse right now". It also followed the principles of 'mutual obligation' – if these were being overlooked, Mario could have replied "Yeah, and how are those plywood teaching aids you promised us coming along?"

In those far-off days, the practice of the internal foreigner crossed all sorts of departmental function barriers. Trade teachers could ask a general education teacher to proofread a course document. Ancillary staff could get a shelf put up. Computer, library and admin staff all helped, each other according

to time and capacity. The internal foreigner brought people together in the common cause of technical and further education. The internal foreigner created lasting personal relationships and organisational efficiencies. The internal foreigner was a human dimension of a workplace that had students at the centre of organisational purpose.

But change happens. The competitive bandwagon was waiting for passengers and all too many saw the potential. TAFEs could be just like corporations and have executive name plates and incentive bonuses and PAs and stuff. The future was in administration and career ladders were popping up like bean stalks.

And so, big and small, famous and infamous, TAFEs across the state of Victoria began their vertical development. A competitive training

If you have any teaching ideas or reflections that you would like to share, please get in touch.

Email Sarah Jones at sjones@aeufederal.org.au for further information.

market requires competitive executives. Executives need data. Data need analysis, so that means a Director of Data Collection and Analysis, and he or she will need a manager to keep the show focused on the KPIs, as well as some people to do the actual work. Unlike in the real world of commerce, there's government bailouts to underwrite the 'business transition process'. All despite years of failed experiments in pursuit of an economic ideology that most normal people think was well discredited even before the collapse of Lehman Brothers in 2008.

As the towering silos of internal structures in each of Victoria's TAFEs have grown, it is those at the base-administrative, support and teaching people who have to bear the weight and pay for the new order in declining job satisfaction and community respect. Internal foreigners were the budgies in the TAFE workplace. Happy and colourful indicators of Victorian TAFE effectiveness. Where once the budgies flourished, now they are a critically endangered species

Under today's regimes, our metal brackets take a more complex path. They would first need approval by the head of department, a program manager, even, ironically, a head of division. With building and engineering in different divisions, there would be budget implications, and, of course,

“Internal foreigners were the budgies in the TAFE workplace. Happy and colourful indicators of Victorian TAFE effectiveness. Where once the budgies flourished, now they are a critically endangered species.”

the lurking danger of 'precedents' – seemingly innocuous events that can morph into savage destroyers of a career.

If sufficient organisational altitude is reached, the bracket deliberations will question of the existence or otherwise of computations for the brackets that have been signed off by a duly qualified structural engineer. At this point, a directive will be issued back down the chain for the building department to source the brackets at Bunnings. In the end, the benches will be mildly restrained by thin metal pressings from China and the aspiring executive who raised the computations issue will be

credited with saving the organisation from a potential multi-million dollar civil case.

Zooming out from looking down on a single TAFE mini-corporation, we see the whole state picture. Over to the right, in Bairnsdale, there are two heavy diesel apprentices who desperately need a good learning resource for injector electronics. In a Melbourne class there's no Dinka translation for an OHS unit. Up on the Murray they're turning away free TAFE students for want of decent bridging skills content. None of these learning needs will be met. They cost too much when there is no economy of scale. “\$20K for a diesel unit for two punters, tell 'em they're dreaming – just sling them the old Bosch manual, that's all we ever had”. Or, “get the marketing department to see if they can sign up some other TAFEs for forward orders on that Dinka project; we need to see that the numbers stack up before we do anything”. “Sorry, Sunshine, but we only get paid for the actual accredited units, not this bridging stuff; get the strategic consultation people to take up your problems with one of their school committees.”

The demise of the internal foreigner is sad. The strangulation of inter-TAFE cooperation in developing better student learning resources is tragic. ●

NEIL HAUXWELL is an LLN Specialist at TAFE Gippsland and former TAFE Teacher.



Around Australia

ACT KAREN NOBLE

IN THE AUSTRALIAN Capital Territory, TAFE operates under the banner of the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) and runs five distinct campuses, geographically dispersed across Canberra.

While CIT sits somewhat at arms-length from the more mainstream ACT Public Service agencies, wage setting is largely centralised, along with the common terms and conditions that prevail across all ACTPS enterprise agreements.

Bargaining becomes interesting when our claims are unique to CIT and tailored to our members' specific interests.

With the current enterprise agreement expiring on 31 October 2021, the bargaining process is already well underway. Membership consultation commenced in January and the final log of claims endorsed by the membership and served on

the employer in mid-May.

Key 2021 claims include:

Salary increases for all classifications of at least 3.5 per cent over the course of the agreement. If successful, this would see the following growth for CIT teacher salaries over next few years:

(*Refer to table below)
CIT Teachers currently receive 11.5 per cent superannuation, which has been increased beyond the 9.5 per cent federal minimum over the two most recent enterprise agreements. Our claim this time is to secure a jump to 15.4 per cent.

A complete and comprehensive induction program for teachers in their first year CIT, supplemented by additional supports including documented mentoring support and a reduction in the annual teaching load.

CIT teachers are continually faced with changes to the type and nature of tasks that make up their work; a trend that was exposed, if not accelerated,

by COVID-19 in 2020. The AEU is seeking a review of the way in which teaching hours at CIT are formulated, with alternative models presented to members for consideration.

Clear structures and mechanisms to consult meaningfully with members on local issues related to workload, resourcing, work safety and change management.

Each of the above claims would represent a significant step forward on salary and conditions, and together would achieve genuine improvements to the pay and working lives of our CIT members.

The federal budget referred to many increases for the aged care sector: jobs, training, dollars and hours per person, and some specialised responses relating to nutrition, dementia and palliative care – reflecting the recommendations from the Royal Commission. The Royal Commission recommended a mandatory minimum qualification for support and care employees of Certificate III in Individual Support. In May 2021, the Federal Government only 'encourages' this and expects a speedy increase in the roll out of training and new jobs. The aged care workforce is, once again, at risk of fast tracked recruitment

and training which will not improve the quality and confidence of those employees, nor services for our older citizens.

JobTrainer and other workforce initiatives continue to highlight the need for timely student support with Foundations Skills. Despite efforts by CIT, departments and teachers resourcing for foundation skills is insufficient and arrangements struggle to meet students' needs. Workload for teachers increases with the need to provide more individual support with assessments and resubmissions. ●

NSW PHILLIP CHADWICK

SADLY, ON 30 March, the eve of a community forum to raise community support to oppose the sale of the main Scone TAFE campus, the NSW Government announced that the college had been sold to Racing NSW. The community forum proceeded as planned and provided community members an opportunity to vent their anger at the NSW Government over the sale. The meeting was well supported, the gathering represented teachers, students, other union members, employers and concerned community members. The forum heard from a panel of speakers including NSW Teachers Federation President Angelo Gavrielatos, Troy Wright Assistant General Secretary (NSW Public Service Association), Jodi McKay Leader of the NSW opposition, David Shoebridge (Greens Education spokesperson) as well as representatives of Farmers NSW and the Country Women's Association.

Current 2021	Projected +3.5% 2022	Projected +3.5% 2023	Projected +3.5% 2024	Projected +3.5% 2025
\$78,538	\$81,286.83	\$84,131.87	\$87,076.48	\$90,124.16
\$82,113	\$84,986.96	\$87,961.50	\$91,040.15	\$94,226.56
\$85,679	\$88,677.77	\$91,781.49	\$94,993.84	\$98,318.62
\$89,435	\$92,565.23	\$95,805.01	\$99,158.18	\$102,628.72
\$93,363	\$96,630.71	\$100,012.78	\$103,513.23	\$107,136.19
\$96,932	\$100,324.62	\$103,835.98	\$107,470.24	\$111,231.70
\$100,683	\$104,206.91	\$107,854.15	\$111,629.04	\$115,536.06
\$104,793	\$108,460.76	\$112,256.88	\$116,185.87	\$120,252.38



Forum members expressed their concerns with the haste of the sale process for Scone TAFE with little or no consultation with industries outside racing and no input from the wider community.

The Berejiklian government has put profit from selling off a public asset before the needs of the community. The sale casts real doubt on the long-term future of the site once the three-year lease-back expires. At a time when we should be expanding the role of TAFE in regional areas, the NSW Government has sold off the campus to private interests. Racing NSW has stated that the site will be developed into an equine studies training centre.

TAFE NSW continues to implement its interpretation of the requirements of the standards for RTOs for TAFE teachers in demonstrating VET currency and competency for the units of competency they teach. 1 April saw the passing of a TAFE NSW imposed deadline for all part-time casual teachers to have submitted an Individual Delivery Profile (IDP) outlining how they meet TAFE NSW's requirements. Members reported that teachers who have not submitted a compliant IDP may be performance managed. This approach could be seen as unnecessarily heavy handed

as this is an administrative matter rather than an educational quality matter. This process has been the final straw for some teachers. They are reporting that the additional time taken to complete the administrative process is excessive in comparison to the number of paid teaching hours and teaching is no longer viable for them.

Teachers in regional NSW are now finding it difficult to get approval for extended or long service leave. Teachers who apply for leave or teaching release, advise that the application is being rejected on account of a shortage of suitable teachers to replace them. If the leave is approved there is high probability that classes will have to be cancelled for the period of the teacher's leave or release. ●

QLD

DAVID TERAUDS

THE QTU ACTING as the Australian Education Union (Queensland) (AEU(Q)) represents VET educators employed at the Central Queensland University (CQU). The QTU has been allocating resources and working towards negotiations with the CQU since mid 2020, with the Log of Claims (LOC) organised around the three themes of

professionalism, parity and programming. Negotiations commenced no later than three months prior to the nominal end of the agreement and were initiated by an exchange of the LOC by the parties. Formal meetings commenced 27 May.

Financially CQU is highly exposed to the international student market and is working to overcome barriers imposed by preventing international students participating on-shore. This has caused deficits that impacted in 2020 and are projected to continue into 2021. The VET division of CQU is returning a modest profit. CQU is seeking changes to conditions, a two-year agreement and no pay increase in order to weather the COVID storm.

For the other public provider, TAFE Queensland (TAFEQld), although it operates as 'One TAFE', many differing processes and procedures around timetabling and overtime exist throughout. Different regions have differing views, processes and interpretations of timetabling, overtime, and workload expectations of teachers. In some regions, different campuses and even different teams within those campuses have differences.

TAFE Queensland Skills Tech region (TQST) and the QTU are acting to develop consistent approaches to timetabling, overtime, non-contact overtime and casual claims in the payroll system. TQST teachers attract more overtime than any other TAFEQld region, therefore Skills Tech is ideal to lead the way developing a uniform approach. Members across TAFEQld will benefit from the clarity of a consistent system-wide approach.

For years temporary TAFE educators in AMEP/SEE programs have been denied conversion to permanent

employment. The reason cited: budget pressures driven by federal contract prices. Fewer permanent ESL educators has resulted with fully qualified teachers accepting work as lower paid tutors because that was the only work on offer.

The pandemic has seen a halt to migrants and refugees coming to Australia resulting in dwindling new enrolments into ESL programs bringing fresh worries for educators. However, in March, the Federal Government 'uncapped' the student contact hours in these programs. This resulted in enrolment increases in many regions, yet these educators appear to continue to be overlooked in the quarterly temp to perm conversion process. A discussion paper released this week highlights further changes to the AMEP/SEE funding model are imminent. There is fear among members that they will continue to be denied employment security.

A Continuing Currency Points Scheme (CCPS) is being trialled selectively in TAFEQld. The intention was to implement in July, following a review. Revised timelines regarding pilot timeline and feedback period push the implementation date back to the new year. The proposed TAFEQld CCPS caused concern for QTU TAFE Council and the TAFE Executive have authorised a survey of members on PD issues. The key issue is the interaction between members' industrial rights to PD leave and the requirements of the CCPS. ●

SA

ANGELA DEAN

IN WHAT THE Department of Innovation and Skills (DIS) called Tranche 1, launched in October 2020, 24 courses in

the Business Administration and Community Services programs at metro campuses were cut from TAFE SA. DIS will no longer allow TAFE South Australia to deliver these courses under any funding model.

In DIS's Tranche 2 there are rumoured to be up to 39 courses that may also be removed in the new financial year, further highlighting the Marshall government's ongoing moves to privatise vocational education and training in SA.

On behalf of TAFE SA members and students, AEU President Lara Golding wrote to Premier Marshall on 10 May to request a comprehensive list of courses that will no longer be offered by TAFE SA from Semester 2 2021.

As yet, neither the Department of Innovation and Skills nor TAFE SA leadership have confirmed course offerings for Semester 2 2021, onwards. A lacklustre response to the AEU letter came from Education Minister John Gardner, who did not confirm which courses the government has commissioned TAFE SA to deliver in the 2021–2022 financial year. Instead, he requested the AEU to provide a list of courses that members have reported to be cut by

DIS next semester for the government to investigate themselves.

The AEU letter also urged Premier Marshall to act in the best interest of all South Australians by stopping the cuts to TAFE, and by instead guaranteeing that 70 per cent of public funding for vocational education will go to TAFE.

Recent media articles further highlighted the AEU's concerns on the Marshall government's plans to fully privatise the vocational educational sector. In one article, TAFE SA Chief Executive David Coltman responded by saying, "if there are any changes to course delivery, this will be implemented in consultation with our staff and the AEU". However, this consultation process has not extended out to the identification of courses to be cut.

The privatisation of TAFE courses is being well covered in the media, and also includes AEU concerns that TAFE materials which have been developed using public funding will be given to private training businesses to make a profit.

Overall, our members are concerned that this move to cut additional courses from TAFE SA has already seen a number of workgroup

reviews and educational staff cuts. To date, the current government has not participated in an open and transparent process on the future course offerings at TAFE SA.

TAFE SA recently announced that the final stage of the move to three Educational Business Units will be completed in Term 2, 2021.

In July 2020, 85 per cent of the educational programs move to the new Educational Business Unit structure. This comprises Business and Arts, Future Industry and Trade and Health, Community and Foundations Skills.

The final 15 per cent of educational programs have now moved into this structure, with the most significant change that the Primary Industry and Laboratory Sciences program area is now aligned under the Future Industry and Trade Business Unit.

TAFE SA has made assurances to the AEU that there will be no change to educational staffing levels with these final educational program moves.

TAFE SA has conceded defeat in the push to completely remove Educational Managers from the organisation in preliminary agreements with the AEU.

The AEU is still in the South Australian Employment Tribunal (SAET) with TAFE SA, seeking a legally binding resolution to secure Educational Managers, as we believe a strong educational leadership is integral to the future of TAFE SA.

While TAFE SA is still fighting the AEU's recommendation to limit future reductions to educational leadership quotas, preliminary agreements with the employer have been made to

secure the role of Educational Manager. As a result, TAFE SA has recently advertised seven ongoing Educational Manager positions. This great win for AEU members ensures ongoing educational leadership within TAFE. ●

TAS

SIMON BAILEY

IN THE PREMIER'S state of the state address, delivered on 16 March this year, Peter Gutwein announced that his government had accepted the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council (PESRAC) recommendations in their entirety, which includes those to effectively privatise TasTAFE.

Perhaps the most shocking part of this sudden push to commercialise TasTAFE's operations is that it will possibly remove local teachers from the Tasmanian State Service and force them into the employment arena for the private sector – under the Fair Work Act. Mr Gutwein will turn his back on the welfare of our TasTAFE teachers and leave them to battle alongside employees at McDonalds and 7-Eleven in the Fair Work Commission. A short time after accepting all of PESRAC's TasTAFE recommendations, Mr Gutwein unveiled a raft of election promises committing to recruiting additional TAFE teachers, pay rises, infrastructure spending and commitments to maintain specific courses.

It should be noted though that a Government Business Enterprise (GBE), by design and law, operates on a commercial basis at arm's length from government with the board and CEO having similar responsibilities to that of the private sector. If Mr Gutwein relinquishes TasTAFE control by



converting it to a GBE then he loses the ability to employ teachers, protect courses, subsidise courses, keep regional campuses open and protect students from price gouging in the private sector.

TAFE teachers face the likelihood that they will no longer be public sector employees like our school teachers and nurses. The state government would no longer be responsible for them or a party to negotiating their wages and conditions. Mr Gutwein's commentary about "pay rises" for TasTAFE teachers is therefore nonsensical in this context.

What is clear from similar policies implemented interstate is that such a commercialised approach to public VET results in higher course costs, cuts to subsidised courses such as community services, teacher job cuts, lower quality training and campus closures and downgrades.

The council report recommends that profitable courses be run by the private, for profit, RTOs and the less profitable VET activities, described as "thin markets", remain with TasTAFE. If the profitable courses are carved out for private RTOs then it would logically follow that TasTAFE would soon find itself with a 'surplus'

of teachers and, operating under a new commercially profit-driven model, it would be forced to cut teacher positions. The South Australian Government has pursued a privatised agenda for its TAFE and it has resulted in hundreds of job cuts, campus closures and course cuts.

The GBE model that Mr Gutwein has endorsed recommends 'full cost recovery' which means increasing fees to students and employers. Currently, many courses are subsidised and others free for those struggling financially and/or who may be unemployed or wishing to re-enter the workforce, perhaps after a break to raise children. Those with concession cards receive heavily discounted course fees and those under 19 who have left school without a TCE, or equivalent, study for free. A GBE which is to operate "more like a business..." on a commercial footing and required to pay dividends to the state government does not align with providing subsidised courses to Tasmanians who are most in need. A model of full cost recovery will disadvantage our most vulnerable students who will either be unable to afford to pay the higher fees or be

forced deeper into debt.

The PESRAC report contains broad-brush criticisms of TasTAFE which lacks evidence beyond that which is provided by a media release. In fact, the only submission to the PESRAC report calling for TAFE privatisation or structural change was from a lobby group formed by the PESRAC Chairperson himself. The submission as reflected in the final PESRAC recommendations is revealed in the proposal for a "Jetstar model" for TasTAFE. It is confounding that such a radical plan can be proposed and agreed upon without consultation with the experts – teachers who deliver the training – and be put forward as a solution to a problem that is yet to be clearly articulated.

What is immediately needed for Tasmania is for industry, teachers and government to meet for genuine discussions to unpack exactly what the issues are for TasTAFE and to develop an evidence-based plan in response that will strengthen and not undermine our public VET provider. ●

VIC

ELAINE GILLESPIE

THERE WERE NO surprises when the federal budget was announced that yet again TAFE and vocational education were neglected, despite being key to rebuilding Australia's economy as we continue our recovery from the pandemic.

It was better news for TAFEs in the Victorian State Budget with the Andrews Labor Government announcing \$383.8 million investment for skills, training and higher education. The announcement included the introduction of the

governments 'Training for the job you want' initiative featuring the new skills authority based on a recommendation from the Skills for Victoria's Growing Economy led by former Federal Minister Jenny Macklin (*The Macklin Review*).

The Victorian Skills Authority (VSA) is part of a strategy to ensure quality teaching and learning, affordable accredited training and improved pathways. The VSA will replace the skills commissioner and is designed to enhance Vocational Education and Training (VET) innovation, lead the development of an annual Victorian training plan and provide a more integrated approach to teaching and learning that will hopefully promote further collaboration between TAFEs.

Almost \$90 million will go to subsidising eligible VET students to improve their job opportunities which will deliver an extra 12,200 training places of which TAFE will receive 7400.

There will also be \$84.4 million allocated to campus improvements and ensuring that our TAFEs have the latest tools and equipment needed to teach trainees and apprentices. There will also be approximately \$20 million allocated to assist with student placements for pre-accreditation and employability training and assessment.

The union has previously warned of the perilous financial state of TAFE in Victoria and stated that a fundamental revision of the funding model is needed. Therefore, although we are happy to hear that the Andrews government wishes to ensure it properly funds TAFE and other training providers to deliver high quality education, it is disappointing that



the Macklin review's recommendation for a full review of the current Victorian VET funding system has not been included and that the Victorian Student Contact Hour (SCH) rate continues to be the lowest in Australia.

We have previously reported on a dispute between the AEU and Bendigo Kangan Institute (BKI) of TAFE which was taken to the Fair Work Commission (FWC), regarding the definition of teaching in the agreement and, if assessment forms part of teaching.

In October 2020, the FWC hearing took place with closing submissions heard on 11 December. Since then, we have been waiting for the outcome which was handed down by the commission late in the day on 26 March.

The FWC found in favour of BKI by determining that assessment undertaken by BKI members at ACE should be counted as part of the 400 hour component of teaching duties, when assessment duties are the major and substantial duties being undertaken during a particular timetabled session, instead of the 800 hour teaching delivery component. It is very difficult to have your profession broken into individual components by people without a TAFE teaching background, without full knowledge of the intricacies of competency based training (CBT) and the requirements to tailor the learning to each individual student's needs. The AEU and its lawyers have appealed the decision which will be heard by a full bench in late June.

The Victorian TAFE Teaching Agreement 2018 is due to expire in October 2022, with negotiations for a new agreement commencing mid 2022. ●



WA

GARY HEDGER

SINCE THE LAST report, the WA state election has been held and the ALP government was re-elected with a majority in both houses of parliament for the first time in WA history. It will be very interesting to see how the government uses this majority to roll out progressive policies.

It will make the negotiating of our replacement General Agreement a lot more interesting as the government has quite clearly stated its wages policy will have a \$1000 per annum cap, which means lecturers' wages will fall further behind cost of living expenses.

With the impact of COVID-19 on Australia and its knock-on effect of closing borders, we have been increasingly hearing the cries from the big companies about labour and skilled worker shortages. The cries are getting louder around the impact that it is having on the mining and construction sectors.

The federal government is holding an inquiry into the national skilled migration policy, with recommendations released including that it reserves

places on flights and quarantine for skilled migrants and pauses mandatory payments to the Skilling Australia Fund from companies sponsoring visas.

The state government has announced a skills summit to be held in June to meet with leaders across a number of sectors including the resources, defence, construction and healthcare industries.

The aim of the summit is to hear from some of WA's business leaders on what more can be done collaboratively, and more immediately, to address existing skills needs across sectors to ensure the WA workforce can continue to advance the state and keep WA globally competitive in the coming years.

Already there is pressure from the big miners and construction companies in WA to "fast track" skilled migration as they are poaching workers from each other to cover worker requirements. The miners are winning with their ability to offer large financial incentives on the back of the record iron ore prices.

The effect on TAFE will be how they are caught up in this push. As part of the skills summit the government has also announced a new program offering a fast track

to an apprenticeship for local construction workers.

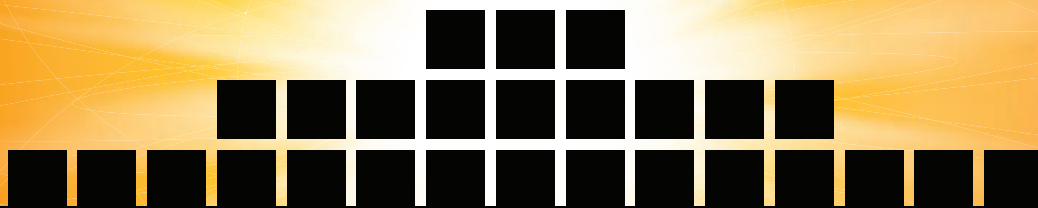
The pilot Construction Accelerated Apprenticeship Program offers construction workers without formal qualifications the opportunity to have their existing skills recognised and therefore cuts the time required to get an apprenticeship.

WA TAFEs will assess the skills of applicants to confirm suitability for the program (no announcement on funding or how TAFE will be doing this). The Minister for Education and Training has stated "Initiatives like this and the accelerated apprenticeships program show we are committed to making sure the WA workforce can keep the state moving forward."

Once again TAFE has been left outside the tent in the discussions that include training of the workforce. Lecturers in colleges will be left to make these changes work with no support or clear guidelines.

We have seen the impact of these programs in the past where apprentices/trainees were left with skills that limited their ability to gain employment after they completed their training, except with the company that had originally employed them. ●

REBUILD WITH TAFE



##RebuildWithTAFE