

Submission

by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER)

To

Business Council of Australia
futureproof@nouggroup.com.au
19 January 2018

Public consultation - Future proof: protecting Australians through education and skills

Name: National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER)
Category: Ministerial Owned Company
Contact: Dr Craig Fowler, Managing Director
Phone: 08 8230 8400
Email: craig.fowler@ncver.edu.au

RESPONSE TO REFORM PAPER

The National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) is an independent body responsible for collecting, managing, analysing, evaluating and communicating research and statistics about tertiary education and training. This submission provides statistics and research findings relevant to the public consultation on the Business Council of Australia's reform paper *Future proof: protecting Australians through education and skills*. It responds to selected questions relating to the overall tertiary system, and aspects of its structure (component one), the single platform for market information (component three), an agreed shared governance model (component four), and lifelong learning (component five).

'Future Proof' Consultation Questions

Overall tertiary system

1. What is your view on the proposal to move to a tertiary model and why?

Craig Fowler's occasional paper, *The boundaries and connections between the VET and higher education sectors: 'confused, contested and collaborative'* (2017a), sums up the challenges of a move toward a more integrated tertiary sector in the current operating environment. It provides a brief commentary on the relative trend change and potential trajectories of Australia's vocational education and training (VET) sector compared with the higher education sector. This gives context for the more detailed exploration of the multiple issues that lie at what might be described as the 'boundaries and connections' between these two components of the tertiary education sector. Some of the key messages from the paper include:

- VET participation has declined relative to higher education participation as a consequence of policy and funding reforms that have travelled 'different tracks' over the last 6-8 years.
- There are many examples of significant confusion, considerable inter-institutional contest, as well as willing collaboration between the sectors.
- The establishment of student 'loans' spanning VET diplomas to degrees (but not at present Associate Degrees) has, by design or not, re-set higher education and VET sector policy, program and funding boundaries.
- From the perspective of students, the ability to pick and mix the best from university and VET, be it skilling, academic or work experience can only be beneficial to needs of employers and future jobs.
- Policy and incentives need to ensure equitable funding of mid-level professionals including for example Associate Degrees and higher apprenticeships; and attention needs be given to systematising cross sector transfer arrangements, better informed by use of common data standards and a Unique Student Identifier (USI) - utilising existing sectoral numbering - across the whole tertiary system.

In 2014, a group of prominent thinkers on tertiary education came together to reflect on the report of the Committee on the Future of Tertiary Education (the Martin report). The resultant NCVER discussion paper, *What next for tertiary education?: some preliminary sketches* (Beddie, 2014a) is the culmination of the ideas discussed and is intended to generate discussion and debate on the possibilities for the future of tertiary education in Australia. Ideas presented include:

- restructuring pathways from school or other vocational settings into diverse tertiary institutions;
- lifting the reputation of applied learning by ensuring competency-based training embraces conceptual thinking;
- decoupling funding for research and teaching; and
- introducing a single governance framework.

A companion publication also by Beddie (2014b), *A differentiated model for tertiary education: past ideas, contemporary policy and future possibilities*, provides the background for these ideas.

2. If Australia were to adopt a tertiary model, do you think the proposed five elements of the tertiary system (structure, funding, information, governance and lifelong learning) are appropriate, and why?

In his occasional paper, Fowler (2017a) includes relevant statistics that highlight the size and complexity of the Australian tertiary sector (see Table 1). He notes that the higher education and VET sectors have a very different purpose and client group. Higher education students are generally younger and study mostly full-time, whereas VET students have a much wider age spread and are studying mostly part-time, with many employed at some level. A significant minority of VET students are also undertaking training in subjects only or skill sets, rather than being enrolled in full program qualifications.

These factors would need to be considered if a more integrated tertiary model were to be adopted, in addition to other regional employment issues, and the differing pedagogical approaches - VET is predominantly competency based and higher education is curriculum based. For example, when considering a funding model, a course delivered to different student groups, in different locations, and using differing pedagogical approaches, would need to have different funding levels. This is especially important in the more contested Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualification levels around Diplomas, Advanced Diplomas and Associate Degrees.

Table 1 Current key dimension of VET and higher education sectors 2015¹

Dimension/feature	VET sector ²	Higher education sector ^{3,4}
Students		
Total	4.5m	1.4m
Australian	4.4m	1.0m
International	0.2m	0.4m
Full-time	20%	71%
Part-time	80%	29%
Providers		
Total	4277 training providers	43 universities
Comprised of	53 TAFE institutes 15 universities 3099 private training providers 468 community education 442 schools 207 enterprise providers	127 non-university higher education providers
Program/course enrolments	3.5m AQF full or part (skill set) program enrolments (~3.2m subject <i>only</i> enrolments)	0.98m undergraduates 0.39m postgraduates

- Notes:
- 1 Numbers may not add exactly to total because of rounding. 86 institutions were registered to provide both VET and higher education.
 - 2 <<https://www.ncver.edu.au/data/collection/total-vet-students-and-courses>>.
 - 3 <<http://www.education.gov.au/selected-higher-education-statistics-2015-student-data>>.
 - 4 <<http://grattan.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/875-Mapping-Australian-Higher-Education-2016.pdf>>.

Component one: structure

3. Do you agree it is important that the two sectors (VET and HE) maintain a unique identity?

NCVER research has sought to better understand structures and consequences of a more integrated tertiary system by examining the impact of policy, funding and market frameworks on the provision of education and training.

In *Structures in tertiary education and training: a kaleidoscope or merely fragments?: research readings* (Beddie, O'Connor & Curtin, 2013), the authors and four discussants came together in November 2012 with other leaders in the sector to discuss 13 essays on various aspects of a tertiary system. The aim was to throw light on the structures in the evolving tertiary education system and take forward debate about the wave of reform occurring at that time.

The authors concluded that while this exercise could never determine the ideal structures for tertiary education and training, it has been invaluable in teasing out the complexity of tertiary education. It also makes clear there is no simple 'market design' that would meet all the objectives of the various elements of Australia's tertiary education system. Given the complexity of these issues, the authors concluded it was quite difficult to distil the discussions into a few simple messages. Nevertheless, some of the key points identified at the time were:

- A common understanding of the dynamics of the system is not easy to reach. We are still not all talking about the same thing when we refer to tertiary education.
- There is little support for a single integrated tertiary education sector. If there is a consensus, it is that variety within the sector is a good thing.
- While the language of markets has been adopted in the reform effort, it is clearly a very unusual market, both in terms of its 'product' and its 'customers'. In fact, there remains dispute over who is the customer of the VET system — the individual student or the employers who ultimately employ those that the system educates and trains.
- Even within the sectors, there is not always consensus on definitions. This is notably the case when discussing the meaning of 'vocation' and the shape of competency-based training.
- To establish the underpinnings and value of each part of the system, we need greater clarity about the purpose of public funding, as well as a clear alignment between funding regimes and policy objectives. The issue is who should pay for what.
- Many pillars of the system can be strengthened. How institutions are governed, and how the workforce is organised and the system regulated require further thought. The extent of institutional autonomy is a key element.

Fowler (2017a) notes that the middle ground of AQF level 5 and 6 qualifications, such as Diplomas, present examples of significant confusion and of considerable inter-institutional contest, as well as willing collaboration. This in aggregate imposes an unquantified cost burden, but is also where the two sectors blur. For students, this provides them with the capacity to pick and mix the best from university and VET — skills, academic study or work experience, which can be beneficial to the needs of employers and to students' future jobs. However, particularly in this middle ground, policy and incentives need to ensure the equitable funding of mid-level professionals, including, for example, Associate Degrees and the newly emerging higher apprenticeships.

In a separate opinion piece, Fowler (2017b) suggests that there is potential for apprenticeships to become the lynchpin in a better integrated tertiary education sector that delivers work-ready graduates – in particular due to their close connections with industry and the world of work. While Australian governments' policies related to apprenticeships are yet to specifically embrace strategies for Industry 4.0, there are a number of broader initiatives underway, and these include, for example, a current and concerted focus on higher apprenticeships.

Loveder (2017) sets out that the key concern for Australia is that, to date, the VET sector has largely been overlooked in the policy for the National Innovation and Science Agenda. Yet innovation has become an increasingly important concept for Australian businesses in that it enables them to continue to compete in an international market. Indeed, the path to prosperity brought about by the fourth industrial revolution will be through innovation. The pivotal role of the VET sector – and apprenticeships – in this area needs to be acknowledged and supported. In addition, policy on higher education reform focusing on universities has inadvertently impacted on the pool of apprentices. Loveder notes that a significant challenge for Australia and one that a single tertiary sector might redress, is the reimagining of sectoral boundaries and addressing misjudged perceptions of the nature of university and vocational pathways.

4. The continuation of sector specific standards and regulators are designed to support each sector maintaining their unique identify. Do you think any other mechanisms are needed to ensure each sector maintains their own identify?

The majority of Australian VET providers are regulated through the national VET regulator, (the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)), but there are also two other VET regulators, which adds further complication to achieving a simplified governance structure. Training providers in Victoria and Western Australia are regulated through their own state-based regulating bodies (Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) and Western Australia's Training Accreditation Council (TAC)). In contrast, Australian higher education is regulated through a single regulatory authority – the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA).

NCVER research (Callan & Bowman, 2015a) finds that having different regulatory frameworks is especially problematic for providers operating in both VET and higher education because it increases the regulatory burden. This has led some VET providers to reduce their delivery of higher education qualifications. The authors recommend a single Australian regulatory body for both VET and higher education to decrease this burden and provide for a more diverse training market. However, this reduction would bring with it pedagogical and potential industry relations challenges that are highlighted by Moodie (2010). Driven by student demand, industry needs and institutional competition, growth in general requires cross sectoral cooperation in learner credit recognition or guarantee entry, and places greater pressure on regulatory cooperation and more streamlined reporting mechanisms (Moodie, 2010).

Although the regulatory bodies and requirements are quite different, their remit of regulating providers and courses is very similar. A single common data standard and reporting mechanism from which national student satisfaction surveys could be drawn would provide significant efficiencies for governments, regulators, students and training providers. It would also improve the navigation and transparency of reporting for VET and higher education, and reduce red-tape and provider burden.

Whilst retaining separate statutory regulators (ASQA and TEQSA), common/joint functionality might be considered in data standards, ICT systems, and staff skilling/exchange. A 'national' USI connecting existing student identification numbers is also essential.

Component three: single platform for market information

10. Market information has been an issue in tertiary education for at least a decade. What are the barriers to building a single platform, and how can they be overcome?

NCVER has recently developed a [National industry insights website](#) for the Australian Industry Skills Committee (AISC), which brings together industry and labour market intelligence along with other data to assist Industry Reference Committees in prioritising training package development. It provides an industry snapshot that covers employment by industry as well as current and future employment projections in VET related occupations (classified using the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO)). This is an example of how information can be brought together from different sources within a dynamic web-based resource.

NCVER research by Siekmann & Fowler (2017) concluded that Australia has multiple and valuable skills information resources and existing repositories although their full potential remains unrealised given the lack of an integrating skills framework of the ambition, scope and complexity seen in other countries. Their paper provides an overview of occupational skills information practices in selected countries and organisations. The evidence indicates that other countries are making concerted efforts to create such frameworks, populated with contemporary and cross-referenced skills intelligence and maintained close to real time. The aim is to steer policy and inform training practices, which raises the question of what might be adapted from these various examples to benefit Australia.

11. What new data sets will need to be created, and what current data sets will need to be accessed or linked?

NCVER as the custodian of the national VET administrative statistical collections and surveys has a number of data sets available that could be accessed or linked as part of the information component of the proposed tertiary system, not only for informing consumers, but also for performance management.

- The [National VET Provider Collection](#) gathers data on VET activity delivered by Australian training providers, to a nationally agreed standard. It provides information on the number of training providers, students, program enrolments, subject enrolments, and hours of delivery, program completions and source of funding. From 2016, data submitted to the National VET Provider Collection has also been used for individual student USI transcripts. Data are collected annually from all training providers and quarterly for those in receipt of government funds. In 2016, there were an estimated 4.2M students studying with 4,279 training providers.
- The [National Apprentice and Trainee Collection](#) provides data on all persons employed under a training contract and includes both apprentices and trainees. Data are collected from state training authorities on all training activity in apprenticeships and traineeships in Australia, including information on training rates and duration of training. Records submitted include information on people who have participated in an apprenticeship/traineeship training contract, including their demographics, schooling and prior education, and cultural and language attributes. The collection also records all training contract transactions including: each commencement, cancellation, withdrawal, completion or expiry associated with the life of the apprenticeship/traineeship training contract; each employer participating in an apprenticeship/traineeship training contract; each program undertaken as part of the apprenticeship/traineeship training contract; and each registered training organisation (RTO) associated with an apprenticeship/traineeship training contract. As at 31 December 2016 there were 265,000 apprentices and trainees in-training (a decrease of 4.5% from 2015).

- The [National Student Outcomes Survey](#) collects information on VET students' reasons for training, their employment outcomes, satisfaction with training, and further study outcomes. For subject completers - students who successfully complete part of a course and then leave the VET system - the main reason for not continuing with the training is also collected. The National VET Provider Collection provides the sample base for this annual survey, which typically includes over 200,000 student responses. NCVER is working to provide more information at the RTO level from this survey. In 2017, the survey was designed to provide course level estimates for all courses with 300 or more graduates nationally (approximately 290 courses), and training provider level estimates for all training providers with 260 or more graduates (354 RTOs). In response to a request from the Australian Government Department of Education and Training for data for a greater number of individual RTOs than the survey was designed to provide, NCVER undertook extensive analysis and concluded we could reliably provide data for 562 RTOs (i.e. all RTOs with 25 or more survey respondents where the respondents were representative in terms of course and field of education of all students at that RTO). For students who trained in 2016, 77.7% of graduates were employed when surveyed approximately six months after they finished their training and 87.3% were satisfied with the overall quality of training.

Data from the National Student Outcomes Survey and the National VET Provider Collection are provided to the Australian Government Department of Education and Training for the [My Skills](#) website, which is designed to assist individuals and employers to choose the training provider that best suits their needs.

While, the new [National VET Data Policy](#) (Australian Government Department of Education and Training, 2017) seeks to facilitate greater information sharing of VET data, it constrains the release of some specified data from these administrative collections and surveys associated with training outcomes, specifically at the RTO level.

This policy (in clause 11.5) allows for the publication of RTO level VET Outcomes data¹ and of VET funding data only by governments, following agreement of Senior Officials responsible for VET in the Commonwealth, states and territories. The publishing jurisdiction is responsible for ensuring adequate consultation with VET stakeholders, ensuring compliance with data use and legislative requirements, and deciding in what form to publish data. Governments may authorise a third party to publish or disclose outcomes of funding data on their behalf. In contrast, higher education outcomes information is publicly available at an identified institutional level, meaning policy on public disclosure of VET vs. higher education is different with respect to, for example, attrition and completion rates.

Data collections and surveys

Data collections and surveys were seen as essential to an informed Australian tertiary sector in the Bradley review (Bradley et al. 2008), with data standards acknowledged as providing the foundation elements for national comparable and consistent information ensuring accurate, valid and reliable data that are fit for purpose to inform consumers, policy makers and researchers. NCVER maintains the VET data standard (AVETMISS²), which outlines the data elements for the national Australian VET collections. Similarly, the Australian Government Department of Education and Training maintains the Australian higher education student data reporting requirements and associated data collection classification. A consistent tertiary data standard would align with a single tertiary regulator and a single national data collection.

¹ VET Outcomes data is defined in the VET Data Policy as: data collected and held by NCVER from the following: Student outcomes surveys, Survey of employer use and views of the VET system, Apprentice & trainee destination surveys and identified RTO level completions data.

² Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard

Data provision in the Australian VET sector is mandated via the National VET Data Policy (Australian Government Department of Education and Training, 2017). As a condition of registration, all VET providers are required to supply an annual AVETMISS compliant data submission on all Nationally Recognised Training to the National VET Provider Collection. This is either provided directly to NCVER or through their State Training Authority depending on the jurisdictional arrangements. RTOs are also required to report to one of the 30 different VET data collections across the Commonwealth, state and territory governments. Some 54% of VET RTOs report to one or more of the 23 main VET collections, and almost half report to multiple collections (KPMG, 2014).

In the Australian higher education sector, data provision is mandated through the Higher Education Support Act, 2003 (HESA), with data submitted to the Australian Government Department of Education and Training twice yearly at the census date set for higher education providers. The 'average' university is required to submit 18 sets of data covering research grant applications, information on staffing levels, specific program participation (e.g. Disability Support Program) and data on students (PhillipsKPA 2012). The majority of this data is submitted via the Higher Education Information Management System (HEIMS), which also administers the allocation of Commonwealth Higher Education Student Support Numbers (CHESSNs) for domestic students. Similar to the AVETMISS validation software in VET, the Higher Education Client Assistance Tool (HEPCAT) validates data submitted to HEIMS as compliant with the requirements of the higher education data collection. Further, all students with income contingent loans, be these Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) or VET Student Loans (VSLs), must submit data through HEIMS. A more simplified data submission process for the tertiary sector would assist in providing the necessary information to support a more integrated market information system.

Each sector also surveys samples of students to assess performance and outcomes from their respective sectors, drawn from the national collections. VET has the NCVER administered Student Outcomes Survey (SOS), higher education has the Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) surveys, and some jurisdictions such as Victoria have their own student surveys. A more harmonised approach to Australian student surveys, integrating QILT into SOS, with appropriate VET and higher education nuances could realise significant efficiencies and reduce respondent burden for students, training providers and their administrators.

One might presume that a single data set would need to be newly created for a united tertiary sector approach. However, recent technological developments are favouring data linked through federated models³, rather than storing data in a single repository. This approach supports the integration of existing sources and processes rather than 'reinventing the wheel'. The national VET information system has benefited from investments in the recent past. NCVER with the Nous Consulting Group recently developed a response, on behalf of the VET sector, to questions about the VET information management system, including:

1. What are the necessary requirements for a renewed, modern and fit-for-purpose national VET information management system that improves quality, timeliness and access?
2. What is the set of possible opportunities and actions that can deliver on this for all stakeholders across the VET system?

³ A federated model is a pattern of enterprise architecture that allows interoperability and information sharing between semi-autonomous de-centrally organised lines of business, information technology systems and applications.

This discovery process found that user requirements of the VET data system tend to support three over-arching needs:

- to better understand what is happening in the VET sector in order to play their role effectively;
- to achieve this in a way that does not unduly compromise ongoing operations; and
- to support students in their journey through training with timely information and accurate records of achievement (Nous Consulting Group & NCVER, 2017).

NCVER is progressing these findings not only to satisfy user needs with regards to data quality, timeliness and ease of submission, but also to lead the sector toward a future state that supports new data sets, enriches existing data sets, enables different linkage techniques, and supports the use of advanced analytics to increase the use of machine learning and meet the sector's demands for deeper insights.

The [USI](#) is a critical element of the recent Australian VET reforms, providing the means with which to record accredited training for each VET student over his or her lifetime and facilitating a VET USI transcript service, in addition to providing valuable information for government, training providers and researchers (Australian Government 2012). Extending the USI from VET to higher education would be a step towards realising the Council of Australian Governments' goal (COAG Communique 2009) of a USI that is capable of being fully integrated into the entire education system, adding higher education and also schools. This would be relatively simple if the data collections were merged or linked to service the existing USI transcript service. It could also provide the link for an integrated Australian tertiary education transcript service, which would provide a history of training for VET and higher education students alike, achieving Bradley et al's (2008) vision for a linked information base, a system more readily navigated by students, and one which aligns with current innovation reforms, demonstrating better access to, and use of, government data.

It may be more appropriate to rationalise the current information offering rather than create a new larger data set. NCVER (Korbel & Misko, 2016) found that in VET just 20 training packages supported 90% of the total enrolments and the remaining 57 training packages had 10% of all enrolments. Two training packages accounted for around 30% of enrolments. In fact, enrolments in training package qualifications are heavily concentrated in relatively few qualifications. In 2015, 200 qualifications (12%) accounted for 85% of all enrolments, while the remaining group of 1444 qualifications (88%) had some 15% of enrolments. Some 14 qualifications accounted for 25% of all enrolments. Further, there were 283 qualifications that recorded no enrolments over a two-year period (2014-15), with these spread across 49 training packages. This dispersion is a reflection of student choice, training provider offerings and also the complexity of present arrangements in establishing and managing training package qualifications, which imposes significant administrative burden across the VET sector.

12. What are your views on the Business Council of Australia's proposed approach for a learner's decision-making process?

NCVER has recently worked with Education Services Australia, which hosts [myfuture](#) - Australia's online career information service mostly designed for young people - to inject greater information about VET into this web-based resource.

In *Choosing VET: aspirations, intentions and choice* (Hargreaves & Osborne, 2017) the authors bring together key findings from two research projects looking at the aspirations, intentions and choice of students considering VET. The research investigated students' post school career and education aspirations, the drivers influencing behaviour, awareness of vocational training options and career pathways, as well as how choices are made in a competitive training market. Implications for schools, vocational training providers and government policy are identified.

An increase in the level of student interest in VET is likely to require changing current perceptions of VET as a lower-status educational destination, one designed for students who are unsuited to university study. In this context, NCVET notes that the Australian Government has recently launched its VET Information Strategy, which includes the campaign *Real skills for real careers*. The Strategy aims to address misconceptions around VET and promote the opportunities that an individual can gain by completing a VET qualification (Australian Government Department of Education and Training website, 2017).

Component four: agree a shared governance model

13. Do you agree with the proposed split of funding responsibilities between the different levels of government? If not, what alternative approach would you propose and why?

The [National VET Finance Collection](#) provides financial information about Australia's public VET system. It focuses on revenues, expenditures and VET student loans, trends in operating revenue and operating expenditure, operating expenditure by business activities, and assets and liabilities. Information collected includes VET activity administered by the main training authority within each state and territory and their training providers, as well as activity administered by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training. It also includes government funding for training delivery paid to non-government training providers by the Australian Government and state and territory training authorities. In 2016, VET had operating revenues of \$8,144.4 million, down 16.8% from 2015.

The Commonwealth review of the National VET Finance Collection has resulted in a widening of scope to include incentive-funded programs. The reporting regime has changed, moving away from financial-statement reporting to reporting funding elements and how these funding elements contribute to training-dimension data. The new National VET Funding Collection will be introduced in 2018 and will be phased in over a three-year period. When fully implemented, VET funding data will better align with government-funded training activity.

The new funding framework will help to address questions relating to contributions to subsidised training, such as the student contribution and employer contribution, at an aggregate level. For example, jurisdictions will report an aggregate total student fee, which will be reported in detail across apprenticeship information, level of training information, student characteristics (Indigenous status, disability status, student remoteness) and RTO type. Specific funding elements will be reported across training-data dimensions such as RTO type or apprenticeship. Reporting will be mutually exclusive, meaning that there will be no reporting against multiple data dimensions, such as reporting funding across apprenticeships and RTO type.

The new National VET Funding Collection will consist of three independent data sets:

- Data set A reports on the jurisdictional contributions to VET;
- Data set B reports on funding and distribution across training activity; and
- Data set C reports on public VET assets.

Reporting will be at aggregate (level 1) and disaggregate levels (level 2 and level 3). The collection will focus on data elements (funding buckets), which are reported at disaggregate level against the data dimensions of:

- level of training
- training package
- apprenticeships
- program identifier

- RTO type and RTO remoteness
- student characteristics (remoteness, Indigenous and disability).

Reporting will be based on the accrual accounting standards of the jurisdiction. While it will be an administrative collection based on actual payments, there are allowances for modelling when reporting against data dimensions. The funding data will be signed off by the Chief Financial Officer or Deputy Secretary primarily responsible for VET matters in the jurisdiction's VET portfolio.

The sensitivity of the data requires a number of publication parameters, which include data elements to be reported at level two disaggregation and data dimensions to be reported at aggregate level. A transition year - 2018 - will allow data compilers to refine reporting to ensure reporting matches as far as possible the time series data collected under the current finance framework. The Report on Government Services reporting requirements have been accommodated in the new National VET Funding Collection.

As noted in Fowler (2017a) others have promoted implementation of a unified national funding and financing framework (e.g. like that which exists in New Zealand), and particularly equity in loan financing across the VET and higher education sectors.

Component five: create a culture of lifelong learning

19. What are your views on adopting a more modularised approach to skill development to support lifelong learning?

NCVER research over the past decade has covered a number of issues relating to lifelong learning, particularly in relation to older and/or displaced workers. For example, Callan & Bowman (2015a) looked at how older, lower-skilled displaced workers, especially from traditional manufacturing industries, can transfer their skills, re-skill and attain new jobs. They found that while training is important it is just one component in any package or program designed to reduce the impacts of industry restructuring on individuals. They concluded that training is more likely to be effective when training providers and support agencies partner to ensure displaced workers can access upfront career counselling, training for in-demand skills and follow-up assistance with job search and attainment.

A comprehensive report by Watson (2013) described lifelong learning in Australia, its impact on the economy and the labour market, inequities in participation in lifelong learning, and policy directions and areas for further research. The report concluded that promoters of lifelong learning should recognise that the idea of increased private investment in education and training - a feature of the lifelong learning policy agenda - could compound the barriers to participation faced by people with low skills, especially if narrowly interpreted. Targeted and carefully evaluated programs of educational assistance are important if the educationally disadvantaged are to share more of the opportunities generated by the new economy. However, education should not automatically be regarded as the primary or only option of assistance for these groups.

In addition, NCVER's VOCEDplus, a free international research database for tertiary education, provides access to relevant material relating to workforce needs, skills development and social inclusion. The VOCEDplus [Lifelong Learning Podlet](#) includes Australian and international (predominantly from Europe, the US and the UK) research and policy related to lifelong learning.

References

- Beddie, F 2014a, What next for tertiary education?: some preliminary sketches, NCVER, Adelaide, viewed 5 January 2018, <https://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/publications/all-publications/what-next-for-tertiary-education-some-preliminary-sketches>
- Beddie, F 2014b, A differentiated model for tertiary education: past ideas, contemporary policy and future possibilities, NCVER, Adelaide, viewed 5 January 2018, <https://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/publications/all-publications/a-differentiated-model-for-tertiary-education-past-ideas,-contemporary-policy-and-future-possibilities>
- Beddie, F & Davis, S 2013, Interview with Francesca Beddie on 'Structures in tertiary education and training: a kaleidoscope or merely fragments?: research readings', NCVER, Adelaide, viewed 05 Jan 2018, <https://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/publications/all-publications/interview-with-francesca-beddie-on-structures-in-tertiary-education-and-training-a-kaleidoscope-or-merely-fragments-research-readings>
- Beddie, F, O'Connor, L & Curtin, P 2013, Structures in tertiary education and training: a kaleidoscope or merely fragments?: research readings, NCVER, Adelaide, viewed 05 January 2018, <https://www.ncver.edu.au/data/assets/file/0020/9920/structures-in-tertiary-education-2616.pdf>
- Bradley, D, Noonan, P, Nugent, H & Scales, B 2008, Review of Australian higher education: final report, DEEWR, Canberra, viewed 5 January 2018, https://www.mq.edu.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0013/135310/bradley_review_of_australian_higher_education.pdf
- Callan, V & Bowman, K 2015a, Lessons from VET providers delivering degrees, NCVER, Adelaide, viewed 4 January 2018, <https://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/publications/all-publications/lessons-from-vet-providers-delivering-degrees>
- Callan, V & Bowman, K 2015b, Industry restructuring and job loss: helping older workers get back into employment, NCVER, Adelaide, viewed 4 January 2018, <https://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/publications/all-publications/industry-restructuring-and-job-loss-helping-older-workers-get-back-into-employment>
- Council of Australian Governments (COAG) 2009, Communiqué 7 December 2009, Brisbane
- Department of Education and Training, Launch of the VET Information Strategy, 24 November 2017, viewed 08 December 2017, <https://www.education.gov.au/news/launch-vet-information-strategy>
- Department of Education and Training 2017, National VET Data Policy, 2017, Australian Government, Canberra, viewed 05 January 2018, <https://docs.education.gov.au/node/46116>
- Fowler, C 2017a, The boundaries and connections between the VET and higher education sectors: 'confused, contested and collaborative', NCVER, Adelaide, viewed 05 January 2017, <https://www.ncver.edu.au/about/news-and-events/opinion-pieces/a-chance-to-be-bold-and-ambitious-make-apprenticeships-the-lynchpin-to-a-better-integrated-tertiary-education-sector>

- Fowler, C 2017b, Opinion piece: A chance to be bold and ambitious: make apprenticeships the lynchpin to a better integrated tertiary education sector, NCVER, Adelaide, viewed 5 January 2018, <https://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/publications/all-publications/the-boundaries-and-connections-between-the-vet-and-higher-education-sectors-confused-contested-and-collaborative>
- Hargreaves, J & Osborne, K 2017, Choosing VET: aspirations, intentions and choice, NCVER, Adelaide, viewed 04 January 2018, https://www.ncver.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0024/1142691/Choosing-VET-aspirations-intentions-and-choice.pdf
- Korbel, P & Misko, J 2016, Uptake and utility of VET qualifications, NCVER, Adelaide, viewed 5 January 2018, <https://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/publications/all-publications/uptake-and-utility-of-vet-qualifications>
- KPMPG 2014, Review of RTO VET Data Reporting Requirements, Department of Industry, Canberra
- Leung, F, McVicar, D, Polidano, C & Zhang, R 2014, Early impacts of the Victorian Training Guarantee
- Loveder, P 2017, Australian Apprenticeships: trends, challenges and future opportunities for dealing with Industry 4.0, NCVER, Adelaide
- Moodie, G 2010, Types of tertiary education institutions: description or prescription? Paper presented to the L H Martin Institute conference 11 November 2010, LH Martin Institute, Melbourne.
- National Industry Insights Website: viewed 04 Jan 2018, <https://nationalindustryinsights.aisc.net.au/>
- Nous Consulting Group & NCVER 2017, VET data streamlining – discovery phase user requirements, Nous Consulting Group, Melbourne, viewed 04 January 2018, <https://vetdatastreamlining.nousgroup.com/>
- PhillipsKPA 2012, Review of Reporting Requirements for Universities: Final report, PhillipsKPA Pty Ltd, Melbourne.
- Siekmann, G & Fowler, C 2017, Identifying work skills: international approaches, NCVER, Adelaide, viewed 04 January 2018, <https://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/publications/all-publications/identifying-work-skills-international-approaches>
- VOCEDPlus podlet 'Lifelong learning', viewed 04 January 2018, <http://www.voced.edu.au/podlet-lifelong-learning>
- Watson, L 2003, Lifelong learning in Australia, Department of Education, Science and Training, Canberra, viewed 5 January 2018, <http://www.voced.edu.au/content/ngv%3A27081>