



The Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory

Pathways to the Future: Report on the Inquiry into Vocational Education and Training in the ACT

Report No. 3

Standing Committee on Education

August 2003

Committee membership

Ms Karin MacDonald MLA (Chair)

Mr Steve Pratt MLA (Deputy Chair)

Ms Roslyn Dundas MLA

Secretary: Mr David Skinner (2001 – August 2003)

Ms Kerry McGlinn (August 2003- current)

Administration: Ms Judy Moutia

Resolution of appointment

To examine matters related to early childhood education and care, primary, secondary, post secondary and tertiary education, non-government education, arts and culture, sport and recreation.

Terms of reference

Inquire into and report on vocational education and training in ACT high schools, colleges, post-college, registered training organisations and adult and community programs, with particular reference to:

- i) the effectiveness of the administration and promotion of vocational education and training;
- ii) current programs and the extent to which they satisfy demand and the community's needs;
- iii) unmet need and gaps including service provision and areas not currently involved with vocational education and training programs;
- iv) the role of industry training advisory bodies; new apprenticeship centres; and group training companies;
- v) the role of career advisory and placement services; and
- vi) any related matter

(self referred 9 May 2002)

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Summary of recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 1

The committee recommends that the Government provide greater investment in VET for secondary schools and colleges.

RECOMMENDATION 2

The committee recommends that the Government give consideration to increasing the User Choice funding allocated to training programs delivered to apprentices in the building and construction industry and other affected industries where the materials used to deliver training are disposable and cannot be re-used.

RECOMMENDATION 3

The committee recommends that:

- a) the Government investigate, in consultation with the community sector, a means of providing incentives in that sector to encourage the uptake of entry-level trainees and to encourage training for existing community workers; and
- b) the Government investigate additional funding for VET programs in the community and youth sector generally.

RECOMMENDATION 4

The committee recommends that:

- a) the Government investigate, in consultation with the community sector, the claim that most workers in the community and youth sector are unable to afford VET course fees; and
- b) should this investigation show that the cost of courses is acting as a significant barrier to access, provisions be implemented to remove this barrier through some form of subsidy.

RECOMMENDATION 5

The committee recommends that:

- a) the Government investigate extending funding for training to existing workers, especially in those industries where there is a very low base of trained workers; and**
- b) should this investigation prove a need for existing worker training, that a transparent application process be established for affected industries to apply for funding to meet this need.**

RECOMMENDATION 6

The committee recommends that the Government investigate Queensland initiatives surrounding government-sponsored training for community/childcare workers that have been in the sector for more than five years and assess the potential costs and benefits of similar provisions in the ACT.

RECOMMENDATION 7

The committee recommends that the Government:

- a) investigate measures to expand the availability of IT industry placements in the private sectors;**
- b) increase the amount of IT industry placements within the ACT Public Service; and**
- c) where industry placements are not possible that practice firms or other practical methods be utilised.**

RECOMMENDATION 8

The committee recommends that the Government investigate the provision of increased funding support for IT courses that are directed towards vocational outcomes for the over-50 age group.

RECOMMENDATION 9

The committee recommends that the Government investigate the implementation of a public transport subsidy for young apprentices and trainees, or better publicise any existing subsidies that apply to trainees and apprentices, including the consideration of extending the student concession to this group.

RECOMMENDATION 10

The committee recommends that the Government:

- a) implement a renewed policy focus on “at-risk” people involved, or wanting to be involved, in the pursuit of vocational education and training programs;
- b) provide adequate resourcing to administer and manage the development of programs for “at risk” students or the incorporation of appropriate VETiS courses into such a program; and
- c) establish a working party to discuss and progress issues surrounding the development of programs to aid the transition from high school to college and the role of VETiS in assisting “at risk” students (and that the working party be made up of a wide range of representatives from across the education, training and youth sector).

RECOMMENDATION 11

The committee recommends that the Government instigate measures that will ensure that all learners requiring some degree of literacy or numeracy support are able to access this support in a timely and expeditious manner.

RECOMMENDATION 12

The committee recommends that the Government ensure there are culturally appropriate support and mentoring services available for Indigenous students and other students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds undertaking VET programs in the ACT.

RECOMMENDATION 13

The committee recommends that:

- a) the Government undertake an audit of the workload of vocational teachers, taking into account the difference between VET and other courses in schools; and
- b) should this audit uncover a great disparity in the respective workloads of VET and non-VET teachers, that steps are taken to apply more resources so that workloads are more equitably distributed.

RECOMMENDATION 14

The committee recommends that the Government establish a working party (comprised of relevant stakeholders) to:

- a) investigate feasible, economical and efficient means of providing broad and regular access to industry experience opportunities for vocational education teachers;
- b) develop, in consultation, a professional development strategy for teachers involved with VET in schools, which emphasises the importance of mentoring and strengthening the relationships between college VET teachers and teachers from CIT; and
- c) that industry experience should be flexible to meet the demands of teachers, while at the same time giving them the relevant experience they need to teach courses.

RECOMMENDATION 15

The committee recommends that the Government undertake an urgent effort to identify and recruit qualified vocational relief teachers.

RECOMMENDATION 16

The committee recommends that the Government:

- a) investigate mobility requirements of VET teachers; and**
- b) consider training interested high school teachers as vocational teachers and including Workplace Assessor Training in the pre-service training given at the University of Canberra's Education courses.**

RECOMMENDATION 17

The committee recommends that the Government examine the proposal to encourage high schools and colleges to co-operate in sharing qualified VET staff.

RECOMMENDATION 18

The committee recommends that the Government fund, develop and implement a comprehensive vocational education and training communication strategy that:

- a) Identifies individual communication strategies specifically targeting the different audiences involved in the VET sector (ie teachers, providers, learners, particular industry/employers etc) and articulates how best to provide information to these groups;**
- b) Provides a centralised information point through both a telephone number and a website portal;**
- c) encourages other relevant bodies and organisations to renew efforts in promoting vocational education;**
- d) affirms TAE's role as a leader, facilitator and communicator in the VET sector;**
- e) raises public awareness and positively influences community attitudes about the value and status of vocational education programs;**
- f) contains identifiable outcomes and related performance measures; and**
- g) is reviewed regularly to measure performance against stated outcomes.**

RECOMMENDATION 19

The committee recommends that Government review the operation of the system within TAE for liaising and communicating with its clients at its premises with a view to improving the accessibility of departmental officers. The review should consider the re-introduction of a shopfront.

RECOMMENDATION 20

The committee recommends that the ACT Government lobby the MCEETYA taskforce, ANTA MINCO and/or other relevant bodies to enable schools to undertake RTO reporting in a manner that is not excessively resource-consumptive.

RECOMMENDATION 21

The committee recommends that the Government consider allocating additional resources to colleges to meet the additional administrative, delivery and promotion costs associated with the provision of VETiS.

RECOMMENDATION 22

The committee strongly recommends that the Government investigate the feasibility and the costs and benefits of transferring the responsibility for AQTF compliance to the Department of Education, Youth and Family Services, possibly by making the department the sole RTO covering all colleges.

4.34. The committee will be keeping a watching brief on these matters.

RECOMMENDATION 23

The committee recommends that the Government commit itself to the better management of the tender process for selecting VET providers and programs by:

- a) conducting a formal review that identifies weaknesses in the current tender processing system and proposes strategies to overcome any identified weaknesses;**
- b) formally consulting with RTOs and other stakeholders as to their needs in relation to the tender process, including consultation about appropriate timeframes and the most suitable times of the year to commence and finalise tenders;**
- c) establishing a higher performance target (beyond 80 per cent) for the percentage of tenders successfully determined within 50 days of tenders closing; and**

d) more detailed reporting of the time taken to determine successful tenders with a breakdown of the percentages of tenders concluded within say, 30 days, 50 days, 70 days, 100 days, and over 100 days;

RECOMMENDATION 24

The committee recommends that Government specifications for programs put to tender/user choice clearly identify the social obligations that the provider will be expected to meet and that meeting these social obligations be an explicit part of the decisions made for funding.

RECOMMENDATION 25

The committee recommends that the Government investigate, in consultation with stakeholders, the inclusion of quality measures in tender specifications for all VET program funding.

RECOMMENDATION 26

The committee recommends that:

a) the Government investigate whether RPL and RCC processes are, on-the-whole, being applied fairly, based on appropriate guidelines, as well as what measures, if any, can be instituted to reduce the cost associated with processing RPL and RCC applications; and

b) that if the cost cannot be reduced that the Government consider a scheme to provide funding for a number of RPL/RCC applications for the financially disadvantaged.

RECOMMENDATION 27

The committee recommends that the Government:

a) affirm its commitment to industry engagement and consultation on VET issues via non-departmental consultation mechanisms (ACTITAA and other industry sources); and

b) continue to consult with industry players and existing ITAB networks to refine and finalise the new arrangements under which ACTITAA will operate.

RECOMMENDATION 28

The committee recommends that the TAE continuously keep all stakeholders informed of the key roles held by various personnel as well as when changes to staffing occur.

RECOMMENDATION 29

The committee recommends that the Government undertake to provide additional professional development opportunities for TAE staff with a particular emphasis on direct industry experience.

RECOMMENDATION 30

The committee recommends that the Government instigate proposals to better and more formally manage complaints made regarding VET issues, in this regard the committee recommends the investigation of:

- a) the model employed in Queensland in relation to its Apprenticeship and Traineeship Ombudsman;
- b) the establishment of a single point of contact for complaints; and
- c) the effective promotion of the complaints management regime once implemented.

RECOMMENDATION 31

The committee recommends that the Government consider the provisions and policy settings similar to those outlined in the Victorian Government's 'Knowledge and Skills for the Innovation Economy'.

RECOMMENDATION 32

The committee recommends that the Government examine and review the efficacy and suitability of the purchaser/provider model as it is applied to the public VET provider, CIT.

RECOMMENDATION 33

The committee recommends that the Government acknowledge that there are few efficiency gains to be made at CIT.

RECOMMENDATION 34

The committee recommends that the Government investigate the feasibility as well as costs and benefits of consolidating the number of CIT campuses across the ACT.

RECOMMENDATION 35

The committee recommends that the Government investigate measures to improve the presentation and external image of CIT campuses.

RECOMMENDATION 36

The committee recommends that the ACT Government raise ongoing problems associated with NACs (identified in paragraphs (4.91-4.95) at ANTA MINCO and MCEETYA with a view to providing a better national system that gives relevant, up-to-date information and support to apprentices and trainees.

RECOMMENDATION 37

The committee recommends that the Government investigate the claims raised by the MBA that apprentices are funded to a far lesser extent than trainees with a view to ensuring equity between trainees and apprentices in the system.

RECOMMENDATION 38

The committee recommends that the Government:

- a) undertake an audit of careers advisory services in high schools, colleges and CIT, and in consultation with teachers, set appropriate benchmarks for service levels across all schools;**
- b) investigate the appropriateness of including career and work planning in the core curriculum of high schools and colleges; and**
- c) investigate measures to improve and maintain wide ranging, up-to-date industry knowledge in those teachers undertaking the role of a school careers advisors.**

Chapter 1. Introduction

Background

1.1. On 9 May 2002, the committee resolved to inquire into vocational education and training (VET) in the ACT. The committee undertook the inquiry in response to concerns expressed by members of the community involved in the VET system, regarding the management and co-ordination of VET programs and doubts as to whether the ACT community's needs are being adequately met by current provisions.

1.2. Much has been written about VET nationally and in the ACT context. It is an area of policy making brimming with acronyms, marked by complex Commonwealth and state/territory relationships and intricate interactions between industry, VET providers and government policy makers.

1.3. The committee has not attempted to produce the definitive work on VET in the ACT and nor did its terms of reference delineate such a task. Instead, the committee has produced a streamlined report that attempts to examine and reflect on several key themes that became apparent over the course of the inquiry based on the evidence it received.

1.4. Amongst others, some of the main themes to emerge were:

- there is insufficient clarity and consistency in the advice and information given to employers and learners about their VET options;
- uncertainty and ambiguity about the process, requirements and eligibility criteria for signing up trainees and apprentices has acted as a barrier for many employers to consider these options;
- policy makers need to focus greater attention on the needs of disadvantaged people involved, or wishing to become involved, in vocational education;
- there is a need for improved communication and linkages between: providers (Schools, Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT), private Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)); industry groups, employers and Industry Training Advisory Boards (ITABs); New Apprenticeships Centres (NACs); and the Government, particularly the Training and Adult Education section (TAE) within the Department of Education, Youth and Family Services (DEYFS); and students and prospective students¹;
- tendering processes for VET provision need to be simplified, made transparent, and the period of time for determining successful tenders needs to be considerably shortened;

¹ See glossary (Appendix 3) for complete list of acronyms.

- the needs of disadvantaged learners require additional attention in terms of funding for learning support and enabling programs and in terms of ensuring that course fees do not act as a barrier to access;
- promotion and marketing of VET programs via NACs needs to be improved;
- there is a need to renew the focus on promoting the value and esteem of VET more generally in the community to vanquish the notion that VET is a “second best” option or the “poor cousin” of university education. The value of VET needs to be properly understood particularly by those in the high-school and college systems;
- consideration needs to be given to providing increased flexibility in funding allocations, particularly in relation to innovative VET projects which might not fall within any previously specified area;
- the costs associated with meeting Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) compliance is a significant impost on many RTOs, including public secondary colleges;
- some submitters argued that the Training and Adult Education section of DEYFS should devise quality standards as one basis for selecting tenders submitted by RTOs – the point was made that low-cost alone should not determine the success of tenders; and
- there is a need to direct resources towards structured programs providing periodic industry placements for VET teachers which facilitate the attainment of relevant, up-to-date industry knowledge and experience.

1.5. Following on from an examination of these issues and others, the committee has produced 38 recommendations urging the Government to consider various approaches aimed at overcoming the difficulties and barriers identified during the course of the inquiry. The committee has been prescriptive in some of its recommendations; while there are also many recommendations where the committee has identified what it considers to be issues requiring attention but has asked that the government conduct its own investigations and develop appropriate responses.

Conduct of inquiry

1.6. At the outset of the inquiry, the committee advertised in the local press as well as writing to stakeholders to seek submissions. The committee subsequently received 19 written submissions from a range of interested organisations and individuals.

1.7. The committee also conducted four public hearings on: 17 September 2002; 29 October 2002; 18 March 2003 and 22 April 2003, receiving evidence from 22 organisations and individuals.

1.8. Further, to gain an interjurisdictional perspective and examine the interface between state/territory provisions and the Commonwealth administration of vocational education and training, the committee travelled to Brisbane. There, it met with senior officials from the Australia National Training Authority (ANTA), the Queensland Department of Employment and Training and the Queensland Department of Education.

1.9. The committee also visited Copland College, Hawker College, Daramalan College and CIT to tour their respective VET facilities and to meet with teachers and students involved in VET programs.

1.10. The committee wishes to thank all of the organisations and individuals that participated in the inquiry. The committee recognises the significant commitment of time and resources required to participate in an inquiry of this nature and the committee is thankful that it was able to draw on a broad range of expertise and experience in its deliberations. The committee notes that it has adopted many of the recommendations, or variations thereof, suggested by participants as recommendations for this report.

1.11. The committee also draws on the work of the 2000 Senate Employment, Workplace Relations, Small Business and Education References Committee's² report, *Aspiring to Excellence: Report into the Quality of Vocational Education and Training in Australia*. The committee considers this an excellent reference for readers interested in an in-depth appraisal of the issues associated with VET in the national context.

Structure of report

1.12. After the introduction, the body of the report is contained in three chapters.

1.13. The second chapter provides a broad overview of the VET system as it operates in the ACT and the main programs and organisations involved in the sector.

1.14. In the third chapter, the committee briefly examines the broad range of interests and needs served by an effective VET system in the ACT. The committee conceived that there are three main beneficiaries to the system, all with their own, albeit it, interrelated needs and interests.

1.15. They are:

- the learners involved in VET;
- industry and business that utilise the pool of skilled and experienced learners/employees produced via the VET system; and
- the larger community with its interest in efficiency, quality and broader social and economic outcomes.

² Hereafter referred to as the Senate committee.

1.16. In this chapter, the committee also examines specific claims of unmet need as identified by submitters and witnesses. That is, how are current provisions failing to produce optimal outcomes for learners, industry and the broader community?

1.17. Many submitters conceived the failure to meet the broad range of community need as a deficiency arising from poor administration in the VET system, rather than mere funding shortfalls (although this was also mentioned). The fourth chapter attempts to identify how the administration (including promotion) of VET in the ACT can be improved. This chapter examines what structural/organisational and funding changes should be made to better meet the range of need.

1.18. The committee also made the decision to include the ACT Government's comprehensive submission in its entirety (Attachment A). This submission provides a broad and detailed presentation of the historical evolution of VET arrangements in the ACT, statistical information, details of funding arrangements and VET outcomes. It is a good reference for those wanting to gain an in-depth understanding of VET in the ACT.

1.19. Finally, the committee acknowledges that much has changed since the inception of this inquiry. The Government has introduced significant alterations to existing legislation; administrative arrangements have changed with regard to the role of ITABs; and the Training and Adult Education Section within the Department of Education, Youth and Family Services has also made some changes. The committee has, where possible, attempted to acknowledge and reflect on these changes. However, the committee believes that the majority of the evidence received supports the recommendations made in this report.

Chapter 2. Overview

2.1. Over the last decade vocational education and training has become a major policy focus for both Federal and state/territory governments. With the establishment of the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) in the early nineties by the Commonwealth Government, there was recognition that a more co-ordinated and integrated national approach was required to keep pace with global changes in industry and the labour market. Among other areas, the new agenda focused on employee mobility, transferability of qualifications, and improving strategic analysis of industry and labour market trends. Reflecting on these changes to the system in recent years the ACT Government noted in its submission that:

Since the late 1980s all governments in Australia have given a priority to workforce skilling, the creation of a training market, competency based training, a national accreditation framework and entry level training system. It has been industry driven.

Since 1996 the drive has been for a national training market, traineeships and more VET in schools, more user choice of training providers and the concept of regional training providers (the concept evolved into the national network of new apprenticeship centres of which the ACT has two).

...ANTA endorsed the first nationally recognised training packages in 1997. New Apprenticeships, and the Australian Recognition and Qualifications Frameworks took formal effect in 1998. This meant that essentially ACT training providers and qualifications were mutually recognised across Australia, and vice versa. The old TAFE certificate-diploma system was replaced by a national 12-part qualifications ladder, which extends from school qualifications through the VET system and into the higher education domain.

The Recognition Framework was revamped as the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) in 2001 with standards for state and territory registration and accreditation bodies and for registered training organisations... The *ACT Vocational Education and Training Act 1995* gives effect to these changes in the ACT and creates an ACT Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA) and an Accreditation and Registration Council (ARC).³

2.2. Against this background, this chapter is intended as a brief outline of the key organisations and programs involved in the ACT VET sector. As noted above, readers interested in a more thorough examination of the specific arrangements for VET in the ACT are referred to the Government submission (Attachment A). *Aspiring to Excellence, Report on the Quality of Vocational Education and Training in Australia* produced by the Senate's Employment, Workplace Relations, Small Business and Education

³ Submission 19, p 5.

References Committee is also a useful reference for those interested in a better understanding of the VET sector as it operates at the national level.

What is VET?

2.3. Vocational education and training is essentially a form of educational experience aimed directly at preparing learners for the real world of work. Comprising both theoretical and practical elements, VET usually involves a combination of on-the-job training as well as the completion formal course work through a registered training organisation (RTO).

2.4. One of the key features of the national vocational education and training sector is the high degree of flexibility it offers. In its report, the Senate committee, commenting on the flexibility and variability associated with the VET system noted that, ‘Students within the vocational education and training sector engage in a wide range of training experiences within different types of providers, across various disciplines or areas of learning, and at differing levels of skill acquisition. The length of time that individuals spend in training also varies considerably’.⁴

2.5. The focus of VET has evolved substantially over the last ten years, with traditional notions of post-secondary apprenticeships giving way to a range of learning experiences and options within a wide variety of industries. In this regard, ANTA notes that vocational education and training has, ‘...traditionally been seen as post-secondary, non-university education and training, focusing on apprenticeships. But reforms in the past decade now see vocational education and training programs offered in secondary schools, stronger links with university study options and six levels of qualifications offered in most industries, including high growth, new economy industries.’⁵ While traineeships and apprenticeships are still a crucial component of the VET sector, the range and depth of courses and pathways is greater than ever before.

2.6. The following list of industries and types of work covered by the VET system provides a good indication of both the breadth and depth of course offerings available under the VET system. Among many others, VET courses are available in:

- automotive;
- building and construction;
- community services and health;
- business services;

⁴ Senate Employment, Workplace Relations, Small Business and Education References Committee (2000) ‘*Aspiring to Excellence: Report into the Quality of Vocational Education and Training in Australia*’ p 14.

⁵ <http://www.anta.gov.au/vetWhat.asp>

- finance;
- information technology;
- telecommunications;
- tourism and hospitality;
- recreation;
- light manufacturing;
- public administration;
- correctional services; and
- culture, art and sport.

2.7. The VET sector caters for a wide variety of groups and individuals from a range of backgrounds including: males and females; the full range of age groups; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders; learners from non-English speaking backgrounds; learners with a disability; learners from the full range of prior education levels; and both unemployed and employed learners.⁶

2.8. In its submission to the inquiry, ACT Teachers in Vocational Education (ACTTIVE) outlined the range of benefits that it conceived as flowing to learners involved in an effective VET system. They are:

- The opportunity to develop employable and transferable skills;
- The enhancement of their opportunities for employment or further education;
- The opportunity to experience the world of work at first hand;
- The opportunity to venture into workplaces different to those normally experienced in part-time work;
- The opportunity to create networks with workers and potential future employers;
- The experience of learning which has a large, “hands-on” component; and

⁶ Senate Employment, Workplace Relations, Small Business and Education References Committee (2000) *‘Aspiring to Excellence: Report into the Quality of Vocational Education and Training in Australia’* p 13.

- The experience of learning which appears relevant and exciting to many students.⁷

2.9. The committee sees multiple benefits arising from the VET sector to the extent that the ACT's economic and social prosperity are intimately tied-up in the degree to which positive outcomes can be produced by the vocational education and training system.

National perspective

2.10. Established in 1992, ANTA is charged with overall leadership and management of the VET system at the national level. ANTA is responsible for the dispersal of Commonwealth funds to the states and territories with all states and territories required to adhere to a reporting framework oversighted by ANTA. It is the ANTA Agreement 2001-2003 that, '...defines the planning, reporting and accountability arrangements between the Commonwealth and the states and territories to maintain the national vocational education and training system'.⁸

2.11. ANTA outlines its mission as being, '...to ensure that the skills of the Australian labour force are sufficient to support internationally competitive commerce and industry and to provide individuals with opportunities to optimise their potential'.⁹ ANTA's core roles include:

- developing a draft national strategy
- development, management and promotion of the National Training Framework;
- developing advice to identify and plan for future growth requirements;
- ensuring comprehensive up-to-date national statistical data are available;
- developing advice on key performance measures and reporting objectives;
- providing an integrated annual national report;
- coordinating national initiatives and undertaking policy reviews, evaluation and research on national priorities; and
- administering programs requiring national delivery.¹⁰

⁷ Submission 12, p 1.

⁸ Submission 19, p 18.

⁹ <http://www.anta.gov.au/abtWhat.asp>

¹⁰ <http://www.anta.gov.au/abtWhat.asp>

2.12. In terms of the broader operating and accountability structures associated with ANTA, the Senate committee notes that:

The structures of ANTA include the ANTA Ministerial Council (known as ANTA MINCO), the ANTA Board, the ANTA office and a network of committees, sub-committees, and working groups.

The ANTA Ministerial Council, comprising ministers from the states and territories and chaired by the Commonwealth minister, is the primary national decision-making body for the VET system. Under the terms of the ANTA Agreement, the ANTA Ministerial Council set national goals, objectives and priorities for the system.

The ANTA Board's role is to advise MINCO and support it in all its functions. With members drawn largely from employers, its composition is intended to ensure that MINCO receives high-level formal advice on employer VET needs, and also to provide employers with a key role in providing leadership and advice.¹¹

2.13. It is Australia's National Strategy for Vocational Education and Training 1998-2003 which articulates the major economic, technological and social trends that affect the vocational education and training system in Australia. The five key national objectives of the VET system identified in the strategy are:

1. Equipping Australians for the world of work;
2. Enhancing mobility in the labour market;
3. Achieving equitable outcomes in vocational education and training;
4. Increasing investment in training; and
5. Maximising the value of public vocational education and training expenditure.¹²

Training packages

2.14. Training packages are a key component of the VET system. Training packages are essentially sets of, 'nationally endorsed standards and qualifications for recognising and assessing people's skills'.¹³ Training packages are developed in close consultation with

¹¹ Senate Employment, Workplace Relations, Small Business and Education References Committee (2000) '*Aspiring to Excellence: Report into the Quality of Vocational Education and Training in Australia*' p 5.

¹² Senate Employment, Workplace Relations, Small Business and Education References Committee (2000) '*Aspiring to Excellence: Report into the Quality of Vocational Education and Training in Australia*' p xxv.

¹³ <http://www.anta.gov.au/tpkWhat.asp>

industry, especially through Industry Training Advisory Boards (ITABs – discussed below) although other recognised bodies and specific enterprises with particular training needs can also be involved in the development of training packages. To gain national endorsement those involved in developing a training package must prove that they have undertaken wide-ranging industry and/or enterprise-level consultation. Training packages are competency based and describe, ‘the skills and knowledge needed to perform effectively in the workplace. They do not prescribe how an individual should be trained. Teachers and trainers develop learning strategies - the "how" - depending on learners' needs, abilities and circumstances’.¹⁴ Again, this reflects the high degree of flexibility associated with VET.

ACT factors

2.15. The ACT is, in many ways, a unique jurisdiction in terms of its industry and demographic profile and the committee was advised that this has implications for the effective management of VET systems issues here. In terms of its industry profile, the ACT private sector is made up of predominantly micro-business (less than 6 employees) and small business. The ACT Government submission notes that, ‘There are over 20,000 private businesses in the ACT but only approximately 600 employ more than 20 people’. Of course, the largest employer in the ACT is the public sector (both Commonwealth and ACT).¹⁵

2.16. Commenting on the makeup of the ACT labour market, the Government noted in its submission that, ‘There are a large number of small companies in construction, retail, and property and business services. These last two industries plus government administration and defence, are the three biggest employers in the ACT’s total employment base of about 167,000. The following table included in the Government submission outlines the make-up of the ACT labour market and comparisons with the national figures.

ACT NUMBERS OF PRIVATE BUSINESSES, BY FIRM SIZE AND INDUSTRY (1998-99); AND ACT AND AUSTRALIA TOTAL PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY (FEB 2002)

	No. small businesses (0-19 empl)	No. larger businesses	Total no. private ACT businesses	Total ACT employment - private + public	Total employment – Australia
Agriculture, etc, mining					517000 (6%)
Manufacturing	600	n.a.	600	4700 (3%)	1096000 (12%)

¹⁴ <http://www.anta.gov.au/tpkWhat.asp>

¹⁵ Submission 19, p 6.

Electricity, gas and water				500	64000
Construction	2000	n.a	2000	8200 (5%)	713000 (8%)
Wholesale trade				3800 (2%)	442000 (5%)
Retail trade (includes wholesale)	2700 (1)	100 + (1)	2800 (1)	22200 (13%)	1399000 (15%)
Accommodation, cafes and restaurants	400	100 +	400 +	6100 (4%)	475000 (5%)
Transport and storage	400		400	4500 (3%)	404000 (4%)
Communication services				3100 (2%)	178000 (2%)
Finance and insurance	400		400	4400 (3%)	349000 (4%)
Property & business services	4200	n.a.	4300	25800 (16%)	1057000 (11%)
Government admin & defence (2)				37900 (23%)	404000 (4%)
Education	400	n.a.	400	12600 (8%)	620000 (7%)
Health & community services	1700	100 +	1800	19000 (11%)	916000 (10%)
Cultural and rec. services	500		500	5400 (3%)	241000 (3%)
Personal and other services	1400	n.a.	1500	7800 (5%)	356000 (4%)
Total	14700	600	15200 (3)	167000 (100%)	9231000 (100%)
Total employment in each type of private business	36200	42100	78300		

¹⁶ Submission 19, p 17 - Sources: ABS 2000, Australian Capital Territory in focus 2000, for businesses. ABS 2002, Labour force employed, industry, Australia, quarterly: tables 8i and 9i, cat. no. 6291.0.40.001, for employment.

(1) Includes wholesale.

(2) The majority are Australian Public Service, the minority ACT Public Service.

2.17. The committee learnt that some of the ACT's unique industry and labour market characteristics present particular challenges that may require specialised, customised responses. In commenting on how the unique make-up of ACT industry may not be completely compatible with all elements of the broader national policy approach, the Australian Education Union (AEU) argued that the ACT, '... really is an atypical sort of state or territory. We don't have big industry groups for whom... the reformed training agenda was devised with a view to someone like McWilliams with 100 trainees in their winery in South Australia who can do in-house training and so on. It is a model that we have devised a system around which sounds good but doesn't necessarily apply in a small jurisdiction like this'.¹⁷

2.18. Similarly, CIT noted in its submission that, 'Nationally determined outcome priorities... may not necessarily coincide with individual state government priorities, and neither may coincide with the intentions or expectations of students, employers or local communities'.¹⁸ Of course, the ACT Government must play a major role in aligning the needs of ACT students, employers and the local community with the outcomes produced by ACT VET programs, particularly by ensuring that local industry and labour-market conditions are taken into account in policy planning, development and implementation.

ACT statistics

2.19. From the evidence, the committee notes the following trends and statistics relating to vocational education in the ACT:

- The biggest areas of ACT VET provision for 2002 were; Sales and Personal Services (17.8%), Business and Clerical (10.8%), Community Services, Health and Education (10.5%), Tourism and Hospitality (10.3%), Finance, Banking and Insurance (9.0%) and Building and Construction (8.6%)...
- With higher VET funding there has been steady growth in VET student numbers – 70 per cent nationally and 30 per cent in the ACT. New apprenticeships have doubled nationally between 1996 and 2001 and are up by 50 per cent in the ACT. Nationally about 12% of the working population is in VET compared with 9 per cent for the ACT. To some extent the slower ACT growth is explained by the ACT's different employment structure with a larger white-collar industrial base, and a trend towards university education.

(3) There were also an estimated 6000 'non employing' small businesses as well.

¹⁷ Transcript of Proceedings, 18 March 2003, Mr McNevin, p 110

¹⁸ Submission 19, p 6.

- In 2001 over 55 per cent of government college students who received a year 12 certificate had a vocational qualification. This was an increase from 49 per cent in 2000.¹⁹
- One distinct area of growth in the ACT VET system since 1996 is VET in Schools (VETiS). These courses are dual-accredited by the BSSS (Board of Senior Secondary Studies) in the VET and school systems, and include school-based new apprenticeships.
- Between 1991 and 2001, the ACT experienced a 17.5 per cent increase in the overall VET participation rate;
- In 2001, young people (aged 15-24) comprised approximately 45 percent of ACT VET participants, with learners aged 25-49 comprising a similar proportion;
- In 2001, approximately 65 per cent of VET activity in ACT is at the AQF Certificate level III or above; and
- The ACT module load pass rate in 2000 was nearly 81 per cent compared with 75 nationally.²⁰

2.20. The following table provided in the ACT Government submission provides an indication of the steady increase in uptake of VET courses in the ACT over recent years.

VET STUDENT NUMBERS AND APPRENTICE IN TRAINING NUMBERS, AUSTRALIA AND ACT, 1992- 2001

Year	VET Students	ACT VET Students	Apprentices	ACT Apprentices
1992	1.04m	17 000	150 000	2 000
1996	1.35m	18 600	164 000	2 700
1998	1.54m	18 500	218 000	2 800
2000	1.75m	20 200	296 000	4 100
2001	1.76m	21 600	330 000	4 100

Sources: Various NCVER [National Centre for Vocational Education Research] publications on VET and New Apprenticeships.²¹

¹⁹ Submission 19, p 6.

²⁰ Submission 19.

²¹ Submission 19. p 15.

2.21. The committee would like to draw attention to the profile of educational attainment in the ACT in 1996, drawn from the 1996 Census. The committee notes that:

- There were 45,667 people in the labour force with a degree or higher qualification in Canberra-Queanbeyan at the 1996 Census. This was 27.9% of the labour force which is higher than the level in any other capital city, the next highest being Sydney (21.1%).
- Over two-thirds (68.3%) of people with university qualifications held a Bachelor degree while the remainder held either a higher degree (18.1%) or postgraduate diploma (13.6%).
- At the 1996 Census there were 15,149 people in the labour force with skilled vocational qualifications in Canberra-Queanbeyan. This was 9.3% of the labour force. Of the people in the [ACT] labour force... 8.7% had trade qualifications.²²

2.22. The committee also notes that the following ACT statistics produced from the 2001 Census undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Statistics:

- In the 2001 Census, 20,604 (**8.5%**) people (11,550 males and 9,054 females) held a postgraduate degree, graduate diploma or graduate certificate. This compares with 16,047 (**7.0%**) people (9,341 males and 6,706 females) in the 1996 Census and 11,005 (**5.2%**) people (6,703 males and 4,302 females) in the 1991 Census.
- In the 2001 Census, 42,282 (**17.4%**) people (20,481 males and 21,801 females) held a bachelor degree, compared with 35,537 (**15.5%**) people (18,388 males and 17,149 females) in the 1996 Census and 27,011 (**12.8%**) people (15,149 males and 11,862 females) in the 1991 Census.
- There were 49,692 (**20.4%**) people (27,984 males and 21,708 females) with an advanced diploma, diploma or certificate in the 2001 Census, compared with 41,303 (**18.0%**) people (22,850 males and 18,453 females) in the 1996 Census and 38,052 (**18.0%**) people (21,275 males and 16,777 females) in the 1991 Census.
- In the 2001 Census, 131,029 (**53.8%**) people (58,636 males and 72,393 females) did not have a qualification, did not state a qualification or stated a qualification outside of the scope of the standard classification. This compares with 136,829 (**59.6%**) people (61,748 males and 75,081 females) in the 1996 Census and 134,848 (**63.9%**) people (60,626 males and 74,222 females) in the 1991

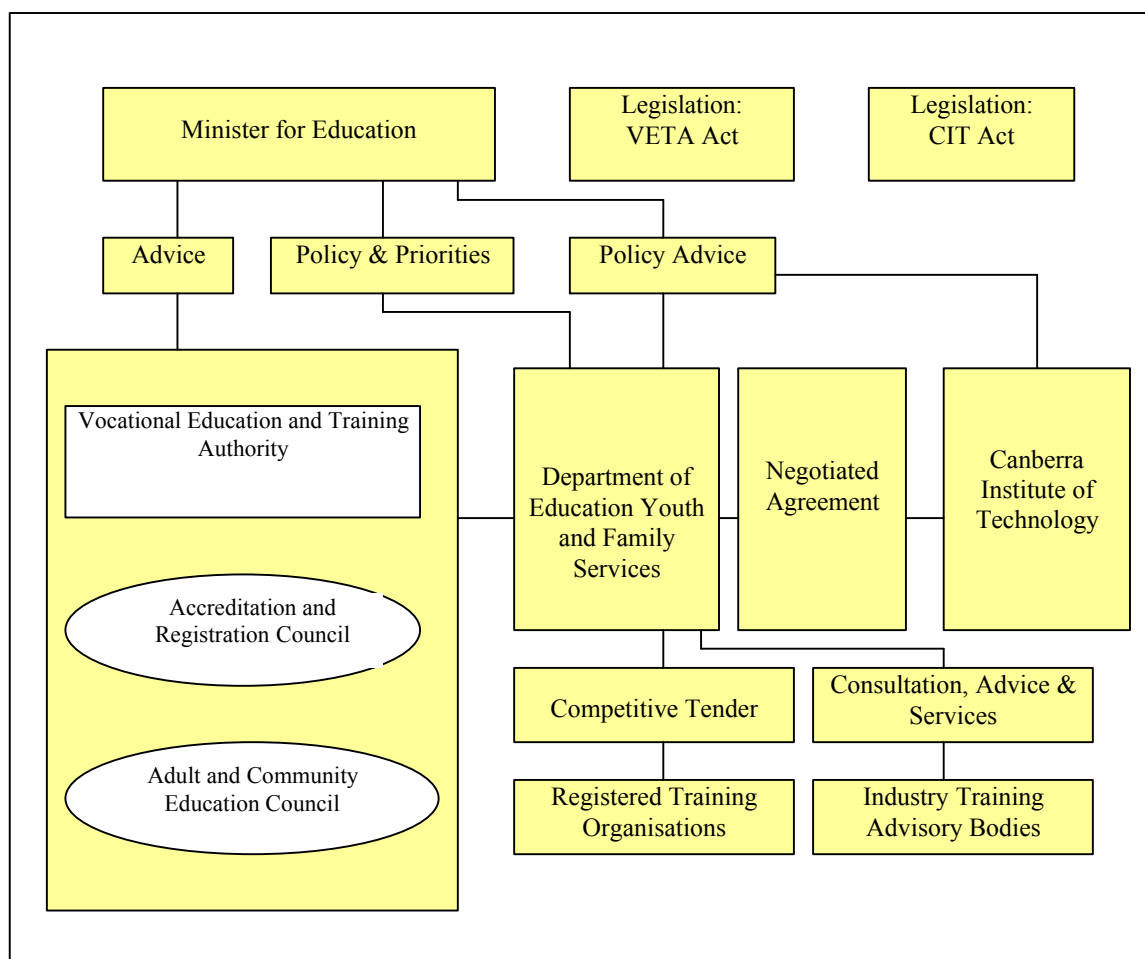
²² ABS (1998) *'Canberra... A Social Atlas'* pp 18-19.

Census. [The Non-School Qualification: Level of Education classification excludes all schooling up to year 12].²³

2.23. Readers interested in more detailed statistical breakdowns on the composition, operation and outcomes associated with the VET system are referred to the Government submission (Attachment A) and the Senate report for national figures.

Who administers VET in the ACT?

2.24. The following flow chart provided in the Government submission outlines the reporting and accountability structures associated with VET in the ACT.



²³<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs%40census.nsf/4079a1bbd2a04b80ca256b9d00208f92/500602ae851edf97ca256bbf0001c9ed!OpenDocument>

2.25. The committee notes the addition to this structure of the ACT Industry Training Advisory Association (ACTITAA) which is responsible for the provision of industry advice and engagement. This is discussed in more detail later in the report.

Training and Adult Education – Department of Education, Youth and Family Services

2.26. The Department of Education, Youth and Family Services is responsible for administering ACT VET-related legislation and is defined as the state training agency in the current ANTA agreement. Within the department, the Training and Adult Education section is charged with, among other things, developing VET policy, administering tenders for RTOs and promoting VET in the ACT. In its Commitment to Service Statement, TAE outlines some of its responsibilities as being to:

- promote the development of training opportunities in the ACT;
- provide advice on training, registration of training organisation, accreditation of courses and the implementation of Training Packages...;
- fund services to support vocational training in the ACT;
- consult with ACT industry and community to ensure publicly funded training meets their needs;
- administer training agreements between employers, trainees and apprentices; and
- support Industry Training Advisory Bodies (ITABs), Skills Centres, Group Training Companies, New Apprenticeship Centres and Training Organisations.²⁴

2.27. Officers from the Training and Adult Education Branch of the Department of Education Youth and Family Services also provide secretariat support to the Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA), the ACT Accreditation and Registration Council (ARC) and the Adult and Community Education (ACE) Council.

2.28. In addition, as DEYFS notes in its annual report, the department also, ‘purchases vocational education and training services through the Industry Training Program, New Apprenticeships through User Choice Program (User Choice), Pathways Program, Equity Development Program, Adult English Language Literacy and Numeracy Program and the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) Bulk Purchase Program.’²⁵

²⁴ Training and Adult Education Section, Department of Education, Youth and Family Services, *‘Commitment to Service statement’*

²⁵ Department of Education and Community Services, *‘Annual Report 2001-2002’* p 41.

2.29. The committee makes several comments in the final chapter of the report regarding areas where the committee believes the department can improve the administration of some of the roles outlined above.

ACT Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA)

2.30. The Vocational Education and Training Authority was established under the *Vocational Education and Training Act 1995*. VETA is a statutory Authority and consists of an 11-member board. In its annual report, VETA outlines some of its functions as being to:

- develop a strategic plan for vocational education and training and to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the plan;
- manage specified funding programs for vocational education and training and monitor the use of these funds;
- provide programs and services to support vocational education and training;
- administer training agreements;
- facilitate recognition and quality assurance in the provision of vocational education and training in association with the Accreditation and Registration Council;
- advise... ANTA in relation to priorities for, and allocation of, funds for vocational education and training in the Territory;
- monitor... the use of funds for vocational education and training in the Territory against the State Training Profile;
- provide... an annual report to ANTA on the performance of the Authority as the State training agency for the Territory; and
- provide... annually to ANTA an audited statement of the funds for vocational education and training allocated by ANTA to the Authority.²⁶

Accreditation and Registration Council

2.31. In accordance with provisions outlined in the Australian Quality Framework, any training organisation wishing to provide VET programs in the ACT is required to gain recognition from the ACT Accreditation and Registration Council (ARC). Following the attainment of accreditation and registration, a training provider is known as a Registered Training Organisation (RTO – discussed below).

2.32. ARC describes its role as providing:

²⁶ <http://www.decs.act.gov.au/publicat/annrep/annrepVETA.htm#background>

- advice on and support for training, registration of training organisations and accreditation of courses;
- monitoring and auditing of vocational training;
- support for training organisations and employers in implementing national training initiatives;
- nationally consistent qualifications obtained in the Territory as a result of accredited vocational education and training; and
- training organisations providing education services to international students registered in accordance with Commonwealth and Territory legislation.²⁷

2.33. The Accreditation and Registration Section within TAE administers the implementation of ARC policy as well as registering and accrediting the 106 registered training organisations in the ACT.

ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies

2.34. The ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS) is responsible for certification of senior secondary school studies in government and non-government schools in the Australian Capital Territory. The Board describes one of its principal functions as being, ‘...to approve, consistent with national agreements, recognised educational institutions for teaching vocational education courses’.²⁸

2.35. Commenting on its role in VET, the Board notes that:

The ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies actively seeks to ensure that the best and most appropriate general and vocational courses are available to all Year 11 and 12 students in government and non-government colleges. It is firmly committed to ensuring only quality curriculum is accredited and that assessment and moderation processes for the ACT senior secondary education system result in qualifications and outcomes that are comparable across the system and consistent, where appropriate, with national and international standards. The Board is also committed to ensuring that students receive clear and accurate recognition of their achievements on certificates that are recognised for their integrity, quality, authenticity and credibility.²⁹

²⁷ <http://www.decs.act.gov.au/services/TrainingARC.htm#Services%20provided%20by%20ARC>

²⁸ <http://www.decs.act.gov.au/bsss/welcome.htm>

²⁹ <http://www.decs.act.gov.au/bsss/welcome.htm>

Who provides VET?

2.36. Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) are responsible for delivering VET programs to learners. All ACT Government secondary colleges, a host of private companies, adult and community education providers, and the CIT are the main VET providers in the ACT.

2.37. The ACT Government, in its submission, advised the committee that the makeup of VET providers is diverse and includes:

- one public provider, the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT);
- 17 government providers, including Commonwealth agencies and the three defences forces;
- 17 government and non-government secondary colleges;
- 72 private training organisations; and
- numerous ACE [Adult and Community Education] providers, of which at any one time around 30 are in receipt of ACT Government funding.³⁰

Colleges

2.38. Secondary colleges in the ACT play a significant role in the introduction and provision of vocational education and training. As noted all government colleges are RTOs and provide students with the opportunity to embark on vocational courses aimed at direct work placement.

2.39. During the course of the inquiry, the committee visited with Copland, Hawker and Daramalan colleges to meet with students and teachers involved in VET courses. The committee was impressed with the range and quality of the programs that were being offered in these schools. The committee notes the following tables from the Government submission setting out both the certificate of attainment outcomes in ACT Government Colleges and the trends in the number of vocational placements in Government Colleges in recent years.

CERTIFICATE OUTCOMES IN GOVERNMENT COLLEGES

Year	Certificate I	Certificate II	Statement of Attainment
1997	156	83	670

³⁰ Submission 19, p 18.

1998	222	142	845
1999	169	253	1105
2000	459	325	1449
2001	343	622**	1639

** There has been a 98% increase in the number of Certificate II qualifications awarded in 2001.

VOCATIONAL PLACEMENTS IN GOVERNMENT COLLEGES

Year	Placements
1997	836
1998	1526
1999	1858
2000	1643
2001	1404

CIT

2.40. The ACT Government-funded Canberra Institute of Technology is the main provider of vocational education and training in the ACT. A statutory authority, CIT was established in 1988 under the *ACT Institute of Technical and Further Education Act 1987*. In 1992, the ACT Legislative Assembly passed legislation changing the organisation's name to the Canberra Institute of Technology.

2.41. CIT has five campuses throughout the ACT – Reid, Bruce, Fyshwick, Southside and Weston - with approximately 19,200 semester enrolments (as at 2001) and a client population of approximately 16,500. The Institute offers over, '350 programs of study leading to Statements of Attainment, Certificates, Diplomas, Advanced Diplomas, Graduate Certificates and Degrees'.³¹

2.42. In its 2002 Annual Report, CIT describes the flexibility of the educational opportunities it offers and the large range of learners it caters for in the following way:

³¹ Submission 17, p 5.

The Canberra Institute of Technology is a premier provider of vocational education and training in Australia. Our students are drawn from all walks of life including:

- people entering the workforce for the first time or re-entering after a break;
- those wanting to fast-track their career, get a promotion, or change direction; and
- people who need recognition for study or life experience...

The Institute's teaching and learning environments are designed to provide choice and to empower people to learn in a flexible manner. We offer our clients a range of learning options including:

- traditional classrooms;
- distance and on-line;
- the workplace;
- simulated work environment; and
- flexible learning centres.³²

2.43. The committee toured the Reid Campus of CIT during the course of the inquiry. It met with teachers and students involved in the Flexible Learning Centre, CIT's Practice Firm, the Faculty of Business and Information Technology, the Faculty of Design, and the Faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management. Again, as with colleges, the committee was impressed with the professionalism and quality of CIT's course offerings. The committee speaks more about CIT in the final chapter of this report.

Private training companies

2.44. As noted above, there are currently 72 private RTOs operating in the ACT. Private RTOs are simply privately owned companies that have been registered and accredited by ARC to provide VET training. In its submission to the inquiry, the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET) advised the committee that there are three different models utilised by private RTOs to deliver training in the ACT and they are:

- a) those which rely totally on government initiated programs and associated funding;
- b) those which are completely self-funded; and

³² Canberra Institute of Technology Annual Report 2002, p 4.

- c) those that are a mixture of government and self-funding.³³

New Apprenticeship Centres (NACs)

2.45. Introduced in 1998, New Apprenticeships were designed to offer increased flexibility in the delivery of apprenticeships and traineeships across a range of industries. In the past, apprenticeships took four years to complete and traineeships lasted two years. In contrast, New Apprenticeships are competency based and it is possible to complete a new apprenticeship in a shorter period of time should a learner acquire the necessary skills more quickly. New Apprenticeships can even be commenced while at school.

2.46. Covered by formal training agreements, New Apprenticeships place certain responsibilities and obligations on both the employer and the employee involved in a particular contract of training. As with most VET programs, those undertaking New Apprenticeships generally undertake on-the-job training as well as off-the-job class work through an RTO. To administer the New Apprenticeship scheme, the Government established a range of New Apprenticeship Centres in local regions with responsibility for:

- providing information on New Apprenticeships options to employers and other interested people;
- marketing and promoting New Apprenticeships in the local area;
- administering Commonwealth incentive payments to employers;
- working with the State/Territory Training Authority to provide an integrated service; and
- establishing effective relationships with Commonwealth contracted Job Network Members, training providers, schools and other organisations.³⁴

2.47. There are currently two NACs in the ACT. They are: 1) Caloola Skills Training and Job Placement; and 2) Employment ACT. The committee heard from many inquiry participants that NACs need to do more in terms of active promotion of vocational education and training options and the committee comments on this further in the final chapter of this report.

How is industry represented?

2.48. Under the VET system each industry decides both the competencies that are required for particular jobs as well as the how associated qualifications are constructed. These competencies and qualifications are agreed nationally and provide the basis for industry standards produced under the Australian Qualifications Framework. The primary

³³ Submission 20, p 4.

³⁴ <http://www.newapprenticeships.gov.au/employer/nacs.asp>

means by which various industries have the opportunity for input into the development of competencies and curriculum is via Industry Training Advisory Boards or ITABs which exist for a wide range of industry groupings.

2.49. The Government advised the committee that the following ITABs operate in the ACT:

1. Arts, Sport, Recreation;
2. Community and Health Services;
3. Wholesale, Retail and Personal Services;
4. Tourism and hospitality;
5. Business – incorporating property and financial services and government;
6. Automotive/Transport;
7. Utilities – Electrical, water and light manufacturing;
8. Information technology; and
9. Construction.³⁵

2.50. ITABs liaise with relevant industry groups and employers to provide advice to government and RTOs about the training and educational priorities associated with their particular industry to ensure that there is sufficient alignment between industry requirements and the outcomes delivered by VET programs. Recently, the Federal Government announced the withdrawal of funding for ITABs and this has left some sections of the VET sector concerned about how industry linkages with the system will be maintained. However, other inquiry participants argued that many ITABs do not add a great deal of value to the VET system to warrant funding across the board. The view was expressed that while some ITABs perform an outstanding service in advising RTOs and government, many do not. The committee speaks more about this in the final chapter of the report.

2.51. Since this inquiry began, and as a result of the Federal funding cuts, at least two ITABs no longer have Executive Directors, and their industry sectors are to be taken up by existing ITABs or other organisations.

2.52. As noted above, the ACT Industry Training Advisory Association (ACTITAA) was established in March 2003 to provide advice on industry training. The committee speaks more about ACTITAA in the final chapter of the report.

³⁵ Submission 19, p 30.

New Legislation

2.53. On 3 April 2003, the *Vocational Education and Training Bill 2003* was introduced in the Assembly but deferred for debate until the August sitting. The legislation, if passed, will repeal the *Vocational Education and Training Act 1995* and will operate in conjunction with the *Tertiary Accreditation and Registration Act 2003*.

2.54. Providing background on the two pieces legislation, the Government notes in the explanatory statement of the *Vocational Education and Training Bill 2003* that:

The two relevant ministerial councils, the Australian National Training Authority Ministerial Council..., and the Ministerial Council on Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) agreed to make regulatory arrangements to ensure national consistency in the accreditation of courses and the registration of providers in vocational education and training and in higher education. ANTA MINCO agreed to enshrine the requirements of the *Australian Quality Training Framework Standards for Registered Training Organisations* in legislation. Similarly, MCEETYA agreed to enshrine the *National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes* in legislation. These two Acts implement the ACT government agreement to implement the decisions of ANTA MINCO and MCEETYA in this matter.

The Tertiary Accreditation and Registration Act subsumes the registration and accreditation aspects of the Vocational Education and Training Act 1995. It implements the two ministerial council...[s'] decisions to expand and enhance the regulation of both vocational education training and of higher education. It accommodates the *National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes* and the *Australian Quality Training Framework Standards for Registered Training Organisations*. In addition the Tertiary Accreditation and Registration Act includes provision for the establishment of the ACT Accreditation and Registration Council..., previously in the Vocational Education and Training Act 1995.³⁶

³⁶ The Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory, Vocational Education and Training Bill 2003: Explanatory Statement, circulated by the authority of Katy Gallagher MLA 2003, p 2.

Chapter 3. Serving the needs of the community

What needs are served by the VET system?

3.1. In its submission, the Australian Education Union made the point that the notion of community need must be construed broadly and that there is not always sufficient alignment of the needs of the various participants involved in the VET system. The union noted that, 'It is quite often the case that the "needs" of parents and students do not align with the "needs" of other sectors of society namely- industry and government through the training profile'.³⁷

3.2. The committee conceives that there are three main beneficiaries served by an effective, efficient VET system in the ACT. Firstly, there are those participating in education and training programs – the learners/employees. Secondly, the industries and businesses that utilise the pool of skills and experience produced by the sector – the employers/industry. Thirdly, there are the broader economic and social interests of the community, a community that expects efficient, quality programs that produce positive economic and social outcomes (such as employment growth and the maintenance/development of equality of opportunity) – the public interest.

3.3. An efficient, effective VET system must produce outcomes that to the fullest extent possible meet the needs of these three interrelated and interconnected groups. In its report, the Senate committee made the following point about the convergence of interests in the sector and how the interplay between the needs of learners, the requirements of industry and the social imperatives of the community need to be considered holistically when formulating policy:

In vocational education and training policy, the relationship between the individual interest and rights of workers, on the one hand, and the needs and priorities of employers on the other, is reciprocal. Ideally, the acquisition of vocational skill should serve to enrich and empower individuals and facilitate a greater awareness among workers of the dynamic governing their workplace and, more widely, society as a whole. This is an explicitly social process. It calls into play the context of the community within which all human relationships are conducted. To revise the notions of VET involves policymakers thinking more holistically and creatively about the role and nature of work, training and education within an explicitly social context where the interest of the community and employers are not taken as by definition mutually exclusive.³⁸

³⁷ Submission 16, p 3.

³⁸ Senate Employment, Workplace Relations, Small Business and Education References Committee (2000) '*Aspiring to Excellence: Report into the Quality of Vocational Education and Training in Australia*' p 7.

3.4. As noted above, there are five national objectives associated with the VET system and each of these objectives can be directly related to one or more of the three groups identified above.

3.5. For instance, the achievement of the first objective, *'equipping Australians for the world of work'*, is of benefit to employees/learners as well as the broader community with its interest in the health of the economy and low unemployment. By *'enhancing mobility in the labour market'* a direct benefit accrues to learners/employees and industry/employers - learners are able to move through the job market with greater ease and employers are able to capitalise on depth of skills and experience produced by the VET sector. *'Achieving equitable outcomes in VET'* is primarily a community or public interest objective but the benefits of diversity in the workforce and in the VET sector are obviously also of great benefit to the individuals identified as disadvantaged learners. *'Increasing the investment in training'* is of benefit to all the three groups. *'Maximising the value of public VET expenditure'* is, again, primarily a public interest objective relating to efficiency and efficacy but the flow-on benefits of the effective and efficient administration of VET is again of assistance to learners and industry players.

3.6. In essence, the committee conceives that there is a great interrelatedness between the needs and interests of learners, industry and the community and that VET policy directions should attempt, where possible, to build on and strengthen these symbiotic relationships.

3.7. The committee acknowledges that there are other players in the VET sector that also have an interest in the effective operation of the system, such as teachers, schools, RTOs, GTCs etc. However, while the committee acknowledges that these groups have a significant stake in the sector, the fundamental purpose or *raison d'être* of the VET system is not to produce outcomes for these groups. That is not to say that the needs, interests and experience of these other groups should be ignored (indeed they are discussed below) but, in terms of outcomes, the vocational education and training system is directed outwards towards the community interest generally and the two main client groups – learners and industry.

3.8. Below the committee has elaborated on some of the needs and requirements of the three groups identified. It is not an exhaustive examination.

Student/learner needs

3.9. In its submission, CIT noted that the needs or objectives of students studying in a VET environment are both economic and social in nature. It further noted that a survey conducted by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) indicated that students pursue VET opportunities for primarily 'employment-related reasons' with the largest proportion of TAFE students enrolling in VET courses to 'get a job or own a business'.³⁹ Visiting CIT, local colleges and examining VET participants during the public

³⁹ Submission 17, p 6.

hearings, the committee encountered a range of learners participating in VET. From this evidence, the committee deduced several fundamental features of the VET system important to meeting the needs of learners. The committee identified that:

- VET should be accessible to learners in terms of both proximity and availability;
- VET should be affordable to learners – this was seen to be particularly important for those on low incomes or the unemployed;
- VET programs should provide participants with skills that are directly applicable and practical in the work place;
- VET should be responsive to new and emerging fields within the workplace;
- Where courses are being pursued for the personal interest and advancement, they should be done through Adult and Community Education programs;
- VET curriculum and programs should focus on where actual employment pathways exist;
- the maximum degree of flexibility in coursework is vital;
- ancillary programs such as literacy and numeracy programs provide an important foundational support that assists learners, particularly at-risk learners, to successfully complete VET programs; and
- advice and information about VET options must be clear, consistent and relevant to the individual needs of learners.

Industry/employers needs

3.10. In its submission, CIT noted that employers' needs or objectives are, 'generally economic and relate specifically to their workforce needs. They look to the VET system to provide them with sufficient numbers of workers with the necessary competencies to meet the needs of their business'.⁴⁰ From the evidence, the committee surmised the following requirements as expressed by industry and employer groups:

- VET curriculum should be closely aligned with industry requirements – that is, skills and knowledge provided via VET must be eminently applicable in the workplace;
- industry needs the capacity to communicate its education and training priorities and requirements to those responsible for curriculum development and have these views reflected in policy decisions;

⁴⁰ Submission 17, p 6.

- processes and procedures for signing up trainees or apprentices must be simple, efficient and well-communicated; and
- industry growth areas must be identified and targeted in the VET system in order that viable employment pathways are opened up for learners/participants in areas where high demand exists.

The broader community/public interest

3.11. The broader community interest in VET can be considered as the sum of both industry and VET participants' interests/needs as well as the more general public interest tests placed on most areas of government policy making and program delivery. For instance, the broader community has a wide-ranging interest in the efficiency of government programs, equity and diversity, economic prosperity and the consequent increase in employment opportunities.

3.12. The Senate committee articulated quite clearly in its report how failing to meet the educational needs of individuals can negatively impact the larger social and economic milieu, arguing that:

People who neither complete secondary school nor attain post-school qualifications suffer higher levels of unemployment, possess lower levels of labour force mobility, have a greater chance of being retrenched, earn less and undertake less training than people holding these qualifications. These facts indicate the enormous costs that are borne by individuals as well as by government. These costs are both financial and social. The overall effect on the life of the nation in social, political and economic terms is profoundly disadvantageous, and exacerbates already marked income inequality. In an era of accelerated change associated with Australia's integration into the global economy these negative effects are more destructive than ever before.⁴¹

Specific unmet need

3.13. The committee received evidence from all quarters, arguing that provisions for VET in the ACT are not currently meeting the full range of community need. This section is devoted to presenting specific claims of unmet need made by witnesses and submitters during the course of the inquiry. Unmet is taken to mean two things:

1. Gaps in programs, that is where existing programs do not *adequately* meet the needs of learners, industry or the community; and
2. The complete *absence* of programs catering for the needs of the groups identified.

⁴¹ Senate Employment, Workplace Relations, Small Business and Education References Committee (2000) '*Aspiring to Excellence: Report into the Quality of Vocational Education and Training in Australia*' p 3.

3.14. Unmet need was most often seen in terms of a lack of funding for particular programs or client-groups but the committee also received evidence that additional flexibility in many areas of VET administration is necessary to produce optimal outcomes for VET participants.

Secondary school funding

3.15. In its submission, the Secondary College Principals' Association (SCPA) argued that current funding allocations for VET in colleges is insufficient. The Association noted that all colleges cross-subsidise vocational programs from, 'already limited and stretched funds'.⁴² SCPA advised the committee that this cross-subsidisation has resulted in a decline in colleges' capacity to deliver their non-vocational courses. The Association argued that:

TAE estimates the cost of delivery of VET programs from college budgets at approximately \$2.8m. Colleges have to date managed to find these funds by reallocating resources from other college programs. College Principals recognise that the continued growth of VET programs is impacting on the depth and breadth of other college programs and requiring choices to be made about which programs to support.⁴³

3.16. The AEU made mention of the lack of VET funding for secondary schools as a limiter on the degree to which positive outcomes can be produced noting that, 'Funding is clearly inadequate for the number of students in the system. Funding is not sufficient to achieve the expectations of success for VETiS. This funding shortfall needs to be addressed outside of the traditional staffing formulae for Secondary schools'.⁴⁴

3.17. The committee urges the government to consider funding levels for VET in secondary schools and colleges.

Recommendation 1

The committee recommends that the Government provide greater investment in VET for secondary schools and colleges.

Construction industry

3.18. The Master Builders Association of the ACT (MBA) advised the committee that the costs associated with delivering training is significantly higher for its industry than that for

⁴² Submission 14, p 6.

⁴³ Submission 14, p 7.

⁴⁴ Submission 16, p 8.

many other industries as the materials used to provide training can only be used once. The MBA informed the committee that:

We believe that the user choice funding should reflect the appropriate apprenticeship and the cost of materials to deliver that training. For example, we receive the same funding as a group training company that trains motor mechanics. They can actually strip and re-build the same motor time after time. Whereas, once a piece of timber is cut, it is finished with. You can also only hang a door twice before it becomes scrap material.

It is even more expensive to train bricklayers and tilers in our industry and we believe the new User Choice funding should reflect this. Currently we receive \$3,050. We would like to see this increased for the carpentry and painting trades to \$3,500, bricklayers \$4,000 and tillers \$4,000.⁴⁵

3.19. The committee is aware from its visit to the Reid campus of CIT that course offerings in areas such as cooking and butchery, among others, have high costs associated with non-reusable materials.

3.20. The committees agrees that there is a significant disparity in the costs associated with courses that rely heavily on the use of non-reusable materials and urges the Government to give consideration to increasing User Choice funding where this is appropriate.

Recommendation 2

The committee recommends that the Government give consideration to increasing the User Choice funding allocated to training programs delivered to apprentices in the building and construction industry and other affected industries where the materials used to deliver training are disposable and cannot be re-used.

Community and youth sector training

3.21. The Community and Youth Sector Training Council Inc. (CYSTC) expressed concerns about the current capacity of the VET system to deliver positive outcomes for its constituents. In its submission, CYSTC simply argued that, ‘...we believe that the community sector both government and non-government has been very poorly served by the vocational education and training system to date’.⁴⁶

3.22. CYSTC advised the committee that due to rapid growth in the sector, the capacity to deliver more VET courses in community work is required across the spectrum. CYSTC

⁴⁵ Correspondence from MBA ACT to ACT Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Education, 29 November 2003, p 1.

⁴⁶ Submission 1, p 4.

informed the committee that the ACT community and health sector projects a growth rate of 10.4 per cent over the next several years and put the case that this represents an opportunity for many unemployed and low-skilled people to participate in the labour market.⁴⁷

3.23. CYSTC noted that, ‘We need more funded training places at Certificate II, III and IV levels in Community Work, Youth Work, Aged Care, Child Care, Disability Work, Alcohol and Other Drug Work, Mental Health non-clinical work just to meet expected labour shortages in these areas over the next five years’.⁴⁸ CYSTC advocated an increased funding commitment from the ACT Government on the grounds that the sector is largely not-for-profit and does not have discretionary funds to realise training opportunities for their staff, nor to take on trainees. CYSTC argued that:

ACT Government needs to offer real incentives to community sector employers to enable them to take on entry level trainees. They need to provide extra funding to pay for some extra positions in agencies plus provide training incentives. These agencies are non-profit and therefore do not have surplus funds to create new positions like their counterparts in the private sector. A different approach is therefore required. ACT Government departments that fund many of these services also need to be far more proactive about encouraging vocational training, professional development and entry level positions. If government wants professional service delivery then it needs to make a real investment in career pathways within this growing labour market.⁴⁹

3.24. In its submission, CYSTC outlined some of the history regarding provision of training to workers in the community sector. CYSTC advised the committee that in 1999 it was funded to train 108 existing workers in the Certificate III in Community Services (Community Work) and yet while it was a very successful program, the Existing Worker Traineeship option was removed, there was an increase in student fees and there were no financial incentives for employers to assist their staff to attend training. CYSTC argued that:

Surely there could be no more deserving sector than the non-profit community sector to provide employer incentives to assist their workers to access vocational education! Yet in 2002 only existing workers in the Aged Care and Alcohol and Other Drug field were offered places. The RTOs received less than half their usual student fee and students were required to pay a compulsory student fee whilst employers received no financial incentive for losing their employee to off-the-job training time. This in a climate of gross shortages in the disability sector following the Gallop inquiry!⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Submission 1, p 3.

⁴⁸ Submission 1, p 5.

⁴⁹ Submission 1, p 3-4.

⁵⁰ Submission 1, p 5.

3.25. CYSTC made the point that the lack of resourcing for community sector training has resulted in a significant failure to meet the needs of the industry, workers seeking training and the community-at-large. The organisation noted that, ‘This kind of blinkered approach to vocational training in the ACT is particularly unhelpful to organisations such as ours who are trying desperately to promote training and skill development to increasingly pressured community services. It simply makes no economic sense to have such restrictively funded vocational programs’.⁵¹

3.26. The committee agrees that there is a case for providing some type of incentive to the community sector to increase the uptake of traineeships and to increase training opportunities for current workers in the sector. It is also true that if the Government is serious about promoting the value of vocational education, as an employer, it must ensure that community and youth sector workers, so many of whom are employed by the ACT Government, have adequate access to VET programs.

Recommendation 3

The committee recommends that:

- a) the Government investigate, in consultation with the community sector, a means of providing incentives in that sector to encourage the uptake of entry-level trainees and to encourage training for existing community workers; and**
- b) the Government investigate additional funding for VET programs in the community and youth sector generally.**

Prohibitive costs for students

3.27. The committee received evidence from the community sector arguing that current pricing structures for VET can be a severe impost on many students choosing this avenue of study. CYSTC argued that a decision made by the VETA Board in 2001 has meant that students must pay far more to undertake course work than they are able to afford. CYSTC noted that:

Most of our students are unable to afford to pay their fees [\$650] prior to the course commencing and request time [for] payment whilst they are studying. Some students have withdrawn because they cannot afford the student fee. This student fee was raised from between \$250 to \$360 the previous year to match the fees charged by CIT for most of its certificate courses. The raising of these student fees has caused great educational disadvantage for many low income

⁵¹ Submission 1, p 5.

earners. It is generally recognised that most community sector workers are low paid, are often employed on casual contracts and most are women, many also have dependants. We hear many stories of hardship not just from our students but also from other workers in the community sector about their own children...[and] about their clients and the difficulty they have accessing affordable and flexible training.⁵²

3.28. In keeping with the idea that an effective VET system needs to provide equity of access to vocational education opportunities as a component of the public interest, it is of concern to the committee that, on the face of it, many workers in the community and youth sector are unable to take advantage of these opportunities due to affordability issues. The committee believes that the Government should investigate this claim further and consider options which remove access barriers, again perhaps by way of subsidisation.

Recommendation 4

The committee recommends that:

- a) the Government investigate, in consultation with the community sector, the claim that most workers in the community and youth sector are unable to afford VET course fees; and**
- b) should this investigation show that the cost of courses is acting as a significant barrier to access, provisions be implemented to remove this barrier through some form of subsidy.**

Growth industry

3.29. CYSTC argued in its submission that the community sector will experience significant growth in the demand for its services over the next several years and that this opens up a range of employment opportunities. CYSTC noted that:

The ACT Community and health sector indicates a projected growth rate of... [10.4 per cent]⁵³ over the next few years and is clearly an area of opportunity for many unemployed and low-skilled people in the labour market. The numbers of traineeships however in this sector... [are] still quite low and... confined to particular parts of the sector.⁵⁴

3.30. In a similar vein, Community Education and Training argued that despite recognition that the community sector is a growth industry, adequate resourcing of training and

⁵² Submission 1, p 2-3.

⁵³ Revised figure provided by CYSTC

⁵⁴ Submission 1, p 3.

development programs has not been forthcoming. Community Education and Training advised the committee that:

It has taken a good 10 years to convince the training market that in fact they had a bit of a gold mine over here in community services. If they would just put a little bit of energy into it, they could actually create some entry-level positions. It was a growth industry. You did not have to be a Rhodes scholar to work out it was going to continue to grow. In fact, if you read some really good national analysis, you would have known that, you would have already got that picture.

However, at the beginning of this year, the yearly outlook stated complete surprise that the community services industry was growing. It is growing at a rate of 10.4 per cent. It is right up there with building and construction at the moment, which has always been considered the growth industry, yet it is not getting anything like the resourcing it needs to create more training places.⁵⁵

3.31. CYSTC also argued that existing workers in the community and health sectors require additional training in order to be more effective in their roles and to make way for entry-level trainees. In its submission, CYSTC set out the problem in the following terms:

Because so many existing workers in these sectors... do not have qualifications it is necessary to fund the training of existing workers so that they can increase their skill levels and move through their sectors in order to create new entry level places for those people wishing to enter this industry or retrain their way into this industry. This is common sense but despite years of lobbying we still cannot get existing worker training funded in all these areas.⁵⁶

3.32. The committee is concerned that without adequate education and training opportunities available in this sector that a “bottleneck” might be created whereby existing workers’ lack of job mobility militates against job promotion, with potential new workers’ then unable to move into entry-level positions.

3.33. Finally, CYSTC also advised the committee that it believes there is insufficient appreciation in the VET system of the specific needs and industry requirements of the community sector. In its submission, CYSTC conceived that one factor responsible for creating a “disconnect” between wider industry needs and program/curriculum development is a lack of understanding by some involved in the administration of the system as to the shifting nature of work. CYSTC argued that, ‘the current players in the vocational system still come from the old traditional areas of trade and apprenticeship training and fail to understand the changing labour market and the new trends in employment. They don’t communicate with employers in the community sector nor do they include them in the usual promotion campaigns and networks’.⁵⁷ The committee urges the Government to consider these comments in relation to decisions it might make

⁵⁵ Transcript of proceedings, 17 September 2002, p 20, Ms Sattler.

⁵⁶ Submission 1, p 5.

⁵⁷ Submission 1, p 3.

about the appropriate skills sets and industry backgrounds of those providing policy advice to Government (including officers from TAE).

Recommendation 5

The committee recommends that:

- a) the Government investigate extending funding for training to existing workers, especially in those industries where there is a very low base of trained workers; and**
- b) should this investigation prove a need for existing worker training, that a transparent application process be established for affected industries to apply for funding to meet this need.**

Childcare training

3.34. In its submission to the inquiry, Train.2.Work, an RTO involved in the provision of training programs for workers in the childcare industry, argued that a large group of childcare workers are prevented from accessing subsidised vocational training due to the fact that traineeships are not currently available at the diploma level. Train.2.Work noted in its submission that:

Train.2.Work currently delivers the Diploma Community Services (Children's Services). In Children's Services, a traineeship can only be offered in certificate III or IV and therefore the traineeship can be offered only to childcare workers below level 4, Level 4 childcare workers and above must either hold a Diploma or be enrolled in a Diploma. No traineeship is available in the Diploma therefore for a significant group of industry professionals subsidised training is not available.

The demand for a traineeship in a Diploma would be quite high because it would provide child care workers with a career path, greater mobility and increased remuneration.⁵⁸

3.35. In this regard, Train.2.Work made mention of the fact that Queensland offers the Diploma Community Services (Children's Services) as a three year apprenticeship and that the Queensland Government also pay for staff who have worked in the industry for five years to undertake workplace assessor training at the diploma level. Train.2.Work advocated Government investigation of these initiatives and the committee agrees that it is

⁵⁸ Submission 3, p 2

worth examining the Queensland scheme to assess its suitability for application in the ACT.

Recommendation 6

The committee recommends that the Government investigate Queensland initiatives surrounding government-sponsored training for community/childcare workers that have been in the sector for more than five years and assess the potential costs and benefits of similar provisions in the ACT.

IT vocational placements

3.36. The committee was advised that there is currently a paucity of work placements for students involved in IT training. A submission from the Catholic Education Office (CEO) argued that:

... in the Information Technology area, students cannot find enough vocational placements to satisfy current demand. One area for development could be the more comprehensive engagement of the Commonwealth and ACT Public Service in the Student to Industry (SIP) scheme and Student New Apprenticeship Program (SNAP). This would help to alleviate the current shortage of placements for the increasing numbers of students undertaking study in Information Technology.⁵⁹

3.37. The committee urges the Government to consider measures to extend the availability of IT placements.

Recommendation 7

The committee recommends that the Government:

- a) investigate measures to expand the availability of IT industry placements in the private sectors;**

⁵⁹ Submission 2, p 1.

- b) increase the amount of IT industry placements within the ACT Public Service; and**
- c) where industry placements are not possible that practice firms or other practical methods be utilised.**

IT Training for over-50s

3.38. In its submission, Train.2.Work argued that more needed to be done for people over the age of 50 in relation to IT training. Train.2.Work advised the committee that much of the IT training delivered in the ACT for the over-50 age group is directed towards recreational activities rather than producing vocational outcomes. In its submission, Train.2.Work noted that, 'IT training that is vocational and educational is expensive for someone who is not in the workforce. There is a high need for this form of training to assist people to either return to the workforce or to stay in the workforce. This demand is prevalent amongst an older age group who did not have the opportunity to study IT at school or in the workplace'.⁶⁰ The committee agrees that IT training is a crucial competency in most contemporary workplaces and that older people attempting to enter, re-enter or ascend in the workplace are placed at a severe disadvantage without such skills. The committee has adapted a Train.2.Work recommendation in this regard'.⁶¹

Recommendation 8

The committee recommends that the Government investigate the provision of increased funding support for IT courses that are directed towards vocational outcomes for the over-50 age group.

Disadvantaged groups – access and equity

3.39. The third national objective of the Australian VET system is that of, *Achieving equitable outcomes in vocational education and training*. Groups identified as being disadvantaged are: people with a disability; Indigenous people; women; people from non-English speaking backgrounds; and people in rural and remote areas.

3.40. The committee received evidence from a range of contributors to the inquiry regarding the plight of disadvantaged groups involved in the vocational education and training sector. Witnesses argued that more effort must be given to facilitate improved educational and employment outcomes for these groups. CYSTC informed the committee that:

⁶⁰ Submission 3, p 2.

⁶¹ Submission 2, p 2.

Some fresh leadership needs to be brought into the vocational education and training area that understand the needs of women, young people, people with disabilities, indigenous people and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. All these groups are disadvantaged learners in the current labour market.⁶²

3.41. The committee heard that a failure to address the needs of disadvantaged people in the VET system is likely to have considerable social and economic effects in the future. Community Youth Sector Training argued that:

We are relegating them to long-term unemployment or long-term underemployment, and inadequate access to real training for quite a long period of their lives. We are probably looking at some of those young people being in that place for 10 years. That has huge implications for our tax base, for our revenue base, for our ability to support people who are leaving the work force, for our ability to support those aged care facilities, and for our ability to support community services in general. I have a number of concerns about the long-term impact of not addressing that problem.⁶³

3.42. In keeping with the idea that the interests of learners, employers and the community are largely connected in relation to the effective operation of the VET system, the committee agrees that a failure to meet the needs of disadvantaged groups is not only likely to result in poor outcomes for the individuals locked out of the system but will inevitably result in a failure to address the wider community's needs. The committee believes that the Government would be wise to place greater emphasis on meeting the needs of these disadvantaged groups. However, the committee notes the commitment of current and previous ACT governments to disadvantaged groups in the area of VET through development of: *Partners in a Learning Culture – ACT Indigenous Action Plan 2002-2005*; the *ACT Vocational Education and Training Strategy for People with a Disability*; and *Reaching Their Potential – Women and Girls in Vocational Education and Training in the ACT 2001-2003*. The committee is greatly supportive of these specialised strategic planning processes and urges the Government to maintain its efforts in this regard.

Transport subsidy

3.43. In speaking about the needs of trainees involved in the recreation industry, the Recreation Industry Training Company argued that the low wages associated with apprenticeships and trainees places a considerable impost on VET participants, particularly where required activities do not take place in central locations. The company advised the committee that:

⁶² Submission 1, p 3.

⁶³ Transcript of proceedings, 17 September 2002, Ms Sattler. p 19.

Not all recreational activities are based in the Canberra town centres, and trainees are sometimes required to travel significant distances to attend work and off-the job training.

A Year 12 school-leaver entering a traineeship would receive a weekly training wage of between \$247 and \$265 before tax. Year 10 and Year 11 school-leavers received between \$157 and \$219. A monthly ACTION bus pass costs \$80.50.⁶⁴

3.44. To alleviate some of this impost, the company argued that, ‘allowing access to student fares would encourage young people to take up apprenticeships and traineeships further from their homes.’⁶⁵ The committee agrees that transportation costs can act as a barrier to the uptake of traineeships and apprenticeships and urges the Government to investigate whether some form of subsidy can be implemented to remove this barrier.

Recommendation 9

The committee recommends that the Government investigate the implementation of a public transport subsidy for young apprentices and trainees, or better publicise any existing subsidies that apply to trainees and apprentices, including the consideration of extending the student concession to this group.

People at-risk

3.45. Many contributors to the inquiry spoke of the importance of VET programs in helping “at-risk” students achieve educational and employment outcomes. In its submission, CYSTC argued that the VET system must increase its focus on improving outcomes for young people at-risk, making mention of a paper, *‘How are Young People Faring in 2001’* by Richard Curtain. Commenting on the paper, CYSTC noted that:

...[Richard Curtain] outlines the issues for a growing number of young people who cannot obtain either full-time work or full-time study. He describes these young people as at-risk in the labour market. He details statistics which compares the numbers of these young people in all states and territories. In the ACT the percentage of the youth population aged 15-19 who are at-risk has risen from 8.4% in 1999 to 17.4 % in 2001. This tells the real story about young people in the ACT. Despite good economic growth in the ACT young people have not benefited in terms of jobs, training or increased outcomes. This is critical to understand what needs to be done to improve vocational education and training for young people and adults in the ACT.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Submission 6, p 10.

⁶⁵ Submission 6, p 10.

⁶⁶ Submission 1, p 2.

3.46. Community Education and Training informed the committee that young people at-risk are not taking up opportunities to participate in VET noting that:

My biggest frustration is that the very young people who could probably benefit most from being able to access voc ed courses are the ones who are not getting into them. It is our high achievers who are actually pursuing the voc ed arm—the smart ones who have good support and good advice are having a leg in both camps. They are doing a tertiary stream and a voc ed stream at the same time.⁶⁷

3.47. While the committee is pleased that school based VET is being undertaken by all sections of the secondary school population it is concerned that significant barriers may exist in relation to at-risk students. Further, the committee was particularly alarmed that the at-risk population had doubled in a two-year period. The Secondary College Principals' Association made mention of the need to enhance support for at-risk students participating in VET in Schools, advising the committee that there are several barriers to effective participation for at-risk learners. The Association noted that:

National agreements state that vocational learning should be a feature of every student's educational experience. However many of the courses designed around Training packages are not particularly suitable for "at-risk" students.

College principals are grappling with the question of how best to develop work readiness in this group of students and are at the developmental stage of trialling and improving appropriate programs and courses. Experience to date has shown that the success of any pilots in the VET area depend on:

- a perception, by students that the course has a high status;
- students being willing (and financially able to) travel;
- courses offered are at a time that does not conflict with students' other commitments (this includes other college commitments); and
- adequate resourcing to administer and manage the liaison [that] is provided.⁶⁸

3.48. The MBA, in correspondence with the committee, advised the committee of a program it has run for students at-risk which, it argued, has been effective in delivering positive outcomes. The MBA informed the committee that:

Recently, we entered into an arrangement to work with Ginninderra High School which, I believe, has been a very successful program. Potentially, the ten participants in this course were at risk of dropping out of the school/education system and becoming third generation unemployed. We believe that this is an extremely worthwhile initiative and should be continued... One of the

⁶⁷ Transcript of proceedings, 17 September 2002, p 21, Ms Sattler.

⁶⁸ Submission 14. p 4.

frustrations of running these initiatives is that once promised funding to run them, we end up having to chase up the program and initially covering the costs ourselves, often leaving us with a cash shortage.

We would like to expand on this program next year to include the Southside schools as, in the long-term, if we can get these young people motivated to work, over time it will be cheaper for Governments as they will not be joining the dole queues.⁶⁹

3.49. Based on a broad range of evidence, the committee came to the view that the Government must renew its commitment to learners, particularly young learners, at-risk. The committee agrees that a failure to address the needs of students at-risk is not only likely to result in poor outcomes for the students themselves but also that the wider ACT community will be poorly served in the long-term. The committee has adapted a recommendation proposed by the Secondary College Principals Association directed towards enhancing provisions for at-risk students involved in VETiS.

Recommendation 10

The committee recommends that the Government:

- a) implement a renewed policy focus on “at-risk” people involved, or wanting to be involved, in the pursuit of vocational education and training programs;**
- b) provide adequate resourcing to administer and manage the development of programs for “at risk” students or the incorporation of appropriate VETiS courses into such a program; and**
- c) establish a working party to discuss and progress issues surrounding the development of programs to aid the transition from high school to college and the role of VETiS in assisting “at risk” students (and that the working party be made up of a wide range of representatives from across the education, training and youth sector).**

Adult literacy and numeracy – learning support

3.50. The committee received a submission from the ACT Council of Adult Literacy arguing that learning support programs have been reduced over the last five years.⁷⁰ The Council made the point that VET programs, and National Training Packages in particular,

⁶⁹ Correspondence from MBA ACT to ACT Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Education, 29 November 2003, p 1.

⁷⁰ Submission 4, p 1.

demand high levels of numeracy and literacy and that increased resourcing for learning support programs is essential to produce positive outcomes for learners. The Council argued that:

National Training Packages for all their advantages in addressing industry need and consistency in national qualifications have produced sometimes insurmountable difficulties for the learner participants in this system. Learners are required to use higher levels of literacy and numeracy and independent learning skills than those previously expected of apprentices and trainees. They are called upon to work on self-paced materials and participate in diverse flexible learning arrangements, all of which dictate highly developed learner confidence and skills.⁷¹

3.51. In its submission the Council argued that while TAE fund learning support upon application, many barriers still exist to the take up of that funding including:

- lack of promotion of VET providers [regarding] the availability of and process to follow in applying for funding;
- extended periods between applying for funding and receiving feedback that this has been granted, often after the period for which funding was intended or after the support program has finished or with no feedback at all; and
- onerous reporting of outcomes which are difficult to gauge when the provision is often integrated into the training program and its impact cannot be assessed in isolation of the training effort.⁷²

3.52. To remedy some of the difficulties associated with the provision of learning support in relation to Training Packages, the Council argued that the Government must ensure that:

- learning support for participants is responsive, flexible and available to all who request it; adult learners who do not need support, don't participate in support programs;
- implementation of Training Packages requires a plan for the equitable support of training participants; and
- information is provided to VET RTOs to encourage them to identify specific needs and apply for funding to address these needs before the learner is unable to cope in the system and becomes a drop-out statistic.⁷³

⁷¹ Submission 4, p 1.

⁷² Submission 4, p 2.

⁷³ Submission 4, p 2.

3.53. The committee agrees that learning support is a vital form of assistance for many learners undertaking VET programs, particularly Training Packages. The committee concurs with the ACT Council for Adult Literacy when it says that in order for the ANTA priorities for the VET system to be realised to obtain fair and equitable outcomes, ‘the issues of adequate and timely support must be considered and initiatives implemented to encourage this’.⁷⁴ The committee urges the Government to consider how it can best ensure that learners requiring support are able to access it via streamlined funding processes.

Recommendation 11

The committee recommends that the Government instigate measures that will ensure that all learners requiring some degree of literacy or numeracy support are able to access this support in a timely and expeditious manner.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

3.54. The committee also received evidence from community education provider, Community Education and Training, advising the committee that current provisions for Indigenous learners are not producing acceptable educational and employment outcomes. Community Education and Training informed the committee that:

Our indigenous outcomes are appalling. Of all the states and territories that could be providing good models, only the ACT is not... As a youth worker I am seeing the siblings of the kids I worked with five years ago. I am seeing their relatives come along in the next half generation. We can all count how many of them are going on to year 12 on maybe two hands, if we are lucky.⁷⁵

3.55. The committee received evidence from a young Aboriginal woman, Ms Danusha Cubillo, who was awarded the Indigenous Student of the Year in the Training Excellence Awards in 2001. Ms Cubillo advised the committee that she confronted several problems during the course of her post-school education. Ms Cubillo informed the committee that she had some bad experiences at university which left her feeling that a university education did not meet her needs as an Indigenous student.

3.56. Ms Cubillo relayed a story to the committee about how the university in question failed to provide sufficient flexibility regarding the completion of her course work following the death of a close relative. Ms Cubillo noted that:

... a person that ran the program... said to me that I couldn’t go away to my sister’s funeral. She had committed suicide and the family wouldn’t have the funeral unless I was there. I told the teacher I had to go and I couldn’t hand in

⁷⁴ Submission 4, p 2.

⁷⁵ Transcript of proceedings, 17 September 2003, Ms Sattler, p 17.

an assignment that was due about that time. She told me she'd fail me for the course if I left. I had to leave, so she failed me.⁷⁶

3.57. As a result of this experience, Ms Cubillo made a decision to leave the university. The committee was concerned about the lack of a culturally appropriate and culturally sensitive approach to this matter but was pleased to learn that when Ms Cubillo later enrolled at CIT, she found the teaching staff much more flexible and understanding about her needs. Ms Cubillo later completed a traineeship through the Commonwealth Community Development Employment Program. Ms Cubillo expressed her disappointment that the traineeship program did not provide her with a mentor and that there were no employment opportunities arising out of the program. Ms Cubillo informed the committee that:

I found that, having no mentor, it was very difficult to talk to someone about problems I was having with the staff. How do I handle it? What do I do?

The thing that really upset me was that there was no job on completion of the traineeship. I was unemployed and basically turned out onto the street – another jobseeker again. I thought I would get at least... weekend work or be asked to come back one day a month or something just to work and earn a few dollars. I had all the experience and then I couldn't use it... I worked a full year for both organisations, and I haven't had a phone call or anything from them since completing. It's like I don't exist anymore. And then they just get another trainee. I don't know if they have, but I heard a lot of places do that – you finish one day, and the new trainee comes in the next day.⁷⁷

3.58. Ms Cubillo advised the committee that effective mentors are invaluable in opening up networks and contacts for prospective employment and that once she found a suitable mentor her employment prospects opened up considerably. Ms Cubillo noted that:

You need good mentors. It is only recently that I have found a very good mentor. She was the one that helped me get the job I've got now...

After speaking with her, I've had nothing but phone calls for jobs. "Come in. We've got interviews for this," or, "Are you interested in coming in for an interview for that?" Dealing with her I applied for about six jobs, and I did three interviews in one week and had two jobs come back.⁷⁸

3.59. The committee was informed several times throughout the inquiry about the importance of mentors, not only for Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islanders but for all involved in undertaking VET programs. However, Ms Cubillo eloquently described the particular importance of mentoring for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people involved in the VET system, especially for someone new to the Territory, noting that:

⁷⁶ Transcript of proceedings, 18 March 2003, Ms Danusha Cubillo p 92.

⁷⁷ Transcript of proceedings, 18 March 2003, Ms Danusha Cubillo p 95.

⁷⁸ Transcript of proceedings, 18 March 2003, Ms Danusha Cubillo, p 95.

Being an Aboriginal person and coming from another country is hard because you're in a place where you don't know the customs or the laws or things you've got to abide by. You don't know who's the elder. You know nothing. You need to have a person you can call and say you think you made a mistake or to ask if you should talk to this person or that person about an issue... In the traineeship, it was just that I didn't have someone I could bounce back stuff off.⁷⁹

3.60. When asked about the value that the Students' Association at CIT in supporting her needs, Ms Cubillo noted her reluctance to seek support saying that, 'They're not people I would approach for indigenous issues. They're not people I feel can help me in that way. I'd rather go to someone who's my own kind, someone who I feel would have a better understanding. There are a lot of white people who go and live in Aboriginal communities and may have an understanding, but I'd go and see someone who is black'.⁸⁰

3.61. The committee places great importance on ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are properly supported in undertaking vocational education and training. The provision of culturally appropriate support and advice can make the difference between the success and the failure of a student to achieve their aspirations in a VET setting. In addition, students with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds also require appropriate support services to meet their needs.

Recommendation 12

The committee recommends that the Government ensure there are culturally appropriate support and mentoring services available for Indigenous students and other students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds undertaking VET programs in the ACT.

ACT and Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry

3.11. A submission from the ACT and Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry cited research it had conducted about employers' broad perceptions as to what areas of the VET system require additional attention. The Chamber informed the committee that many employers believe that:

- schools focus on tertiary entrance rather than preparing young people for the world of work;
- vocational education and training is still regarded as a second class option by parents and teachers when compared to...[university education] [something the committee discusses later in the report];

⁷⁹ Transcript of proceedings, 18 March 2003, Ms Danusha Cubillo, p 96.

⁸⁰ Transcript of proceedings, 18 March 2003, Ms Danusha Cubillo, p 96.

- the education system is not keeping pace with the social, economic and technological changes;
- rapid changes within industries and occupations and newly emerging career pathways are not being communicated effectively to educators, parents or students;
- there is insufficient resourcing for, and lack of industry involvement in the provision of career advice and guidance to schools, and a general lack of industry engagement in the secondary sector; and
- there is inflexibility in school timetables to suit the needs of students and employers who are involved in school based apprenticeships and traineeships.⁸¹

3.62. The committee notes these observations were shared by many of the contributors to the inquiry from across the spectrum. The committee urges the Government to consider these views in further developing VET-related policy initiatives.

Teachers' workload

3.63. The AEU advised the committee that a deterioration of funding support has placed an increasing onus on teachers to perform administrative tasks not traditionally undertaken by teachers. The union argued that this has an impact on the ability of teachers to perform their key role of actually teaching. The union noted that:

We undertook a workload survey of our members last year and a lot of anecdotal evidence has been before us saying that there is an increased burden on teachers for administrative responsibility, and that leaves less and less time for teachers to focus on what they perceive to be their core business, and that is of educational delivery or teaching. That shift towards the administration of the system is largely because of the resources being withdrawn. So teachers are being asked to take up more and more of the burden of that administrative responsibility where previously that may have been able to be funded through support staff.⁸²

3.64. The AEU made the point that a two-dimensional model of workload involving the number of students and the length of time spent teaching is an inadequate measure. The union put the case that complexity also has a bearing on the extent of work undertaken by teachers. The union conceived complexity as, '... a function of all those diverse tasks, and increasingly diverse tasks, that teachers are asked to do on a day-to-day basis almost simultaneously'.⁸³

⁸¹ Submission 10, p 2.

⁸² Transcript of proceedings, 18 March 2003, p 108, Mr McNevin.

⁸³ Transcript of proceedings, 18 March 2003, p 108, Mr McNevin.

3.65. The committee heard that VET teachers have particularly burdensome workloads due to the extra administrative tasks for which they are responsible. In its submission to the inquiry, ACTIVE put the case that there is a “huge burden” upon college teachers and co-ordinators involved in vocational education and training, arguing that the workload goes beyond what other non-vocational teachers are required to do.⁸⁴ ACTIVE made the point that in addition to their responsibilities for teaching VET courses, VET teachers are usually involved in teaching tertiary and accredited courses.

3.66. In this regard, ACTIVE submitted that VET teachers have the following additional tasks placed on them:

- Organising vocational placements for students;
- Visiting vocational placements and addressing problems which sometimes arise (and often involve phone calls to employers, parents);
- Assessing competencies as well as undertaking grade-based assessment;
- Recording competencies on the Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS) vocational database;
- Participating in record keeping etc for RTO accreditation;
- Supervising SNAPs students (often without an additional time allowance);
- Fulfilling professional development and industry experience requirements of Training Packages;
- Achieving Workplace Assessor and Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training;
- Attending meetings with industry to stay abreast of the industry (eg Industry Links meetings);
- Becoming familiar with different versions of the training packages and accompanying resources;
- Rewriting courses (or having input to these) to stay in line with Training Package changes; and
- Responding to numerous vocational education reviews and surveys.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Submission 12, p 3.

⁸⁵ Submission 12, p 3.

3.67. CYSTC also supported the assertion that VET teachers working in colleges have an inordinate workload noting that, ‘Vocational education teachers in the colleges are working under ridiculous pressure to deliver vocational courses. They often have a vocational load as well as other subject loads and are often marking the same students under 2 or 3 different systems’.⁸⁶

3.68. In its joint submission to the inquiry, the NSW/ACT Independent Education Union and Independent Schools Staff Association also concurred with the assessment that VET teachers have workloads above and beyond those of non-VET teachers arguing that the ACT is unique in this regard. The unions noted that:

... the expectation on schools, and teachers in particular, in the ACT far exceeds those experienced by teachers in other States/Territories in respect of Vocational Education and Training... As a consequence of decisions of government and statutory authorities, schools in the ACT have had to undertake responsibilities that are not encumbered upon their colleges in other jurisdictions. This has resulted in schools in the ACT being required, in addition to teaching VET courses, to undertake additional work and responsibility for their RTO status, additional workload from ‘dual’ assessment requirements and work related to student work-experience placement. In other States/Territories, the impact of the VET agenda has meant, at the most, responsibility for the delivery of some of the training program.⁸⁷

3.69. On the face of it, there does appear to be an extra level of burden placed on teachers involved in teaching VET in schools. The committee has adopted part of a recommendation put forward by ACTTIVE suggesting that a review be conducted to ascertain the workload of VET teachers.

Recommendation 13

The committee recommends that:

- a) the Government undertake an audit of the workload of vocational teachers, taking into account the difference between VET and other courses in schools; and**
- b) should this audit uncover a great disparity in the respective workloads of VET and non-VET teachers, that steps are taken to apply more resources so that workloads are more equitably distributed.**

⁸⁶ Submission 1, p 6.

⁸⁷ Submission 18, p 6.

Professional development for teachers

3.70. Several contributors to the inquiry mentioned the importance of ensuring that teachers involved in VET have regular contact with industry to keep their skills and knowledge up-to-date. ACTIVE expressed concerns that current provisions for allowing teachers to participate in industry experience opportunities are inadequate. ACTIVE noted that:

Training packages often require vocational teachers to undertake regular industry experience. One week of industry experience per year is onerous if taken in stand-down time, and difficult for relief staffing if in term time. The quality of experience offered to teachers has varied considerably, from real involvement in the organisation's work to repetitious, menial tasks.⁸⁸

3.71. Mrs Robyn House, an education consultant, expressed a need to implement a professional development strategy for the VET sector which builds on the potential networking opportunities between college teachers and CIT teachers. Mrs House noted that:

I would like to see a professional development strategy that is premised on action research, action learning, communities of practice, shared knowledge, cost-neutral activities that encompass mentoring, shadowing, pairing with others—and that taps into the areas that have the expertise. Can I say the public provider in the ACT has tremendous amounts of expertise. I think that one of the ways that teachers of VET in schools could feel more confident about what they're doing is if there were some relationships or partnering set up between those teachers in the public provider, who have been through all of these things before and have learned what works and what doesn't, and teachers in VET in schools who are really struggling to fit VET into an already crowded program. It's not that they don't value it or see its worth. It's just that they're trying to fit it in and it's not easy to do.⁸⁹

3.72. The committee supports the development of an over-arching professional development strategy for teachers involved with VET in schools.

Recommendation 14

The committee recommends that the Government establish a working party (comprised of relevant stakeholders) to:

⁸⁸ Submission 12, p 7.

⁸⁹ Transcript of proceedings, 17 September 2002, Ms Robyn House, p 5.

- a) **investigate feasible, economical and efficient means of providing broad and regular access to industry experience opportunities for vocational education teachers;**
- b) **develop, in consultation, a professional development strategy for teachers involved with VET in schools, which emphasises the importance of mentoring and strengthening the relationships between college VET teachers and teachers from CIT; and**
- c) **that industry experience should be flexible to meet the demands of teachers, while at the same time giving them the relevant experience they need to teach courses.**

Relief teachers

3.73. ACTIVE informed the committee that there is a lack of relief teachers capable of delivering VET courses in the ACT noting that this is the case, ‘... particularly with the introduction of higher minimum qualifications for trainers through the new Australian Quality Training Framework standards’.⁹⁰ ACTIVE advocated a renewed effort to attract qualified VET teachers into the ACT education system.

Recommendation 15

The committee recommends that the Government undertake an urgent effort to identify and recruit qualified vocational relief teachers.

Teacher mobility

3.74. In its submission to the inquiry, ACTIVE argued that mobility requirements in the ACT Government School system can result in a loss of corporate knowledge and expertise for college VET programs when VET teachers change schools. ACTIVE submitted that new vocational teachers in the government system have limited tenure in colleges, with a consequent loss of expertise and wastage of professional development funds spent by colleges on their training. To counter this, ACTIVE argued that VET teachers should be exempt from the standard mobility requirements in the public system. The committee believes that this suggestion warrants further consideration by the Government, specifically in relation to the question as to whether colleges should act as specialist centres for particular VET course offerings.

⁹⁰ Submission 12, p 2.

Recommendation 16

The committee recommends that the Government:

- a) investigate mobility requirements of VET teachers; and**
- b) consider training interested high school teachers as vocational teachers and including Workplace Assessor Training in the pre-service training given at the University of Canberra's Education courses.**

Sharing teaching resources

3.75. In its submission, ACTTIVE made a case for encouraging the interchange between college and high school VET teachers to allow increased flexibility, especially where a teacher is on leave for an extended period of time. ACTTIVE argued that, 'appropriate teachers in high schools are not currently used to fill in for college vocational teachers on extended leave. A replacement or exchange system would benefit colleges and give the high school teacher greater breadth of experience'.⁹¹ The committee considers that this proposal has merit and urges the Government to consider the wider implications of such a scheme and to move towards implementation if the benefits outweigh any potential negative impacts.

Recommendation 17

The committee recommends that the Government examine the proposal to encourage high schools and colleges to co-operate in sharing qualified VET staff.

Non-government schools

3.76. As noted, the committee received a joint submission from the NSW/ACT Independent Education Union and the Independent Schools Staff Association outlining their priorities for action concerning VET arrangements.

3.77. The unions echoed the views of ACTTIVE, the AEU and the Secondary Principal's Association in relation to the excessive workloads of VET teachers when compared to non-VET teachers. The unions noted that:

... the current ACT model relies almost exclusively on the schools and colleges to deliver and assess Vocational Education curriculum. Consequently,

⁹¹ Submission 12, p 2.

substantial workloads are undertaken by vocational teachers and vocational coordinators to deliver the programs...

Very often, the workload of the vocational teacher is higher than the workload of the non-vocational teacher, with little or no recognition or support. In particular the “doubling” up of assessment and reporting requirements is a particular issue in this sector.⁹²

3.78. To address this, the unions proposed that vocational teachers receive the equivalent of 0.5 of a teaching line release for each vocational class taught. The unions also advocated that:

... coordinators be classified as coordinator 1, (equivalent to head of subject/department) as per the relevant certified/enterprise agreement, and received the equivalent time release for that position. Additionally, where the coordinator is responsible for the RTO status of the school/college, they will receive an additional teaching line of release and where the coordinator is responsible for SNAP at the school/college, they will receive an additional teaching line of release.

3.79. In addition, the unions called on the Department of Education, Youth and Family Services, the Catholic Education Office and the Association of Independent Schools to, ‘develop and implement appropriate staffing resources, including clerical/administrative, to assist in alleviating teacher workload’.

3.80. The committee notes that it is not in a position, nor is it the role of an Assembly committee, to make recommendations as to the employment conditions of teachers in non-government schools but appreciates their reason for making this point.

3.81. The committee notes that the unions, in their submission, provide in-principal support to the positions and recommendations outlined in the ACTIVE submission.

⁹² Submission 18, p 7.

Chapter 4. Issues – administration and promotion

4.1. The committee received evidence from nearly all contributors to the inquiry indicating that considerable work is required to improve the administration and promotion of VET in the ACT to a point where optimal outcomes are realised for the learners involved in the system and the various industries that rely on particular training and education outcomes. The committee gained the impression from submitters and witnesses from across the spectrum of stakeholder groups that while there has been much rhetoric about the value and status of VET in the ACT, a commensurate policy commitment with adequate resourcing and ‘championing’ on behalf of current and previous governments, as well as, the Education Department has not been forthcoming.

4.2. In its submission, CYSTC argued that the department does not place a high level of importance on vocational education and training. CYSTC noted that:

The Training and Adult Education Branch within the Department of Education and Community Services tries to tackle this task with limited resources, high staff turnover and a history of poor leadership. This branch carries very little weight within the larger department and vocational education and training is regarded as the lesser important part of the portfolio. This is the impression that we have gained from seven years of experience as a registered training organisation.⁹³

4.3. Community Education and Training argued similarly that:

One of the problems is the way TAE is positioned within the department of education as a very poor cousin. It does not have a lot of say and it does not have a lot of power within the department. It has lost funding at various times. When it does not spend all of its allocation, its allocation is taken back into the bigger department, and that has happened every year that I can remember.⁹⁴

4.4. The committee came upon this theme, or variations on it, from numerous submitters, witnesses and other individuals and organisations it met with over the course of the inquiry. The committee acknowledges that governments of all flavours are required to make difficult decisions in allocating scarce resources to particular areas of service delivery whether in the Education portfolio or any other. However, if the ACT as a community is serious about elevating the status and efficient operation of the VET sector, the committee believes a renewal of VET administration is required at the highest decision-making levels.

4.5. Further, the committee would add that it is always easy to have money go into the traditional educational areas of primary and secondary education without really knowing

⁹³ Submission 1, p 4.

⁹⁴ Transcript of proceedings, 17 September 2003, p 20, Ms Sattler.

how the money is spent. The committee notes that proponents of VET have traditionally had far less political lobbying muscle than other educational sectors.

4.6. As noted earlier in the report, the Training and Adult Education (TAE) section of the Department of Employment, Youth and Family Services is primarily responsible for the regulation and administration of VET in the ACT. During the inquiry, the committee received evidence from numerous witnesses about how TAE can improve its processes, policies and focus to deliver improved VET outcomes in the ACT. Many comments in this section of the report are directed towards how the Government might improve its policy approach and how the department might renew its commitment to vocational education and training. As noted, some of the committee's recommendations are prescriptive, while others attempt to highlight the concerns expressed by witnesses and urge the Government to consider the most appropriate responses via their own investigations.

4.7. Some of the main themes the committee examines in this Chapter are:

- the existence of excessively bureaucratic structures and the need to reduce red-tape;
- the need to better align industry needs with policy and curriculum/program development, including the development of improved prognostic tools for assessing emerging and growth industries where focus should be concentrated;
- New Apprenticeships are not being effectively marketed by New Apprenticeship Centres (NACs);
- there is variable quality and differing levels of service provision and advice in relation to group training companies and industry training advisory boards
- the importance of career guidance and advice in schools and the need for additional funding to provide adequate levels of service in this area;
- the need to strengthen the promotion and marketing of VET in schools; and
- better communication between VET providers, the government and industry.

4.8. Again, readers interested in a more thorough, in-depth, background regarding the administrative provisions of VET in the ACT are referred to the Government submission (Appendix A).

Improving VET promotion and communication

4.9. Many witnesses informed the committee that information and advice about VET programs and initiatives is, in many instances, poorly communicated to stakeholders. The committee heard time and time again that those involved in the sector find it hard to access relevant, up-to-date information and that a more coordinated approach is required. Commenting on the importance of effective and coordinated promotion to encourage

student uptake of particular VET programs, the Secondary College Principals' Association argued that, 'The major issue confronting the viability of course offerings appears to that of promotion. Students are keen to enrol in courses where they see that there is a high likelihood of employment, the program is interesting and most importantly is perceived by them as having a high status... This promotion needs to be conducted at a number of levels and requires the support of DEYFS, ITABs and industry itself'.⁹⁵

4.10. Following on from this, the committee was impressed with evidence given by an independent education consultant involved in advising the university sector on VET programs, Mrs Robyn House, who mirrored the views of many inquiry participants noted that:

I think we need clear and consistent information to all of the participants in VET. I think at times we don't have that. I think there are areas where the messages are inconsistent, and sometimes inaccurate, not helpful and confusing to the people who really need that information. So I think that one of the things that we really should be doing is focusing on how to get that consistent, accurate and timely information out to all of the players...

When changes occur – and sometimes they're big changes – the information trickles out to some people and comes out in a torrent for others. In both respects people find it very difficult to find their place in those changed systems.⁹⁶

4.11. Mrs House conceived one of the barriers to effective communication and promotion as being the lack of a coordinated and integrated effort. Mrs House argued that current provisions for promotion are ad hoc and fail to adequately identify target audiences and to contextualise promotional opportunities in a consistent, coherent framework. Mrs House advised the committee that:

I think we need to avoid piecemeal, unfocused, one-off promotional activities that tend to dilute the message. I think there should be careful consideration of how national initiatives fit into the ACT, both as a broad implementation requirement and also as part of the whole of the promotion strategy that TAE is endeavouring to develop.

I think the promotion policy and implementation should be predicated on targeted, clear and simple messages, based on... the simple principles of: who is the receiver, what is the purpose, what is the context? Promotion is not and should not be about forests forgone. It shouldn't be quantities of glossy brochures that don't hit the mark, or sit in boxes, never to be sighted by the people who would really value them. It's not about all-purpose, dense booklets that make trying to work your way through them impossible and turn people

⁹⁵ Submission 14, p 9.

⁹⁶ Transcript of proceedings, 17 September 2003, Mrs House, p 2.

off. It's not about information overload—or, alternatively, the information desert, where no information reaches the people who most need it.

I think they should be aiming to deliver consistent messages clearly and effectively through all their channels. The purpose should be to reach the people who need to know, and the people whose support is critical to the success of VET in the ACT. I think the promotion strategy should be efficient. It should involve efficient, cost-effective networking strategies that are not depending on funding or individuals to be sustaining. Too often we have projects that are funded that are wonderful and when the funding runs out they die—or, when the champion who has been leading the project moves on, no-one is there to carry it on.⁹⁷

4.12. The Construction Industry Training Council provided the committee with one stark example of how inappropriate methods of disseminating information can hamper efforts to promote vocational education in particular industries. Commenting on the communication barriers confronting many traditional trades in the building industry, CITC informed the committee that:

a lot of the promotion work and the sorts of expectations are that all industries are the same... the people who train apprentices in our industry are usually one-on-one small businesses, they are subbies. Those subbies work on faxes and mobiles, yet everything is driven down a computer, the internet...⁹⁸

4.13. In its submission to the inquiry, ACTIVE made the point that the effective promotion of VET programs and courses is impeded by the lack of a central, co-ordinated approach. ACTIVE advocated a stronger and more prominent role for the department in this regard, arguing that:

In recent years there has been little system-level promotion of vocational courses (apart from marketing of SNAPs), compared to the late 1990s when DEYFS teams undertook a variety of marketing activities. The burden of promotion has largely fallen upon colleges, who have limited time and resources for this. A centrally organised effort would be much more efficient and maintain the knowledge base of high school students.⁹⁹

4.14. Mrs House also advocated an increased role for the department supporting a, 'refocus [of] TAE's role in VET implementation, to be the leader, innovator and facilitator, not just the regulator. Ensure that TAE is well resourced, and then expect quality outcomes'.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Transcript of proceedings, 17 September 2003, Ms Robyn House, p 4.

⁹⁸ Transcript of proceedings, 17 September 2003, Mr Vince Ball, p 11.

⁹⁹ Submission 12, p 4.

¹⁰⁰ Transcript of proceedings, 17 September 2003, Mrs Robyn House, p 5.

Communication strategy

4.15. The committee received evidence advocating the development of a comprehensive communication strategy setting out a broad ranging examination of how information can be better communicated and tailored to the various audiences involved in the VET sector. Ms Robyn House advised the committee that:

On the subject of promotion of VET, again I think this is a challenge because you're trying to deliver messages to a range of stakeholders who have different needs and wish to access their information in different ways. So I think what's needed here is a comprehensive communication strategy with clearly stated goals, clearly defined outcomes, including an evaluation strategy which tells us whether we've actually achieved what we set out to do or not, and review and reporting mechanisms that are disseminated to the VET audience.¹⁰¹

4.16. The committee is strongly of the view that improving the provision of VET-related information to key stakeholders requires a dedicated effort by Government. The committee believes that a formalised strategic planning process, which identifies methods for better targeting and customising information for the full range of stakeholders, is warranted. The committee makes a recommendation to this effect below.

Improving public perceptions

4.17. The committee was also informed repeatedly that aside from the issue of improving promotion and marketing of individual VET programs and courses, much more must be done to improve the esteem with which VET is held in the public mind. Many argued that a renewed promotional commitment must target underlying assumptions about the notion that VET is the “second best option” or the “poor cousin” to university education. The Senate committee made mention of this in its report noting that, ‘There are many negative perceptions within the community regarding VET. These perceptions are ultimately reducible to the belief that to undertake VET is somehow inferior to university study, with its attendant prestige, status and respect. Thus VET is seen as a poor second option for those not “bright” enough to attain university entrance.’¹⁰²

4.18. It is this committee's view that the value of VET is beyond question, yet much could be done to improve the status of VET in the community mind. The committee sees worth in strengthening general public awareness raising campaigns emphasising VET as a viable, valid and valuable educational pathway.

¹⁰¹ Transcript of proceedings, 17 September 2002, Ms House, p 4.

¹⁰² Senate Employment, Workplace Relations, Small Business and Education References Committee (2000) ‘*Aspiring to Excellence: Report into the Quality of Vocational Education and Training in Australia*’ p 4.

Recommendation 18

The committee recommends that the Government fund, develop and implement a comprehensive vocational education and training communication strategy that:

- a) Identifies individual communication strategies specifically targeting the different audiences involved in the VET sector (ie teachers, providers, learners, particular industry/employers etc) and articulates how best to provide information to these groups;**
- b) Provides a centralised information point through both a telephone number and a website portal;**
- c) encourages other relevant bodies and organisations to renew efforts in promoting vocational education;**
- d) affirms TAE's role as a leader, facilitator and communicator in the VET sector;**
- e) raises public awareness and positively influences community attitudes about the value and status of vocational education programs;**
- f) contains identifiable outcomes and related performance measures; and**
- g) is reviewed regularly to measure performance against stated outcomes.**

TAE premises

4.19. One witness appearing on behalf of the Utilities and Light Manufacturing Industry Training Board expressed particular concerns about the manner in which TAE communicates with its clients at their premises. The representative informed the committee that apprentices seeking information or advice at the offices of TAE are required to make contact with an officer from TAE via a telephone in the foyer. The representative advised the committee that:

First of all you arrive there [at the TAE premises] to ask somebody about your contract of training particularly apprentices, young apprentices. You are confronted with a telephone with two doors in front of you with security codes

on them. I see that as diabolical. If you are going to talk about promoting VET, why would you do that to your client? I think it is a disgrace... There used to be a nice shopfront there and it was well used, but economics obviously have got rid of that shopfront. If you are going to promote VET, and you are going to provide a service to apprentices, you don't have a phone there with a list of telephone numbers, and [an apprentice] wouldn't have a clue who [he or she was] going to ring anyway. So I don't like that at all.¹⁰³

4.20. The committee agrees that this approach would seem to act as a significant barrier to apprentices and other clients groups wishing to access information, advice and support. The committee urges the government to review this issue.

Recommendation 19

The committee recommends that Government review the operation of the system within TAE for liaising and communicating with its clients at its premises with a view to improving the accessibility of departmental officers. The review should consider the re-introduction of a shopfront.

Reducing red-tape, improving process

4.21. The committee received evidence from all quarters of the VET sector calling for a reduction in red-tape, streamlined and prompt tendering processes, and more flexibility in the administration of the VET system generally. While some of the issues that submitters remarked upon are strictly the domain of the Federal Government, other concerns related to areas where the ACT Government can have an impact.

RTO reporting

4.22. Many submitters complained that AQTF reporting requirements in relation to RTO accreditation are cumbersome and involve RTOs applying intensive resourcing to undertake effectively. Private RTOs conceived the problem in terms of inadequate funding to cover compliance costs, while teachers involved with VET in schools saw AQTF compliance as taking away time that could be spent teaching. The Construction Industry Training Council argued in its submission that AQTF compliance and audit requirements have, 'added significant costs to the administration of RTOs which has not been offset by funding increases'.¹⁰⁴ This was a view echoed by the ACT Association of Providers of Training Services (APTS) and the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET), both peak organisations for RTOs.

¹⁰³ Transcript of proceedings, 17 September 2002, Mr Taylor, p 44.

¹⁰⁴ Submission 7, p 3.

4.23. ACPET explained its position in the following terms:

We accept regulation, we accept quality assurance, all of those things are important. But we are concerned that the compliance costs associated with the AQTF and the way it's administered at state and territory level are growing all the time and there's insufficient recognition by government that those costs inhibit the provision of training.¹⁰⁵

4.24. Speaking on behalf of ACT teachers involved in VET, ACTIVE argued in its submission that onerous reporting requirements to retain RTO accreditation have the potential to diminish the amount of time invested in actual teaching. ACTIVE noted that:

Colleges have embraced the opportunity to become RTOs, but the requirements to retain accreditation constantly become more difficult (eg the change from 4 standards to 12 in the auditing process as well as the need for trainers to have Certificate IV). The huge reporting load for RTOs detracts from teachers' ability to undertake their core work (ie teaching!) well. Colleges believe that they meet many of the AQTF standards particularly well (eg those relating to assessment, equity) and that the more bureaucratic aspects of the standards could be managed, perhaps, on a system basis.¹⁰⁶

4.25. In a similar vein, the Secondary College Principals Association advised the committee that RTO reporting necessitates significant ongoing staffing costs which are borne by individual schools. The Association contended that:

... the requirements related to colleges maintaining RTO status have added significantly to the costs associated with delivering VETiS. These costs usually include the salaries of a VET Coordinator (At a Level 2 role) and a Deputy Principal (Level 3). These salary and administrative costs have been met entirely from within colleges' own funds. ACT government college principals question the need to devote so much time and energy to meeting the AQTF standards for RTO compliance which could be better spent on improving delivery practices in the classroom or on-the-job. A number are questioning the value of being involved in VETiS as an RTO.¹⁰⁷

4.26. The committee has adopted recommendations put by ACTIVE and the Secondary College Principals Association as recommendations for this report.

Recommendation 20

¹⁰⁵ Transcript, uncorrected proof, 22 April 2003, p 181.

¹⁰⁶ Submission 12, p 4.

¹⁰⁷ Submission 14, p 2.

The committee recommends that the ACT Government lobby the MCEETYA taskforce, ANTA MINCO and/or other relevant bodies to enable schools to undertake RTO reporting in a manner that is not excessively resource-consumptive.

Recommendation 21

The committee recommends that the Government consider allocating additional resources to colleges to meet the additional administrative, delivery and promotion costs associated with the provision of VETiS.

4.27. One witness before the inquiry, an independent education consultant, put forward a proposal to reduce the compliance costs and resources borne by colleges at the expense of teaching resources. Ms Robyn House argued that the department could become the sole RTO and responsible for administering AQTF compliance for all colleges noting that:

It would seem to me that to expect each school that is involved in VET and each college that is delivering VET to be an RTO and to undergo the process that goes with meeting those standards is asking too much. I think the quality of their VET delivery will be diminished if they have to focus so much of their time, attention and resources on the compliance. I really think it would be best if the department was the RTO and the department was the one that actually was required to meet the compliance requirements of the AQTF standards.¹⁰⁸

4.28. One advantage of centralising AQTF compliance for colleges is the potential to greatly reduce the duplication of effort currently involved in compliance activities across the colleges. A central area would have the capacity to recruit and retain staff with specialised expertise in these matters and free up resources and time for teachers to actually deliver vocational education and training to students. The committee was advised that South Australia has recently rejected a proposal to make all its senior secondary colleges RTOs on the basis of, 'cost and imposition of time and resources'.¹⁰⁹ The committee sees great merit in the Government investigating the feasibility of the proposal outlined above and asks that the Government consider the costs and benefits of such an approach.

Recommendation 22

¹⁰⁸ Transcript of proceedings, 17 September 2003, Ms Robyn House, p 3.

¹⁰⁹ Transcript of proceedings, 17 September 2003, Ms Robyn House, p 3.

The committee strongly recommends that the Government investigate the feasibility and the costs and benefits of transferring the responsibility for AQTF compliance to the Department of Education, Youth and Family Services, possibly by making the department the sole RTO covering all colleges.

Tender processes

4.29. As part of its role in the administration of the VET system in the ACT, the Department of Education, Youth and Family Services is responsible for assessing and determining tenders to provide VET programs. A consistent criticism, particularly from RTOs was that the tendering process is excessively lengthy; affecting the ability of many RTOs to plan for their business, recruit trainers and to effectively market their courses. It was argued that due to the length of time it takes to determine a successful bid, tenders often have to be revised in light of increased costs (presumably inflationary) and changing priorities and needs within the RTOs themselves. In evidence, Capital Careers articulated quite clearly the importance for RTOs, particularly small RTOs, to have prompt feedback about tender bids arguing before the committee that:

Forward planning is really important for small business, especially if we want to stay competitive with the TAFE. They can write down what their curriculum is for the full year. In terms of our government-funded programs, we can't do that and it has been a case of "the tender will come out", and it will come out next month and next month. So people I think are starting to lay off staff. We are looking at our rooms and thinking, well, perhaps we may need to cut back on the training rooms that we are using. So it makes forward planning extremely difficult.

In training, you need an appropriate running time for recruiting. It really takes as long to recruit for a course as it does to deliver a course. Trying to recruit for courses in a month or a week sometimes is very difficult. So from our point of view, we need notice of funded programs that we are going to be able to deliver. Six months notice would be wonderful but quite often that just isn't the case.

Also, we don't always have a clear idea of how much money, the total amount of monies, is available for a program. At the moment there is a program for existing workers in the ACT that is taking off and we think it is an excellent program. Nevertheless, no-one can really tell us how much money there is in the bucket and whether that program will be around by September or October this year.

That is very, very short time frame. So we become very reactive and I often think that maybe because of that the planning is not done—it is a little bit ad hoc rather than in a considered fashion, not so much from our point of view but I think in terms of the overall planning for training for the ACT.¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ Transcript of proceedings, 22 April 2003, p 193, Ms Williams.

4.30. The ACT Association of Providers of Training Services advised the committee that there is an optimal time of the year to market courses to potential learners but that the laggard tender process has often meant that this window of opportunity for marketing is missed. Following on from this, APTS argued before the committee that the untimely tender process threatens the very viability of some programs and courses, noting that:

In terms of the long-term impact on training providers, this kind of bureaucratic stalling has been happening for at least the last six years. We have had constant consultation about when is the best time to start courses, and the best time for us to market and start courses is to know by about October, November at the latest, that you have got the courses. Then you start marketing. And then you have got a fresh group of students coming out of school, or even students finishing university, and it is a very, very good time to market. I think in the last six years that has coincided with the release of tenders once. At one stage we had a delay of six months because the minister needed to make a decision about whether to charge fees or not and it delayed it till about May. Now, May is a terrible time.

We have made quite frequent representations to ask them to try and coincide the release of the tender results to match the times when we have actually got people out there wanting to do courses. If it is delayed, what happens is they take up other things. They do part-time work, or they go to CIT which has a regular intake, and they know when they are going to start. The training providers in the ACT spend a lot of time and a lot of money marketing courses where there are inappropriate numbers out there to take them up. So that is something that I would really like to see addressed.

We don't get paid to market; we get paid to deliver. We don't get any money to do all this marketing. I might have staff spending two months marketing a course, trying to get the numbers in the seats. The dual problem is that then TAE doesn't have the numbers. So it can't report back to ANTA that we have filled our courses because we told them that it was inappropriate at this time for us to have 60 days to fill courses. It is a very practical thing. I don't know why it has not happened, but it hasn't happened—it has happened once in the last six years.¹¹¹

4.31. It was not only private RTOs that expressed concern over the extended periods that tenders took to finalise, the Community and Youth Sector Training Council pointed to this as a significant barrier to achieving the outcomes for learners as well as negatively impacting on the operation on individual adult and community education training centres. CYSTC noted in its submission that:

It takes a long time to get new trends and information to feed into the funding process and an inordinate length of time for tender rounds to be determined – ...in the past two years it has taken at least five months for tenders to be

¹¹¹ Transcript of Proceedings, 22 April 2003, Mrs Jones, p 198.

decided that were lodged in November the previous year. This kind of time delay disadvantages RTOs, trainers and learners because it means that recruitment, appointing of trainers and setting of timetables cannot be finalised until the middle of a calendar year. This practice is both inefficient but also expensive to all those who are required to implement these programs without any funds for such a significant period of the year.¹¹²

4.32. The department's annual report provides stark evidence of its extremely poor performance in relation to determining tenders. The department set itself a benchmark that 80 per cent of tenders would be finalised within 50 days of the tender period closing for the 2001-2002 period. The committee considers that the 80 per cent benchmark is itself unsatisfactorily low for an organisation committed to excellence; however, the department's actual end of year result for this measure in the period 2001-2002 was only 45 per cent. **The committee finds that this is an unacceptable result and that the department must improve its performance in this area as a matter of urgency.**

4.33. The committee is also unsatisfied with the limited performance data presented in the department's annual report regarding the time taken to determine tenders. While the department measures its success against the 50-day period, this data provides no indication as to how long the remaining 55 per cent of tenders took to finalise beyond that 50-day period. The committee believes that the department should introduce new, more detailed reporting and performance measures for assessing the timeliness of the tender process and has made a recommendation to this effect below.

4.34. The committee will be keeping a watching brief on these matters.

Recommendation 23

The committee recommends that the Government commit itself to the better management of the tender process for selecting VET providers and programs by:

- a) conducting a formal review that identifies weaknesses in the current tender processing system and proposes strategies to overcome any identified weaknesses;**
- b) formally consulting with RTOs and other stakeholders as to their needs in relation to the tender process, including consultation about appropriate timeframes and the most suitable times of the year to commence and finalise tenders;**

¹¹² Submission 1, p 4.

- c) **establishing a higher performance target (beyond 80 per cent) for the percentage of tenders successfully determined within 50 days of tenders closing; and**
- d) **more detailed reporting of the time taken to determine successful tenders with a breakdown of the percentages of tenders concluded within say, 30 days, 50 days, 70 days, 100 days, and over 100 days;**

Social obligations

4.35. In its submission, the AEU argued that more must be done to explicate the broader social and community obligations that should be realised within an effective VET system. To this end, the union advocated that tenders for VET programs and user choice funding should be allocated on the basis of not only cost but also that tender documentation should spell-out social outcomes and community requirements that must be met by funding recipients.

4.36. The committee has adopted a recommendation from the AEU in this regard.

Recommendation 24

The committee recommends that Government specifications for programs put to tender/user choice clearly identify the social obligations that the provider will be expected to meet and that meeting these social obligations be an explicit part of the decisions made for funding.

Quality measures

4.37. Many private RTOs complained to the committee that TAE predominately uses cost-efficiency (ie low cost) as the primary determinant for selecting successful tenders to deliver VET programs. The case was put that quality measures must be included in the specifications for tenders as this would lead to improved outcomes for learners by encouraging RTOs to produce high-quality programs, not merely low-cost programs. APTS argued in its submission that the cost-alone determinant has threatened the viability of many private RTOs. APTS advised the committee that, 'Funding levels are causing the collapse of private training providers in the ACT. Quality not competitive pricing should be the reason for provider choice'.¹¹³

4.38. APTS advised the committee that it had asked TAE to adopt a practice of, 'developing a quality score for each provider and awarding competitive tenders on the quality and fixing the price (this is done increasingly by government departments wishing

¹¹³ Submission 5, p 2.

to promote quality)’ but that these representations have been, ‘largely ignored’¹¹⁴; although some progress was said to have been made with the department subsequent to the commencement of this inquiry.

4.39. The committee supports that a quality component be included in tender specifications for VET funding and urges the Government to review the usefulness of such an approach.

Recommendation 25

The committee recommends that the Government investigate, in consultation with stakeholders, the inclusion of quality measures in tender specifications for all VET program funding.

Recognition of prior learning

4.40. The committee was informed that processing applications for recognition of prior learning (RPL) and recognition of current competency (RCC) undertaken by RTOs is excessively complicated and inordinately expensive. The committee learned that RPL and RCC processes could cost anywhere between \$500 and \$600 to finalise.¹¹⁵

4.41. The claim was also made that some RTOs are not applying RPL and RCC guidelines properly. Brendan Mulhall, a consultant engaged by the Department of Education, Youth and Family Services to conduct a review of training packages, informed the committee that, ‘a chequebook mentality [in relation to RPL and RCC] is coming through’.¹¹⁶

4.42. The committee considers that both these matters require further investigation by Government.

Recommendation 26

The committee recommends that:

¹¹⁴ Submission 5, p 6.

¹¹⁵ Transcript of proceedings, 17 September 2003, Mr Mulhall, p 32.

¹¹⁶ Transcript of proceedings, 17 September 2003, Mr Mulhall, p 32.

- a) **the Government investigate whether RPL and RCC processes are, on-the-whole, being applied fairly, based on appropriate guidelines, as well as what measures, if any, can be instituted to reduce the cost associated with processing RPL and RCC applications; and**
- b) **that if the cost cannot be reduced that the Government consider a scheme to provide funding for a number of RPL/RCC applications for the financially disadvantaged.**

Private RTOs and VETA representation

4.43. The committee received evidence from ACPET expressing unhappiness with the representative structure of the VETA board. While ACPET expressed a general satisfaction with the administration of VET in the ACT, the organisation saw more of a role for private RTO representation in VETA is required. ACPET noted that:

ACPET believes... that the role and representative structure of VETA and of some of the various advisory groups needs to be updated. The ACT Vocational Education and Training Strategic Plan (2002-2004) recognises the challenges of delivering a largely nationally funded agenda in a local context....It is... important that a reasonable proportion of the representatives on the advisory board have local, regional and national perspectives on training issues and on industry needs and development.

4.44. ACPET argued that due to the increase in the number of learners participating in VET via private RTOs (doubled in the last 3-4 years) and 'in recognition of the different private provider models that operate in the ACT', ACPET advocated:

- a) the representation of private RTOs on VETA be increased;
- b) at least one of these members be a local representative from a national private provider organisation such as ACPET; and
- c) representatives should cover the range of private provider models which operate in the ACT.

4.45. The committee expresses no view in relation to the recommendations put forward by ACPET regarding the composition of the VETA board but urges the Government to consider ACPET's concerns in making appointments to the VETA board and in determining other representative structures.

The role of ITABs

4.46. The committee received a great deal of comment about the role and performance of ITABs in the VET sector. The most common position of those organisations and

individuals who provided submissions and/or gave evidence before the committee was that the overall performance of ITABs was inconsistent - with some providing excellent advice and support, while others were said to be out of touch with industry requirements and added little value to the work of RTOs or policy input via the department. The committee gained the impression that the performance of individual ITABs is largely dependent on the particular personal characteristics and degree of motivation behind the various Executive Officers/Directors associated with each of the ITABs. Representing ACT vocational education teachers, ACTTIVE's position reflected that of many stakeholders involved in the inquiry. ACTTIVE noted that:

ITABS' performances in relation to vocational education in schools have been variable, and ACTTIVE recognises that ITABs receive very limited funding for the multitude of tasks they must perform. Some ITABS have been an excellent support to colleges and have undertaken such tasks as:

- Membership of course accreditation panels
- Involving college staff in panels for apprenticeship awards
- Providing PD on assessment
- Providing information on industry trends through meetings and newsletters
- Hosting industry link meetings

Others have had a very low profile, maintaining very little contact with colleges. In the case of a very small number, college teachers have perceived their role to be obstructionist rather than supportive. In these cases college teachers have believed that such ITABs had a bias against vocational education in schools, preferring programs delivered by external RTOs. There are also questions in some cases about the degree to which ITAB leadership really represents the industry, when conflicting messages come from employers and ITABs.¹¹⁷

4.47. The Australian Education Union made the case before the committee that ITABs may not be adequately representing the needs of the smaller employers so prevalent in the ACT. Reflecting on the difficulties confronting ITABs in representing the wide range of industry groupings the union noted that:

... there is a real problem in a small territory where you still have a large number of industries. Even though we don't cover all the industries, we still cover a huge range of industries, and how do you get all of those views? Typically, it has been said to us by our members that it is the voice of the small... businessperson that is not really filtering up through the ITABs. That is

¹¹⁷ Submission 12, p 5

probably because there simply is not time to go around and talk to the different people.¹¹⁸

4.48. In its submission, the Catholic Education Office (CEO) acknowledged the value of ITABs in reflecting industry requirements and trends but advocated the development of closer and more direct linkages between RTOs, particularly schools, and industry. The CEO noted that:

ITABs play an important role in setting the standard for competency assessment and training package provision. However, the development of more formal partnerships between industry and schools (as educational institutions and Registered Training Organisations) is vital. Ongoing, positive communication between ITABs, new apprenticeship centres and Group Training Companies will help to promote a more complete understanding of the special needs faced by all participants in the provision of vocational education and training for the students.¹¹⁹

Federal funding

4.49. In the Federal budget handed down in May 2002, the Commonwealth announced that funding allocated to the states and territories for industry advice via ITABs would be reduced by two thirds in 2002/2003 and then to zero in the out years. For the ACT, this decision meant a funding reduction of \$600,000 for the purpose of industry engagement in the ACT VET system.

4.50. Many involved in the administration and delivery of VET expressed concerns that this policy decision has the potential to seriously undermine the provision of accurate and relevant advice from industry. In its submission to the inquiry, Recreation Industry Training Company expressed concerns that the withdrawal of Federal funding for ITABs could potentially result in the two following outcomes:

1. If state/territory ITABs are forced to close, the implementation of industry training packages and their adherence to State/Territory requirements will revert to the respective Government agency which may not be resourced for that purpose;
2. Like the Recreation Industry, many industries had their own system of training and accreditation well before the introduction of industry training packages. If industries are forced to fund their own ITABs, those ITABs will be bound by industry agendas which may have a different direction to the Government's agenda.

¹¹⁸ Transcript of proceedings, 18 March 2003, Ms Ballantyne, p 113-114.

¹¹⁹ Submission 2, p 2.

4.51. To avoid either of these scenarios from coming to fruition, the Company advocated ACT funding be set aside for territory ITABs. The Government, however, has taken a slightly different approach.

ACT Industry Training Advisory Association

4.52. In addition to a review of the operation of ITABs undertaken by ANTA, the ACT Government completed its own review in September 2002 to, ‘develop appropriate structures to ensure that the ACT Government is well served with advice on industry training’.¹²⁰ Commenting on the outcomes of the ACT ITAB review, the Government noted in its submission that it had, ‘... decided to fund a new entity in return for providing the required advice to VETA. The entity would be managed by industry representatives in accordance with an annual business plan approved by VETA. The new entity would also have access to specific purpose project funding’.¹²¹

4.53. Following extensive industry consultation¹²², the new entity to emerge from the ACT review is that of the ACT Industry Training Advisory Association (ACTITAA), established in March 2003. An interim nine-member board, made up from all the chairs of the formerly funded ITABs, currently governs the Association. The committee understands that the Association will be conducting its Annual General Meeting in November 2003, at which time it will elect a permanent board.

4.54. One of the driving forces behind the approach the Government has adopted is the potential to realise economies of scale via a central, overarching ITAB. To this end, the Government put the provision of secretariat support services for the Association out to open tender and subsequently the Utilities and Light Manufacturing Industry Training Board emerged with the successful tender.

4.55. The total funding for ACTITAA is \$500,000 in addition to \$50,000 GST per annum. The committee is aware that this level of funding commitment is quite favourable when compared with other jurisdictions, many of whom have reduced the total number of funded ITABs in response to the Federal cuts.

4.56. The committee supports the establishment of the ACTITAA but believes that the government must continue to consult with industry and the existing ITAB networks to refine and finalise elements of the implementation. The committee believes that the Government must affirm its commitment to effective industry engagement and consultation and acknowledge that TAE or any other bureaucratic permutation is not properly geared for this role – it must be at arms length from government.

¹²⁰ Submission 19, p 31.

¹²¹ Submission 19, p 31.

¹²² The committee is aware that consultation was undertaken with: ACT industry Training Advisory Boards; Employer and employee associations and unions; Training Providers, Federal and State and Territory government Departments and other ACT VET Stakeholders. The Association is broadly supported by stakeholders.

Recommendation 27

The committee recommends that the Government:

- a) affirm its commitment to industry engagement and consultation on VET issues via non-departmental consultation mechanisms (ACTITAA and other industry sources); and**
- b) continue to consult with industry players and existing ITAB networks to refine and finalise the new arrangements under which ACTITAA will operate.**

TAE staffing

4.57. The committee received evidence that there is a high staff turnover in TAE which has led to fragmented and inconsistent advice being given to VET participants. The committee also heard that the roles and responsibilities undertaken by TAE staff need to be clarified. Arts, Recreation Training ACT informed the committee that:

Changes to [TAE] staff meant there was lack of continuity. Often there are a lot of changes of staffing in TAE. Often it's not communicated to the business world. My private RTOs would say to me, "Whom do I need to talk to at TAE? I can't track the right person." In my job I sometimes walk around that floor and I talk to five key senior managers, who will send me back to where I started. There needs to be some sorting out of tasks, key roles, who makes decisions, and communicating with the broader spectrum out there.¹²³

4.58. A similar comment was made by the Utilities and Light Manufacturing Industry Training Board in a public hearing about the loss of corporate knowledge in TAE as officers get moved around. The training board noted that:

... from my point of view, we deal with the system in TAE as it involves industry liaison officers and they have sectors in industries to look after. I find sometimes that the rotation of these officers is frustrating in that you just get a person up to speed with your industry, with the nuances and the rigours of your industry, and all of a sudden they are doing something else. You start again with a new person; and you just start from scratch. This is particularly so in electrical, electrotechnology, water and gas.

If you are not involved with industrial relations, it takes a long time to understand what you can and what you can't do. You get somebody up to speed and all of a sudden they are doing a job in fashion or something else and you

¹²³ Transcript of proceedings, 17 September 2003, Ms Wardrop, p 42.

start again with a new officer. Industry just runs out of patience with that. I find that I am involved with those liaison officers a lot of the time. They are good people who try very hard, but I think at the mid-management or management level they could stop the rotations. It affects us greatly, it costs us a lot of money.¹²⁴

4.59. The committee received evidence from one ITAB suggesting that greater professional development opportunities may not only assist with retention of TAE staff but also improve the quality of advice and support offered by the section. The Executive Officer from the Arts and Recreation Training ACT ITAB put the case that TAE staff, particularly those working in the Industry Liaison area of the section could benefit from structured professional development opportunities as well as more direct contact with industry through ITABs, peak industry organisations and even experiences at the enterprise level. The ITAB noted that:

As TAE is currently structured, there is an industry liaison cell. Much of the brokering I currently do would probably default back to that cell. There are significant gaps in the workers who work there. They don't understand the business or the training agenda they are currently responsible for. I've also suggested that they need some serious professional development. For example, I think if they were to do the certificate 4 in workplace assessment and training that would help them. That's the same benchmark we expect of industry people playing in the agenda...

They have to deal with industry negotiations. They often do not understand what industry is asking them. Therefore, they don't give quality information to industry people, who then come back to us. I do a lot of things that probably technically, if I looked at my performance agreement, I shouldn't be doing. I should be doing other things. That's how I bridge and broker, and that's how I do that promotion of a training package and get that engagement at a local level. If I didn't do that, I wouldn't have any uptake on any of my training packages. I really feel I've had to do that.

I feel for the people in industry liaison roles. There've been put there because they've been excess to the Department of Education and Community Services. They are often trying to find the ground with the job they're doing. They're administrative assistants. They have an enormous role. The people I deal with have an enormous industry coverage.

How can we make it different? Yesterday I said, "If they want to come out and work with me for a chunk of time, about five to six weeks, I'm happy to provide a range of experiences and shift meetings to give them a meaningful professional development experience." What do I gain from that? They'll know about my training packages. If I develop some of that knowledge base, I may not get some of the calls that I get.

¹²⁴ Transcript of proceedings, 17 September 2003, Mr Taylor, p 44.

It's a two-way street. In return for that, I believe I need to go in and shoulder with them to learn about some of the questions they may be fielding so that together we will know how we could be working in a different way. I'm prepared to do that. In being critical, I'm prepared to say there's some other stuff we could be doing in value-adding to the system. In the longer term that's how I see things overcoming some serious PD that needs to happen right now.¹²⁵

4.60. The committee is greatly supportive of providing additional, targeted professional development opportunities for TAE staff, particularly those working in the Industry Liaison area. The committee believes that the proposal outlined by the ACT Arts and Recreation Training to provide TAE officers with hands-on, frontline industry experience also has much merit and has made a recommendation to this effect below.

Recommendation 28

The committee recommends that the TAE continuously keep all stakeholders informed of the key roles held by various personnel as well as when changes to staffing occur.

Recommendation 29

The committee recommends that the Government undertake to provide additional professional development opportunities for TAE staff with a particular emphasis on direct industry experience.

Complaints management

4.61. To improve the VET system's capacity to respond to and address complaints made by apprentices and trainees, the AEU argued that it is worth investigating the idea of establishing an Ombudsman for apprentices and training in general. The union informed the committee that currently apprentices and trainees do not have a great deal of recourse when they experience significant problems in their workplace or training program. An official from the union told the committee that, 'I know from personal experience that it is still possible to have an employer who can treat an apprentice badly and it is very much up to the apprentice to try and deal with it and sort it out'.¹²⁶

4.62. While acknowledging that it may be costly for a small jurisdiction such as the ACT to establish such an office, the union made the point that a single contact point for resolving concerns and complaints that apprentices and trainees could be a useful addition to the system. The union informed the committee that Queensland already has such an

¹²⁵ Transcript of proceedings, 17 September 2003, Mrs Wardrop, p 40.

¹²⁶ Transcript of proceedings, 18 March 2003, Ms Ballantyne, p 111.

ombudsman role in operation, noting that all trainees and apprentices are given contact information for the Training Ombudsman on commencement of courses.

4.63. The AEU advised the committee that currently the VETA secretariat undertakes the role of managing complaints and concerns expressed by learners involved in VET but argued that it isn't happening in a coordinated fashion. The union noted that:

At the moment it is done through the secretariat of the VETA board and maybe it could continue to be done that way. But it is done in, I think, a fairly ad hoc way. It is one of the many duties of people in the secretariat and I think it would be quite nice to see it formalised in some way or at least promoted more.¹²⁷

4.64. The committee believes that it would be useful for the government to develop formal complaint management mechanisms and to widely promote a single point of contact amongst apprentices and trainees. The committee has made a recommendation to this effect below.

Recommendation 30

The committee recommends that the Government instigate proposals to better and more formally manage complaints made regarding VET issues, in this regard the committee recommends the investigation of:

- a) the model employed in Queensland in relation to its Apprenticeship and Traineeship Ombudsman;**
- b) the establishment of a single point of contact for complaints; and**
- c) the effective promotion of the complaints management regime once implemented.**

The Canberra Institute of Technology

4.65. The committee received a comprehensive submission from the Canberra Institute of Technology outlining the key role it plays in providing VET programs as the ACT's sole public provider. The ACT VET Planning Framework indicates that the Institute provides approximately 80-85 per cent of publicly funded VET activity in the ACT.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ Transcript of proceedings, 18 March 2003, Ms Ballantyne, p 111.

¹²⁸ Submission 17, p 8

4.66. CIT argued that it has performed well in relation to the general effectiveness of administration and promotion of vocational education and training in the ACT noting that it had exceeded most of its performance targets stipulated in its purchase agreement with the Government. In its submission CIT noted that:

- nominal Hours Supervised (formerly Annual Hours Curriculum) were 7 per cent above target in 1999, 4 per cent above target in 2000 and 6 per cent above target in 2001;
- course enrolments were 4 per cent above target in 1999, 17 per cent above target in 2000 and 22 per cent above target in 2001;
- employer satisfaction with CIT performance has improved from 84 per cent in 1999 to 91 per cent in 2001...
- client satisfaction rates and outcomes for graduates are high, fluctuating between 87 per cent and 89 per cent between 1999 and 2001; and
- in terms of employment and further study outcomes, around 75 per cent of CIT graduates in 2000 indicated they received one or more benefits from completing a TAFE course compared with 69.5 per cent nationally.¹²⁹

4.67. Despite its good performance in these areas, CIT returned to the theme raised earlier in this report that the national framework may not be completely compatible with the specific needs of the Territory. CIT argued that while its effectiveness could be rated as 'high', national VET policies and priorities have, to some extent, impinged on the Institute's capacity to deliver positive outcomes. CIT argued that, 'The application to the ACT, a very small jurisdiction, of policies and administrative processes designed for large jurisdictions has not always achieved the best results'.¹³⁰

New and emerging training needs

4.68. One of the areas that CIT identified as needing greater attention is in relation to the ability of VET providers to respond to particular training needs and priorities as they emerge. The institute noted that, 'One of the weaknesses in the VET system that requires urgent action both nationally and locally, is that provision, particularly in a budgetary context, tends to focus on previous and current needs. More consideration needs to be given to developing strategies that would allow VET organisations to respond more quickly and appropriately to emerging training needs'.¹³¹

¹²⁹ Submission 17, p 3.

¹³⁰ Submission 17, p 3.

¹³¹ Submission 17, p 4.

4.69. One area that CIT saw as restricting the capacity to respond to emerging needs in a timely fashion is the requirement for RTOs to use training packages where they exist. CIT advised the committee that, ‘Training Packages have been criticised for their inconsistency in content, the narrow task-based focus in some, and the lack of adequate provision for underpinning knowledge and skills and for the achievement of generic competencies in many’.¹³²

4.70. In its submission, CIT cited the Victorian Government’s policy statement, *Knowledge and Skills for the Innovative Economy*¹³³, which is an attempt to respond to the issue of addressing emerging training needs, ‘through a range of measures including allowing TAFE institutes in that state to extend their scope beyond VET limitations identified in the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) and to offer programs outside of the restrictions of the nationally endorsed training packages where this is warranted to meet industry needs’.¹³⁴

4.71. The two key issues here seem to be those of flexibility and responsiveness. The view held by CIT and others is that the rigidity of training packages means that they cannot respond to industry innovation, changes in the labour market and growth sectors in the economy with sufficient alacrity or “customisation”. CIT was impressed with the Victorian policy position and provided the committee with the following detailed description as to the aims behind it:

The statement recognises that ‘to move forward and respond to the challenge of the innovation economy, TAFE needs new freedoms to innovate, to be flexible enough to move with the rapid changes in industry, to build new alliances with other educational institutions and to embed training activity in the community and industry in new ways’. While Victorian VET providers will continue to deliver national qualifications and work to incorporate generic skills in their delivery, they will also be able to ‘move beyond standard products and take a new approach to design, development and delivery. They will engage with new clients, customize their products more effectively, and broaden the range of courses and qualifications available’.

According to the policy statement, ‘new courses and qualifications are to be created to support a more explicit approach to the teaching of key competencies and employability skills, and to assist communities in providing pathways to employment opportunities’. A More flexible approach to Training Package delivery will enable providers to design effective local solutions, tailor them to the specific needs of clients, and make them available quickly.

The significance of these statements is that they free Victorian VET organisations from the obligatory use of Training Packages. Programs will still

¹³² Submission 17, p 18.

¹³³ <http://www.det.vic.gov.au/resources/ks-innovation.htm>

¹³⁴ Submission 17, p 4.

need to be accredited but the statement promises a smoother pathway through this process.¹³⁵

4.72. CIT indicated great enthusiasm for the direction that Victoria is taking with this new policy position arguing that it has, ‘the potential to considerably enhance... [their] ability to respond flexibly and in a timely way to emerging industry and community skill needs’.¹³⁶ CIT advocated the adoption by the ACT Government of a similar approach for the ACT VET system but pointed out that Institutes current Purchase Agreement does not provide this latitude.

4.73. The committee believes that there are certainly merits in the position adopted by the Victorian Government and recommends that the Government consider the statement in any further policy work in this area.

Recommendation 31

The committee recommends that the Government consider the provisions and policy settings similar to those outlined in the Victorian Government’s ‘Knowledge and Skills for the Innovation Economy’.

Purchaser/provider model

4.74. One of the main issues raised in CIT’s submission is the issue as to whether the purchaser/provider model presents the most appropriate method of allocating funding and providing accountability. CIT cited two major difficulties associated with the application of purchaser provider in relation to VET provision in the ACT. The Institute noted that:

The first is that [purchaser/provider] is designed for large jurisdictions with multiple providers. The second is that the best policies and plans arise when VET practitioners/providers are involved with policy and planning. In CIT’s case, there is no input into the national policy and planning processes, either directly or through input into the Department or the Minister. CIT, for example, is not advised of ANTA MINCO agenda items for forthcoming meetings and therefore does not have the opportunity to provide advice to the Minister to inform his [sic] decisions in that forum. At the ACT level, CIT is involved in some consultations during the development of ACT VET priorities and in the negotiation of the Purchase Agreement but believes there is substantial scope for the institute to contribute in a wider planning context – in, for example, the development of the Territory Plan and in formulating an ACT position on national issues.¹³⁷

¹³⁵ Submission 17, p 19.

¹³⁶ Submission 17, p 19.

¹³⁷ Submission 17, p 22.

4.75. In its submission, CIT cited several papers outlining some of the problems existent in the purchaser/provider as it applies to VET. CIT paraphrased some of the arguments in the following way:

At the same time that governments have attempted to distance themselves from TAFE, they have continued to exert a large degree of control over the way institutes operate and, through ANTA structures and arrangements, on the way VET is developed and delivered. Noonan maintains that it is not sufficient for the purchaser, who is usually the owner, to say that they are only interested in purchasing outcomes, without regard to the long term health of the public provider when as regulators, priority and strategy setters, and through the political process, many constraints are imposed on what institutes provide and how they provide it. Governments, he argues, need to be more conscious of their responsibility as the owner of the public provider and ‘they and the community generally need to know more about its health... as a key provider of the skills and knowledge Australia will require if it is to be an economically successful and more socially cohesive society.

Noonan exhorts governments to think and act as both owners and purchasers and to be clearer in what capacity they are acting and when. As purchasers, he argues, they must be willing to allow institutes to increasingly make the decisions about what they provide and how they provide it. He calls for longer term agreements that reflect governments’ roles as both purchaser and owner: ‘Those agreements should encompass strategies for the transformation of the institute to meet future requirements and not be limited to purchasing specific outputs – that is, governments will have to be prepared to invest more in building TAFE’s capability’.¹³⁸

4.76. The committee understands CIT’s concerns about the efficacy of the purchaser/provider system as it is applied to the public VET provider. The committee believes it is appropriate for the Government to at least re-examine the suitability of purchaser/provider provisions in this regard.

Recommendation 32

¹³⁸ Noonan, P, (2001) ‘*Critical Success Factors for TAFE*’ paper presented to Centre of Economics of Education and Training, Monash University, April 26 & Ardagh, David (2001) ‘*Ethics, Empowerment and Education: a New-Aristotelian Case for Public Education and Training*’. cited in submission 17, p 21.

The committee recommends that the Government examine and review the efficacy and suitability of the purchaser/provider model as it is applied to the public VET provider, CIT.

Interjurisdictional recognition

4.77. One of the main areas that the national framework has attempted to address in recent years is the recognition of providers and qualifications across all the states and territories. All Federal and state/territory ministers agreed to the previous Australian Recognition Framework (ARF) (now the AQTF) which set out provisions for interjurisdictional recognition of qualifications and providers. However, the committee received evidence arguing that there have been significant problems regarding the degree to which states/territories have faith in the quality of qualifications and RTOs from other jurisdictions. In this regard, CIT informed the committee that:

Although the then Australian Recognition Framework, to which all Ministers at MINCO had agreed, provided for mutual recognition of providers registered in other states and the qualifications issued by RTOs in other states, this did not happen in practice. Some States did not have confidence in the rigour of the registration and compliance processes in other states and insisted on a form of re-registration of providers. Similarly, some providers did not have confidence in the quality of qualifications issued by other providers for the same reason. This created a great deal of frustration for both industry and individuals, and undermined confidence in the effectiveness of the VET system.¹³⁹

4.78. Commenting on the issues that have confronted the public provider in this regard, CIT advised the committee that it hasn't always been satisfied that learners coming from interstate with qualifications earned in that state/territory, have been up to the standard that it would expect for successful completion of its course offerings. CIT informed the committee that:

CIT from time to time has encountered problems in the quality of qualifications awarded by some other RTOs, both within, and outside the ACT. While qualifications have been recognised in accordance with the requirements of the national recognition arrangements, CIT teachers have found they have had to provide remedial assistance to some students to bring them up to appropriate standards.¹⁴⁰

4.79. CIT advised the committee that there has been a considerable degree of work done to overcome these difficulties, especially through the development of the AQTF and that there are also some legislative adjustments being considered to remove inconsistencies in the operation of accreditation and recognition regimes in the states and territories.

¹³⁹ Submission 17, p 16.

¹⁴⁰ Submission 17, p 16.

4.80. The committee notes that while progress is being made in this area there are still some barriers to overcome. In this regard, CIT noted that despite the progress being made, ‘difficulties arising from the failure of supposedly nationally agreed arrangements will not disappear overnight and VET organisations, including CIT, will need to apply considerable resources and energy for some years to resolving them’.¹⁴¹

4.81. The committee urges the Government to consider these comments in the context of its position for future ANTA MINCO meetings.

‘Growth through efficiencies’ policy

4.82. The committee received evidence that the Federal Government’s ‘growth through efficiencies’ policy has had a significant impact on the degree to which CIT and other TAFE institutions have been able to expand and improve their course offerings. CIT provided the following background of the policy in its submission:

In negotiating the 1998-2000 ANTA Agreement, the Commonwealth declined to continue providing the \$70 million annually it had previously provided for growth funding. Instead, the states and territories were required to achieve ‘growth through efficiencies’ in return for Commonwealth funding being maintained in real terms for five years, with 1997 set as the base year for funding for the duration of the Agreement.¹⁴²

4.83. CIT argued that while it has been able to achieve significant efficiency improvements, it is now in the position where continued growth cannot be realised by efficiency improvements alone. Compounding this problem, CIT advised the committee that the growth in New Apprenticeships has put additional pressure on the TAFE system. CIT noted that:

The ‘growth through efficiencies’ policy was successful in achieving substantial improvements in efficiency, as measured by lower unit costs, but also led to cost-cutting measures that in some states and some institutions threatened the quality of VET. Despite significant reduction in funding, CIT was able to accommodate growth in VET without compromising delivery quality, although the institute’s ability to extend and improve its program offerings, and to invest in new initiatives such as alternative delivery methods was curtailed.

As highlighted in the Senate Committee report, difficulties created by the ‘growth through efficiencies’ regime was exacerbated by the Commonwealth’s vigorous marketing of New Apprenticeships and its decisions to extend employer training incentives to existing workers between August 1998 to May

¹⁴¹ Submission 17, p 16.

¹⁴² Submission 17, p 17.

1999. The substantial growth in New Apprenticeships numbers that resulted put severe stress on TAFE institutes.¹⁴³

4.84. Given the importance placed on responding to new industry trends and growth as well as the need to provide increased flexibility in the delivery of VET course offerings, it is of great concern to the committee that CIT is finding the lack of growth funding to be a significant limiting factor. The committee is of the view that CIT has undertaken a rigorous efficiency improvement program and that the capacity to deliver further improvements are unlikely.

Recommendation 33

The committee recommends that the Government acknowledge that there are few efficiency gains to be made at CIT.

4.85. The committee urges the Government to consider these comments when considering its position on negotiations with the Commonwealth and to raise these issues at the next ANTA MINCO meeting.

Engagement with providers on policy development

4.86. One of the problems that CIT identified as being an impediment to effective VET policy was the absence of significant representation from those with educational background, especially those involved in directly delivering VET programs – the teachers and lecturers. CIT was particularly concerned about the lack of teaching representation on the ANTA Board. Although this is not an area that falls under the domain of the ACT Government, the committee believes that the Institute's comments are worth repeating in full as they may inform the ACT Government's views in relation to future ANTA MINCO meetings. In its submission, CIT noted that:

Many difficulties flowing from national VET planning and development might have been avoided or tempered if there had been teaching/educational expertise on the ANTA Board, and particularly if there had been greater involvement of teaching/educational expertise in the development of Training Packages. The Senate Committee found that 'teaching and education expertise has not been used to best advantage in national policy making and the development of important components of the current VET system, particularly where aspects of VET delivery and assessment are concerned'. The Committee considered that such expertise should be sought at the planning and development stage of all VET system components in order to avoid difficulties at the implementation or delivery stages. This view was strongly supported in a number of state government submissions to the Senate inquiry.

¹⁴³ Submission 17, p 17.

CIT, like TAFE institutes in other jurisdictions, has very little input into the development of the national strategy, annual national priorities, or the setting of key performance measures. CIT is heartened, however, by the establishment of the Enterprise and Training Providers Working Group to advise the ANTA Board and ANTA MINCO's decisions to consider appointing an educationalist to the ANTA Board.¹⁴⁴

4.87. The committee is of the view that it makes good sense to provide mechanisms for greater involvement of educationalists in the formulation and development of VET policy at both the national and local levels. The committee urges the Government to consider these comments in developing its position on representational structures at the Commonwealth and Territory levels.

CIT Students' Association

4.88. The committee received evidence from the CIT Students' Association arguing that the fact that CIT conducts its programs across five different campuses has presented some difficulties. The Association noted that:

... we think the effectiveness of the administration of CIT is hindered by the multicampuses.... We find operating on five campuses expensive, inefficient and difficult. Since we spoke to you once before, we've seen the closure of the Watson campus and that group of students from the Faculty of Design moved to Reid two years ago. It has been a really positive transition for that group of students. We've seen the resources redirected to Reid. The students have benefited from a larger student body and from the resources that that larger campus provides.

We always struggle with the dilemma of the equitable services that we can deliver and we know the same applies to CIT. We've got really under-resourced libraries on all campuses at CIT and it's because it is spread over five campuses. Our Fyshwick campus doesn't even have a campus librarian; it's run by an admin officer.¹⁴⁵

4.89. The committee believes that there is a case to examine whether consolidation of campuses may have some benefits in terms of developing economies of scale and concentrating resources more effectively.

4.90. The CIT Students' Association also made mention of the fact that the presentation of CIT's campuses has declined in recent years and that Reid campus, in particular, did not have adequate facilities for students. The Association noted that:

As for outdoor facilities, come and have a look how many tables and chairs there are to sit on at Reid. There's probably seating for about 80 people on a

¹⁴⁴ Submission 17, p 19.

¹⁴⁵ Transcript of proceedings, 18 March 2003, Ms Walls, p 128.

campus that has 5,000. Maybe CIT makes the right decisions in directing those resources into educational needs rather than facilities, but we may not look as good as we need to look for a campus that delivers excellent education. Maybe that's where our image lies: it looks run-down. The design school is a new building; it might be a showpiece. Reid campus is an old campus with not a lot of resources to show off.¹⁴⁶

4.91. While acknowledging that the core business of educational facilities like CIT is to provide excellence in course delivery, the committee believes that the external image of an educational institution significantly contributes to community perceptions of the organisation. The committee makes a recommendation that the Government investigate what steps can be taken to improve the facilities and public face of CIT campuses. The committee notes the consolidation of CIT campuses may provide additional capacity to enhance the facilities of remaining campuses.

Recommendation 34

The committee recommends that the Government investigate the feasibility as well as costs and benefits of consolidating the number of CIT campuses across the ACT.

Recommendation 35

The committee recommends that the Government investigate measures to improve the presentation and external image of CIT campuses.

The role of New Apprenticeships Centres

4.92. As noted earlier in the report, the ACT currently has two New Apprenticeships Centres, Caloola Skills Training and Job Placement and Employment ACT. The committee was advised by almost everyone involved in the VET sector that New Apprenticeships Centres are not effectively fulfilling their responsibilities in relation to the general promotion of VET. A view put by the Recreation Industry Training Company to the committee was typical of views expressed by many submitters and witnesses. The Recreation Industry Training Company informed the committee that:

It was a tendering requirement by the Commonwealth that New Apprenticeship Centres undertake active promotion of New Apprenticeships and the Recreation Industry Training Company is disappointed that there appears to be little or no active marketing by New Apprenticeships Centres either nationally or within the ACT.

¹⁴⁶ Transcript of proceedings, 18 March 2003, Ms Walls, p 129.

It is acknowledged that there is considerable contractual and financial pressure on the New Apprenticeships Centres to place large numbers of trainees. However the Commonwealth through its tendering processes has set up a “closed shop” arrangement with a limited number of New Apprenticeships Centres need only wait for business to walk in the door.

If an increase in the take-up of trainees and apprentices is needed, either globally or within a designated industry, occupation, or other group, industry or the Government will need to provide the impetus and the resources.¹⁴⁷

4.93. The Australian Education Union were also concerned about the lack of active marketing undertaken seeing it as a function of general work pressures confronting NACs. The AEU noted that:

Under the system... the NACs really are supposed to perform the role not only of promoting the system but, in a sense, of a bit of pastoral care – certainly of apprentices and trainees. I suppose that really it seems to me they are so busy trying to run their businesses and just get the numbers on which their funding is obviously based, that the other side of it – maybe for good reason – tends to fall away.¹⁴⁸

4.94. In evidence before the committee, the Utilities and Light Manufacturing Industry Training Board argued that high staff turnover at New Apprenticeships Centres and limited industry knowledge has shifted workloads, particularly in relation to signing up apprentices, to the ITABs. The Training Board noted that:

NACs... haven’t got a clue. They ring me constantly in respect of how my qualifications work. Their staff rotation would be such that if they last six weeks it is a miracle because they pay a pittance to their field officers. Somebody might get trained up in that NAC organisation about electrotechnology, which is complicated—there is licensing, there are industrial relations issues, there are awards, there are EBAs; it just goes on and on and on. You can’t expect somebody that is not an industry person to understand that.

So I have got an agreement in place now with Caloola, that when they sign up somebody from my package I attend the sign up because invariably if I don’t they put them in the wrong qual. So I have looked at every sign up and given it the tick to make sure they are in the right qual. Now, that is a pain in the neck. They get paid to do these sign ups; I don’t. It is a real imposition on my time when I could be doing something else.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ Submission 6, p 9.

¹⁴⁸ Transcript of proceedings, 18 March 2003, Ms Ballantyne, p 111.

¹⁴⁹ Transcript of Proceedings, 17 September 2002, p 51, Mr Taylor.

... It is just that you have to know the rules of the [training] package so that when you go to the RTO you can assist with what goes in it. And poor old NACs don't understand that.¹⁵⁰

4.95. The committee received evidence that NACs are not well-suited to the provision of industry-specific training programs and information. The Recreation Industry Training Company submitted that:

...there are some 200 separate trade apprenticeships and traineeships. New Apprenticeships Centres are not industry specialists and they cannot be expected to understand the full range of options of each traineeship and apprenticeship. This in turn can lead to poor advice to employers resulting in inappropriate choice of traineeship/training package.

An inappropriate choice of Traineeship and Training Plan is likely to result in dissatisfaction by both employer and trainee, and contribute to a decision by either or both parties to discontinue the arrangement.¹⁵¹

4.96. RITC accepted, however, that this is a problem that remains the domain of the Commonwealth Government to tackle.

A lack of industry knowledge remains a major shortcoming of the Commonwealth's New Apprenticeship Support Services and the Recreation Industry Training Company acknowledges that it is not reasonable to expect the ACT Government to address it.¹⁵²

Recommendation 36

The committee recommends that the ACT Government raise ongoing problems associated with NACs (identified in paragraphs (4.91-4.95) at ANTA MINCO and MCEETYA with a view to providing a better national system that gives relevant, up-to-date information and support to apprentices and trainees.

The role of Group Training Companies

4.97. The committee did not receive a great deal of evidence in relation to the role and performance of Group Training Companies (GTCs). However, the committee has reflected briefly on the issues that were raised by some submitters and witnesses. In its submission to the inquiry, the ACT Government describes group training as, 'an employment arrangement whereby an organisation employs the apprentice or trainee and then places them with a host employer for the duration of their training agreement. This is

¹⁵⁰ Transcript of Proceedings, 17 September 2002, p 52, Mr Taylor.

¹⁵¹ Submission 6, p 9.

¹⁵² Submission 6, p 9.

particularly important where a small employer does not have the capacity to fully employ a trainee or apprentice'.¹⁵³ The committee was advised that GTCs train between 70-80 per cent of apprentices.¹⁵⁴

4.98. In its submission ACTIVE noted the inconsistent quality of service provision provided by various group training companies. ACTIVE also lamented the drop-off in the number of GTCs willing to provide group-training opportunities for SNAPS. ACTIVE noted that:

The role of GTCs has, like ITABs, been variable in VET in schools. Some have provided excellent service in trying to locate host employers for SNAPS and in performing the role of employer for these. Unfortunately several now report to colleges that it is not financially viable to continue to operate SNAPS, so the service to colleges in this area seems to have diminished. This has made more difficult the task of finding employers for SNAPS in some industries.¹⁵⁵

4.99. The committee was advised that prior to 1998 the majority of trainees and apprentices employed in group training were in building and construction but that in that year group training funds were opened up to contestability, allowing the capacity for additional GTCs to operate in the territory.¹⁵⁶ The Government noted in its submission that the opening up of training funds to a contestable regime resulted in an increase in the total number of group training places:

In 1997/98 there were under 400 training places while in 1999/2000 there were approximately 528 places. [Contestability] also led to wider access of group training services to industries such as Community Services and Health, Retail, Clerical and Tourism.¹⁵⁷

4.100. The committee heard that both the Commonwealth and the ACT Governments fund group training noting that, 'this funding is to support sustained employment and is separate from funding for training provided under New Apprenticeships, through User Choice'.¹⁵⁸ The committee understands that there are currently eight companies in receipt of funding from the ACT Government for the provision of group training and that training delivered to New Apprentices by GTCs, in their role as RTOs, is separately funded.

4.101. In correspondence received from the Master Builders Association of the ACT (MBA), the committee attention was drawn to the important role that its group training company, MBA Group Training, plays in the provision of VET training in the building and construction sector. The MBA made mention of the fact that its fund has been significantly

¹⁵³ Submission 19, p 29.

¹⁵⁴ Correspondence from MBA ACT to ACT Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Education, 29 November 2003, p 1.

¹⁵⁵ Submission 12, p 6.

¹⁵⁶ Submission 19, p 29.

¹⁵⁷ Submission 19, p 29.

¹⁵⁸ Submission 19, p 29.

reduced over recent years. The MBA noted that in the past the MBA Group Training Company received recurrent funding of \$120,000 but that under current arrangements the company only received between \$40,000-\$50,000. Further the MBA noted that its GTC used to receive a rebate for workers' compensation for first year apprentices but now receives nothing. The MBA also argued that there are significant funding disparities between apprentices and trainees, noting that:

We believe, that one of the inequities in the system is, that when comparing trainee funding with apprenticeship funding, there is an enormous difference. For example, trainees stay with their employers for 9-12 months and potentially received \$3,500. In the space of four years, you can put through a ratio of 4:1. Whereas in a group scheme, an apprentice will receive \$2500 over the four year period. This means that when comparing the funding of trainees and apprentices the rate for trainees is, \$14,000 compared with \$2500 for apprentices over a four period.¹⁵⁹

4.102. On the face of it, this disparity does appear to present an inequity and the committee urges the Government to investigate means of redressing it.

Recommendation 37

The committee recommends that the Government investigate the claims raised by the MBA that apprentices are funded to a far lesser extent than trainees with a view to ensuring equity between trainees and apprentices in the system.

The role of career advisory and placement services

4.103. In its submission, the Recreation Industry Training Company (RITC) made the point that career advisory and placement services play an important role in meeting the needs of disadvantaged groups such as young people, Indigenous people, "at-risk" learners and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. However, RITC argued that more could be done to support at-risk people involved or wanting to be involved in pursuing VET in the ACT. In this regard, ACTIVE argued that a greater emphasis on career advice and support is required in ACT schools. ACTIVE noted that:

There is a great need for an update of careers advisory services in high schools and colleges to support vocational education as well as students' careers pathways in general. At the moment the extent of careers services at any school is a reflection of what that school leadership believes it can afford. There is therefore inequity in the careers guidance provision for students. Students need

¹⁵⁹ Correspondence from MBA ACT to ACT Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Education, 29 November 2003, p 1.

regular and ongoing careers guidance to assist them in decision making about courses at college and future opportunities.¹⁶⁰

4.104. The AEU also expressed concerns about the level of engagement with students via career placement and advisory services within schools, colleges and the CIT arguing that scarce resources have lessened the capacity to provide effective advice and support. The AEU noted in evidence before the committee that:

... there is a reduction in student support services across the board. Career advice is just one example of where that has been restricted or withdrawn or collapsed. So teachers are taking on that responsibility more and more... That creates tensions... for the teachers because they have to engage in this pastoral care role... In an environment where they are struggling to find time to prepare for classes and all those sorts of things, it is increasingly difficult for teachers who care sincerely about the students that they are teaching to provide sufficient or adequate advice.¹⁶¹

4.105. In its submission, the ACT and Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry argued that there is a critical need for improvements to be made in how career guidance and placements services are provided. The Chamber note that improvements could be made to these services by:

- increasing industry involvement with curriculum development and delivery...;
- providing training in basic employability skills for students;
- reforming career guidance and education to ensure those involved have broad industry backgrounds, access to a diverse network in undertaking their role and maintain currency of their industry knowledge;
- integrating career and general work preparation into core curriculum so that all young people are equipped with skills, attitudes and confidence to effectively participate in the world of work; and
- teachers of VET and career advisors need more preparation in the world of work through structured industry program such as teacher release into industry for up to four months.¹⁶²

4.106. In concluding its comments the Chamber noted that, ‘... employers feel that contact with VET should be an integral part of the education process, not something that starts when young people leave school. They also feel it essential for young people to see an immediate connection between their schooling and their future educational and career

¹⁶⁰ Submission 12, p 6.

¹⁶¹ Transcript of proceedings, 18 March 2003, Mr McNevin, p 110.

¹⁶² Submission 10, p 3.

choices. In addition, educators and students need to have a much better understanding of the requirements of modern workplaces whether in the private, public, community and voluntary sectors'.¹⁶³ The committee supports the comments made by the Chamber and urges the government to consider them in making policy decisions about the direction that career advisory and placement service will operate.

4.107. The committee agrees that career guidance is particularly important in the high school and college environments as this is often the first time that students seriously consider their career options. The committee is of the view that the provision of effective advice at this stage has the capacity to positively influence the direction that students may pursue in relation to further studies and work placement. It is certainly an undesirable situation to have the career guidance and more general pastoral care role fall to teachers without the necessary training, experience and expertise. The committee considers that access to quality career advice should not depend on which school a person happens to attend but instead should be available across the board. The committee has adopted the recommendation put by ACTIVE in this regard.

4.108. The committee also heard evidence about the shortfall of career advice at CIT, this is of concern.

Recommendation 38

The committee recommends that the Government:

- a) undertake an audit of careers advisory services in high schools, colleges and CIT, and in consultation with teachers, set appropriate benchmarks for service levels across all schools;**
- b) investigate the appropriateness of including career and work planning in the core curriculum of high schools and colleges; and**
- c) investigate measures to improve and maintain wide ranging, up-to-date industry knowledge in those teachers undertaking the role of a school careers advisors.**

¹⁶³ Submission 10, p 3.

Adult and Community Education (ACE)

4.109. While the committee called for submissions, including areas of Adult and Community Education, the inquiry was not and could not be exhaustive, and the committee did not receive a great deal of evidence of ACE programs.

4.110. Notwithstanding this, the committee acknowledges that ACE programs provide a raft of courses of extra-curricula interest, which often provide valuable skills that can be contributed back to the family and the wider community. For example, a person undertaking a carpentry or woodworking course is able to effectively take on home maintenance and assist friends and neighbours with home repairs. Another example would be people undertaking cookery courses and developing their knowledge of nutrition that can, again, be passed on to others.

4.111. At the conclusion of its inquiry, the committee came to the view that VET is a crucial component of education system. It is an area that has unfortunately lacked acknowledgement, focus, support and resources.

4.112. The committee trusts that this report will inform public policy development on VET issues and provide a pathway to the future.

Karin MacDonald
Chair

August 2003

Appendix 1 List of Submissions

1. Ms Kim Sattler, Community Education & Training
2. Mr Geoff Joy, Catholic Education Office
3. Ms Sharon Figueiredo, Train.2.Work
4. Ms Nancy Veal & Ms Pam Bossard, ACT Council for Adult Literacy
5. Ms Sharon Simons, The ACT Association of Providers of Training Services Inc
6. Mr Rudi Schneider, Recreation Industry Training Company Ltd
7. Mr Vince Ball, Construction Industry Training Council
8. Ms Georgie Crossing, Australian Hotels Association
9. Ms Moir Holmes and Mr Peter Enge, CIT
10. Ms Jill Bailey, ACT & Region Chamber of Commerce & Industry
11. Mr Michael Doyle, Student to Industry Program
12. Ms Ann Nield, ACTTIVE
13. Mr Geoff Masters
14. Mr John See, ACT Secondary College Principals Association
15. Mr Bruce Calder & Mr Tim Smith, Australian Business Academy
16. Mr Clive Haggard, Australian Education Union
17. Dr Barry Roantree, CIT
18. NSW/ACT Independent Education Union & Independent Schools Staff Association
19. ACT Government - Department of Education, Youth and Family Services

Appendix 2 Witnesses at public hearings

17 September 2002

1. Robyn House
2. Vince Ball, Construction Industry Training Council
3. Kim Sattler, Community Education and Training
4. Brendan Mulhall, Brendan Mulhall and Associates
5. Jenny Wardrop, Arts and Recreation Training ACT
6. Robert Taylor, Utilities and Light Manufacturing Industry Training Board

29 October 2002

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2. Peter Gordon, Something Ventured Pty Ltd.
3. Jill Bailey, Manager, Employment and Training, ACT and Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry
4. David Dawes and Jerry Howard, Master Builders' Association

18 March 2003

1. Danusha Cubillo
2. Donna Reid, Kath Billing, Australian Network of Practice Firms
3. Robin Ballantyne, Tim McNevin, ACT Australian Education Union
4. Vaughan Croucher, Rod Brightman, CIT
5. Michael Axelsen, Elaine Walls, CIT Students' Association

22 April 2003

1. Katy Gallagher, Minister for Education, Youth and Family Services

Trevor Wheeler, Executive Director, Vocational Education Training and Corporate,
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Stephen Bramah, Director of Training and Adult Education, Department of Education,
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2. Rudolf Schneider, Chief Executive Officer, Recreation Industry Training Company
3. Tim Smith, Paul Facer, Bruce Calder, Australian Council for Private Education and Training
4. Ian Gibson, Head of School of the Academy of Interactive Entertainment
5. Jacqueline Ryles, Ross Williams, Capital Careers
6. Jacqueline Jones, Jeannie Cotterall, Quest Solutions
7. Josie Porter, Outward Bound Australia.

Appendix 3 – Acronyms

ACPET	Australian Council for Private Education and Training
ANTA	Australian National Training Authority
ANTA MINCO	Australian National Training Authority Ministerial Council
APTS	Association of Providers of Training Services
AQTF	Australian Quality Training Framework
ARC	Accreditation and Registration Council
CIT	Canberra Institute of Technology
CITC	Construction Industry Training Council
DEYFS	Department of Education, Youth and Family Services
GTCs	Group Training Companies
ITAB	Industry Training Advisory Board
MCEETYA	Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs
NACs	New Apprenticeships Centres
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
SIP	Student to Industry Program
SNAPs	School Based New Apprenticeships
TAE	Training and Adult Education (section within the Department)
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VETA	The Vocational Education and Training Authority
VETiS	VET in Schools

1 ATTACHMENT A – GOVERNMENT SUBMISSION

**SUBMISSION TO LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY STANDING
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

INQUIRY INTO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING



**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, YOUTH AND FAMILY
SERVICES**

OCTOBER 2002

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2 INTRODUCTION

This submission is provided by the Department of Education, Youth and Family Services (DEYFS) for the Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Education as a contribution to the Committee's Inquiry into Vocational Education and Training.

The Terms of Reference for the Inquiry are as follows:

"Inquire into and report on vocational education and training in ACT high schools, colleges, post-college, registered training organisations and adult and community programs, with particular reference to:

- i) the effectiveness of the administration and promotion of vocational education and training;
- ii) current programs and the extent to which they satisfy demand and the community's needs;
- iii) unmet need and gaps including service provision and areas not currently involved with vocational education and training programs;
- iv) the role of industry training advisory bodies; New Apprenticeship centres; and group training companies;
- v) the role of career advisory and placement services; and any related matter."

This submission provides an overview of the arrangements by which vocational education and training is provided in the ACT within the context of the national policies and arrangements.

3 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3.1 Changes in the Training System

Since the late 1980s all governments in Australia have given a priority to workforce skilling, the creation of a training market, competency based training, a national accreditation framework and entry level training system. It has been industry driven.

Since 1996 the drive has been for a national training market, traineeships and more VET in schools, more user choice of training providers and the concept of regional training providers (the concept evolved into the national network of new apprenticeship centres of which the ACT has two).

The Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) endorsed the first nationally recognised training packages in 1997. New Apprenticeships, and the Australian Recognition and Qualifications Frameworks took formal effect in 1998. This meant that essentially ACT training providers and qualifications were mutually recognised across Australia, and vice versa. The old TAFE certificate-diploma system was replaced by a national 12-part qualifications ladder, which extends from school qualifications through the VET system and into the higher education domain.

The Recognition Framework was revamped as the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) in 2001 with standards for state and territory registration and accreditation bodies and for registered training organisations (RTOs). The ACT Vocational Education and Training Act 1995 gives effect to these changes in the ACT and creates an ACT Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA) and an Accreditation and Registration Council (ARC).

3.2 Training Packages

Under the post-1998 Quality Framework, national industry training advisory boards and similar bodies develop training packages, which are sets of nationally endorsed standards and qualifications for recognising and assessing people's skills. At May 2002, 74 training packages were endorsed of which seven are enterprise-based.

The market penetration of training packages is about 50% nationally. The percentage of students in packages is currently around 60% at certificate levels of study, falling to 25% at diploma and higher levels. This should increase since this ANTA pathway preference is reflected in state and territory VET purchasing policies. The structure of VET in the ACT is different from other states with a much higher proportion of students at the diploma levels (where the emphasis is less on training packages and more on the course accreditation pathway).

3.3 Historical Trends in VET Demand

With higher VET funding there has been steady growth in VET student numbers – 70% nationally and 30% in the ACT. New apprenticeships have doubled nationally between 1996 and 2001 and are up by 50% in the ACT. Nationally about 12% of the working population is in VET compared with 9% for the ACT.

To some extent the slower ACT growth is explained by the ACT's different employment structure with a larger white-collar industrial base. In 2001 over 55% of government college students who received a year 12 certificate had a vocational qualification. This was an increase from 49% in 2000.

3.4 Factors in Demand for VET

There are over 20,000 private businesses in the ACT but only approximately 600 employ more than 20 people. There are large numbers of small companies in construction, retail, and property and business services. The three biggest employer groups are government administration and defence, retail and property and business services.

Most of the projected ACT job growth to 2005 seems likely to fall into just two industries, property and business services, and health and community services.

3.5 ACT VET Supply

The biggest areas of ACT VET provision for 2002 are; Sales and Personal Services (17.8%), Business and Clerical (10.8%), Community Services, Health and Education (10.5%), Tourism and Hospitality (10.3%), Finance, Banking and Insurance (9.0%) and Building and Construction (8.6%)

New Apprenticeships in the ACT account for about 20% of VET students with most of the growth since 1995 outside of trades and related occupations although nationally the trades group still accounts for over 40% of all apprenticeships, which is much higher than its 14–15% share of Australian employment.

3.6 VET Providers

DEYFS is the state training agency for the purposes of the ANTA Agreement. ACT VET is delivered by a variety of Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) and Adult and Community Education (ACE) providers. The RTO community in the ACT is diverse and comprises one public provider (the CIT), 17 government providers (including the three defence forces), 17 secondary colleges, 72 private providers and numerous ACE providers of whom around 30 receive funding at any time.

3.7 VET Funding

Over the period 1998-2000 there was no increase in funding from the Commonwealth with any growth in activity to be achieved through efficiencies. The ACT reduced its cost of delivery by improving its efficiency and reporting (to reduce the level of invalid enrolments) and making the New Apprenticeship funding available via competitive tendering.

The 2001-2003 ANTA funding agreement provides for growth funding of \$3.860m over the 2000 level, which the ACT must match, and for which agreed levels of training growth must be achieved. It is a condition of funding that state and territories continue to comply with User Choice principles and undertake an innovation strategy to increase training in emerging industries.

In return for this contribution the ANTA funding agreement activity targets require the ACT to deliver an additional 110,000 Annual Hours Curriculum (AHC) and an additional 320 New Apprenticeships over previous levels.

ACT Government funding for 2002-03 is projected to be \$66.2m of which \$48m (72%) is to fund places at CIT and \$18 million is for other training programs (including all competitive programs) and program administration. In addition the CIT generates approximately \$16m per annum in revenue. The Commonwealth, through the ANTA Agreement, will contribute \$17 million (excluding a capital component which averages \$3 million per annum) or approximately 25 % toward these programs.

3.8 VET Programs and Delivery

The bulk (72%) of VET is undertaken through the CIT. New Apprenticeship funding is provided through the *User Choice Program* (\$9 million in 2001-02) by which employers and employees select the training provider best suited to their needs. CIT competes for this funding. School students can access New Apprenticeships through the School based New Apprenticeship Program (SNAP) while still attending school.

Training is also undertaken through private training providers through a competitive tendering process via the *Industry Training Program (ITP)* (\$2.6 million in 2001-02). CIT competes for this training. Twenty percent of the ITP is devoted to the needs of equity groups.

An *Adult English Language Literacy & Numeracy Program* (AELLN) is jointly funded (\$0.25m) by the Territory and the Commonwealth. The Territory also provides \$0.25m for *ACE Programs*.

In the financial year 2002-2003, CIT will provide 3.735 m AHC, which equates to approximately 13,160 enrolments, in accordance with the ACT Training Profile. The user charge for the delivery of the agreed output is \$48.003 million at an average of \$12.9 per AHC.

Private providers will deliver approximately 1.189 million AHC equating to approximately 6,118 enrolments. In 2002 *ACE Programs* will deliver training through some 32 providers to around 1,950 people.

Group Training Companies (GTCs) employ and place New Apprentices. This is an important service for small employers. In 2001 there were approximately 470 GTC placements (down from 528 in 2000). A review to assess reasons for the decline in market demand is underway.

The *Student to Industry Program* (SIP) provides independent centralised work placement for school students. Its core business is the coordination of structured workplace learning (SWL) opportunities for ACT Year 11 & 12 students through vocational placements (VP) in industry and is funded by the Commonwealth through the Enterprise and Career Education Foundation (ECEP).

There are currently nine Industry Training Advisory Boards (ITABs) in the ACT funded by the Commonwealth. This funding ceases from October 2002. After a review of industry training advisory arrangements to identify viable future arrangements, the ACT Government has indicated that it will fund a non-profit consortium to provide industry advice.

3.9 National VET Planning

ANTA is responsible for drafting a national strategy for endorsement by the VET Ministerial Council (ANTA Minco). The current strategy '*A Bridge to the Future*', was developed in 1997-98 and covers the period 1999-2003. Development of a new strategy to 2010 is underway in close consultation with industry and states and territories.

3.10 Planning for the ACT

Territory planning is undertaken by the VETA taking into account Government policies and priorities and ANTA requirements. The 2002-2004 ACT VET Strategic Plan was launched by the Minister for Education, Youth and Family Services in February 2002. Consistent with the strategic plan, VETA endorses a list of VET priority industry areas for attention. VETA takes into account the nature of the ACT economy, the needs of both the public and private sectors and the cultural and social requirements of the ACT community.

VETA continues to focus on small and micro business and to give attention to matters such as existing workers, the ageing workforce, sports and arts administration, library work and areas of urgent need such as the shortage of bricklayer and plasterer apprentices.

For the purpose of adjusting priorities and establishing patterns for purchasing VET services in the short to medium term, DEYFS manages a cyclic process of research, consultation, analysis, reporting, authorisation, and publication.

The key product is the *ACT VET Half-Yearly Outlook* approved by VETA for publication every six months.

Work is currently underway to finalise a policy for indigenous people in the ACT. *Partners in a Learning Culture – ACT Indigenous Action Plan 2002-2005*. Since 2001 DEYFS has been implementing the *ACT Vocational Education and Training Strategy for People with a Disability*. This strategy is modelled on the national *Bridging Pathways* disability blueprint. DEYFS is also implementing the strategy *Reaching Their Potential - Women and Girls in Vocational Education and Training in the ACT 2001-2003*.

3.11 VET Infrastructure

States and territories are required to develop three-year Strategic Infrastructure Management Plans and Annual Infrastructure Statements to be incorporated with the Annual VET Plans submitted annually to ANTA.

Territorial VET infrastructure funding for 2002-03 is \$2.0m and the Commonwealth will provide another \$3.3m. It will be mainly spent on CIT projects. In recent years, more attention has been given to non-buildings support systems such as IT networks, and to facilities such as school and industry based skills centres.

Funded industry based skills centres include skill centres for automotive, business, transport and construction. In 2002 ANTA approved an amount of \$183,000 for Outward Bound Australia for improved infrastructure facilities at Tharwa.

School based skills centres have been established at eight government and three non-government colleges with a focus mainly on IT although one college operates a restaurant and another has a childcare and community and aged care centre. Three further school based skill centres are under consideration by ANTA to establish an office and retail facility; a spatial information database and asset modelling, and to upgrade a theatre.

3.12 VET in Schools

VET in schools is part of the national agenda introduced four years ago. It provides VET for college age students within a comprehensive general education that maximises students' employment and post-school training opportunities.

In the ACT, 17 government and non-government colleges are RTOs. A regulatory and quality assurance framework has been established involving the Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS) as well as the ARC. VET qualifications contribute towards the year 12 certificate.

ACT government colleges had 3017 students enrolled in 20 VET courses in 2001. 115 VET teachers delivered these VET programs. Some 13% of units completed and recognised on the Year 12 Certificate are VET qualifications.

In 2001 ACT catholic schools had 870 students enrolled in VET programs while independent schools had 98.

ACT schools have experienced an increase of around 160% in VET enrolments and around 140% in certificate outcomes over the last four years. The combined Government and non-Government schools delivery represented more than 10% of total VET hours delivered in the ACT in 2001.

Currently 23 courses have been written for government college delivery under the training packages with a number of these courses also tertiary accredited thus enabling them to be included in Universities Admissions Index. Students may also select some VET courses offered by the CIT.

The cost of VET delivery in government colleges is estimated at around \$3.4 million with the non-government sector contributing around \$1 million more. The Commonwealth makes a contribution to the cost of delivery of VET in schools through ANTA. In 2001 this amounted to \$648,000 for the ACT, of which approximately \$200,000 was for non-Government schools.

3.13 School Based New Apprenticeships (SNAPS)

In 2000 there were 111 SNAPS commencements, and in 2001 this rose to 182, an increase of over 60% and representing approximately 5.5% of all ACT New Apprenticeships commencing in that year. The estimate for the number of SNAPS commencing in 2002 is 200.

SNAPS exist in a number of industry areas, including building and construction, electro-technology, automotive engineering, sport and recreation, viticulture, and information technology. Students in 2001 signed training contracts for a number of additional industry areas including business (office administration), community services and telecommunications (call centres).

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the introduction of SNAPS has encouraged students who might otherwise have left school early to continue their studies and achieve a senior secondary certificate.

3.14 VET Performance 1998-2001

The ACT's participation rate, while below the national average, is growing steadily. It is at or close to the national average for the 18-24 age group. Participants in ACT VET tend to take higher level and longer courses than elsewhere probably because of the effects of the ACT's higher socio-economic and educational levels and a preference for university qualifications amongst the ACT's dominant employing industries.

In terms of load pass rate (the number of training hours students have passed) the ACT rates above the national average and third overall. More ACT students take shorter two year courses than the national average (probably due to the proportion of traineeships in the service

sector) and the proportion undertaking full time studies is slightly lower than the national average.

The ACT rates better than the national average in terms of the labour force status of TAFE students and employment outcomes after TAFE.

In terms of participation and load pass rates of specific client groups (women, indigenous, non-English speaking and people with disabilities), the ACT performs better than the national average although female participation as a proportion of population is low.

In 2001 the ACT had more than three times the enrolments in targeted client groups than in 2000.

The ACT's expenditure per ACH is now only slightly above the national average having reduced by around 15% in 2000 from 1999. The ACT's cost of delivering a successful VET result however is lower than the national average.

Apprentices/trainees satisfaction has steadily risen over the past four years while that of employers peaked in 2000 and in 2002 has fallen to 1999 levels.

3.15 Quality Assurance

The ACT Accreditation and Registration Council registers training providers and accredits courses in the VET and non-university higher education sectors pursuant to the *Vocational Education and Training Act 1995*.

In June 2001 state and territory ministers endorsed the Australian Quality Training Framework. The AQTF has introduced clearer higher nationally consistent standards for state and territory registering/course accrediting authorities and for RTOs.

A training organisation must be registered if it wants to issue nationally recognised qualifications in the vocational education and training sector. To obtain and maintain registration, RTOs must meet all twelve *Standards for Registered Training Organisations*.

Qualified auditors audit the RTOs in a nationally consistent manner with the targeting and frequency of audits based on a risk management approach. An audit precedes initial registration and again within twelve months. An RTO undergoes an audit at least three times during its five-year registration cycle.

4 DELIVERY ARRANGEMENTS FOR VET

4.1 *Changes in the Training System*

Shortly after ACT self-government, Commonwealth, state and territory VET ministers agreed to the creation of a training market, competency-based training through the National Training Board (NTB), a national accreditation framework and entry level training system.

In 1992, the nine VET Ministers extended this to a new VET system with agreed objectives and funding, and a public-private training market. The Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) was established to develop and fund the system.

Established under the *Working Nation* initiative, the National Employment and Training Taskforce (NETTFORCE) had a major impact on traineeship numbers after 1994. Industry-focused committees drove the initiative. NETTFORCE was criticised on quality grounds, particularly for its on-the-job traineeships, but was one primer for the rapid growth in training that took place in the second half of the 1990s. Like the NTB, NETTFORCE has since been abolished.

Traineeships, and the drive for a training market, were taken up in the 1996 New Apprenticeships reforms of *Training for Real Jobs*. This policy emphasised an industry-led VET system, more VET in schools, user choice of training providers, and the concept of 'regional training services'.

Regional training services were piloted in 1997, and evolved into the present national network of New Apprenticeships Centres (NACs). There were originally three NACs in the ACT, but this was reduced to two in the second tender round.

ANTA endorsed the first nationally recognised training packages in 1997. New Apprenticeships, and the Australian Recognition and Qualifications Framework took formal effect in 1998. This meant that essentially ACT training providers and qualifications were mutually recognised across Australia, and vice versa. The old TAFE certificate-diploma system was replaced by a national 12-part qualifications ladder, which extends from school qualifications through the VET system and into the higher education domain.

The Recognition Framework was revamped as the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) in 2001. New ANTA guidelines set out the standards for state and territory registration and accreditation bodies and for RTOs.

There are now 12 essential standards that all ACT RTOs have to meet as from July 2002. AQTF-endorsed auditors must take part in audits, and RTO assessment strategies have to be developed in conjunction with 'enterprises and industries'. In

practice, state accreditation agencies, including the ACT Accreditation and Registration Council (ARC), often call on the assistance of industry training advisory bodies (ITABs) for these audit and assessment matters.

4.2 New Training Machinery

Significant state and territory VET laws were enacted in the 1990s, including the ACT VET Act of 1995. The laws incorporated the new terminology and functions that would enable states and territories to take up their prescribed roles in the national VET system and with ANTA, which had been empowered by the ANTA Act and VET Funding Act of 1992.

The 1995 ACT VET Act, with later amendments, regulates the VET system and is a context for the ANTA agreements. The Act establishes a VET Authority and an Accreditation and Registration Council. The Authority advises the ACT Minister and ANTA, develops strategic plans and 'state training profiles', and monitors ANTA national programs.

The agreement between ANTA and each state and territory appears as a schedule to the consolidated ANTA Act. It allocates responsibilities among ANTA and its Ministerial Council, state and training agencies, and the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Technology. It calls for annual state and territory VET plans, and enables the release of Commonwealth VET funds to each state and territory.

Under the agreement between ANTA and the ACT for 2001–03, the ACT VET Authority is therefore charged with advising the ACT Minister; participating in national VET policy processes; implementing national VET priorities; administering the national training framework; and consulting with and supporting industry networks at the territory level.

4.3 The Changing VET Program Environment

In 1993–94, the Commonwealth's initial national allocation for VET was about \$973m, excluding running costs. There was about \$630m (65%, for calendar year 1994) going into VET funding, \$271m (28%) for support to apprentices and trainees, \$21m (2%) to ITABs and \$13m (1%) to group training assistance.

The Commonwealth VET investment trend since then is more towards VET funding and apprenticeship support, with the emphasis on servicing VET numbers, than for the group training and ITAB mechanisms.

For 2002–03, the Commonwealth has allocated about \$1.747b to the same broadly equivalent VET programs.

About \$1.087b (62%) goes to ANTA for VET funding; \$543m (31%) assists New Apprenticeships; \$80m (5%) is for skills development and transition to work; and \$37m is for ANTA National Programs. This last category mainly comprises ITABs, group training, and training package development.

The Commonwealth's contribution to VET funding has jumped 70% over the 1993–2002 period. Its contribution to apprenticeship support, which includes New Apprenticeships employer incentives and New Apprenticeships Centres, is up 100%. Funding for group training and ITABs has not grown.

4.4 Training Packages

Under the post–1998 Quality Framework, national ITABs and similar bodies develop training packages. These are sets of nationally endorsed standards and qualifications for recognising and assessing people's skills; they do not prescribe how an individual should be trained.

At May 2002, 74 training packages were endorsed, seven of these being enterprise-based. Nine packages only had had a triennial review and another 31 were under review.

The market penetration of training packages appears to be about 50% nationally, that is, within those courses of VET study directed towards qualifications. The percentage of students in packages is up around 60% at certificate levels of study, falling to 25% at diploma and higher levels.

At 2000, about 55% of the 295,000 New Apprentices were in training packages. This had risen to about 70% of 330,000 New Apprentices by the end of 2001.

The percentage appears to be only about 30% in the core trades (metal, electrical, auto and construction).

The market penetration of training packages ought to increase, as VET policy has it that courses not be accredited unless there is an industry–community need and an appropriate package is lacking. This ANTA pathway preference is reflected in state and ACT VET policies.

4.5 Growth in the ACT Training System

After the formation of ANTA, national VET funding and VET student numbers grew fairly rapidly over the rest of the 1990s, although growth now appears to have levelled off.

In 2000, total recurrent VET revenues had reached \$3.96 billion, states and territories contributing 58% and the Commonwealth 21%.

With higher VET funding, there has been a steady upward trend nationally in VET student numbers and (since 1995) a much steeper upward trend in New Apprenticeship numbers. Growth has been slower in the ACT, and participation in VET remains lower in the ACT than elsewhere (see table 1). To some extent, this is explained by the different structure of ACT employment.

The VET student base grew nearly 70% nationally between 1992 and 2001, compared with less than 30% in the ACT. The number of New Apprentices in

training *doubled* nationally between 1996 and 2001, compared with about 50% growth in the ACT. After 2000, apprentice numbers kept climbing nationally, but not so in the ACT. Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania are the three states that have kept their shares of New Apprenticeships ahead of their shares of the national labour force.

TABLE 1: VET STUDENT NUMBERS AND APPRENTICE IN TRAINING NUMBERS, AUSTRALIA AND ACT, 1992-2001

Year	VET Students	ACT VET Students	Apprentices	ACT Apprentices
1992	1.04m	17 000	150 000 (1)	2 000
1996	1.35m	18 600	164 000	2 700
1998	1.54m	18 500	218 000	2 800
2000	1.75m	20 200	296 000	4 100
2001	1.76m	21 600	330 000	4 100

Sources: Various NCVER publications on VET and New Apprenticeships.

(1) At June 1992.

In 2000, about 9% of Canberra's working age population was in VET (about 20,000 students), compared with about 12% nationally. Relatively low VET participation, and higher university participation, probably reflects Canberra's relatively higher levels of education and income, a larger white-collar industrial base and an ageing population.

One distinct area of growth in the ACT VET system since 1996 is VET in Schools. These courses are dual-accredited by the BSSS in the VET and school systems, and include school-based new apprenticeships. All ACT colleges are now registered training organisations. In 2001 over 55% of government college students who received a year 12 certificate had a vocational qualification. This was an increase from 49% in 2000.

4.5.1 ACT VET and New Apprenticeships

Using the ANTA industry groups, the biggest areas of ACT VET provision for 2002 are; Sales and Personal Services (17.8%), Business and Clerical (10.8%), Community Services, Health and Education (10.5%), Tourism and Hospitality (10.3%), Finance, Banking and Insurance (9.0%) and Building and Construction (8.6%)

In the ACT, New Apprenticeships account for about 20% of VET students. As in the rest of Australia, most of the growth in ACT New Apprenticeships since 1995 has been outside of the group that covers trades and related occupations. However, this trades group still accounts for over 40% of all Australian New apprenticeships, which is much higher than its 14–15% share of Australian employment.

The overall trades group represented about 43% of all ACT New Apprenticeships in 2000, compared with 45% nationally (table 2). About 24% of all ACT New apprenticeships were in the traditional metal, auto, electrical and building trades, compared with 30% nationally.

‘Clerical, sales and service’ represents about 30% of the ACT New Apprenticeships, a little higher than the traditional trades. Production and transport is a larger source of new apprenticeships in the ACT (15%) than it is in the rest of Australia (6%). However, the proportion of New Apprentices employed by governments (Commonwealth and ACT) has declined as outsourcing has increased.

The structure of the ACT ITABs reflects the changing ACT markets in vocational training and New Apprenticeships. In 1987, four out of the six recognised ACT industry training councils or training advisory committees centred on the core or ‘traditional’ trades. Three out of the present nine ITABs—automotive, construction and utilities—have a similar focus.

TABLE 2: OCCUPATIONAL MIX OF APPRENTICES AND TRAINEES IN-TRAINING, ACT AND AUSTRALIA, 2000

	% of total, ACT	% of total, Australia
Occupation (ASCO)		
Managerial and professional	2.8	5.9
Trades	42.8	44.6
Mechanical	1.9	5.7
Auto	8.1	7.8
Electrical & electronics	5.4	6.0
Construction	8.2	10.1
Food	9.0	6.5
Other	10.2	8.4
All clerical, sales and service	31.1	30.4
Intermed. Production and transport	14.9	6.4
Labourers & related	8.4	12.6
All occupations	100	100

Sources: *New apprenticeship trends in the ACT* (Bender & Hardy 2001) and *Australian apprentice and trainee statistics-annual 2000* (NCVER 2001).

4.5.2 VET and Future ACT Industry Directions

Table 3 summarises ACT businesses and employment by industry in the ACT and Australia. There are in excess of 20 000 private businesses in the ACT. About 15 000 of these are ‘employing’ rather than sole operator businesses. Only about 600 of the businesses employ more than 20 people.

There are large numbers of small companies in construction, retail, and property and business services. These last two industries, plus government administration and defence, are the three biggest employers in the ACT’s total employment base of about 167 000. The industry structure of ACT employment is quite different from that of Australia and the six states.

In some industries, ACT job trends over 1993–2001 are similar to those for Australia. These are manufacturing and government (stable), retail, property and business, health (up) and utilities (down, due to productivity growth). In others, such as transport and construction, Australia but not ACT has moved upwards. Most of the projected ACT job growth to 2005 seems likely to fall into just two industries, property and business services, and health and community services.

TABLE 3: ACT NUMBERS OF PRIVATE BUSINESSES, BY FIRM SIZE AND INDUSTRY (1998-99); AND ACT AND AUSTRALIA TOTAL PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY (FEB 2002)

	No. small businesses (0-19 empl)	No. larger businesses	Total no. private ACT businesses	Total ACT employment - private + public	Total employment – Australia
Agriculture, etc, mining					517000 (6%)
Manufacturing	600	n.a.	600	4700 (3%)	1096000 (12%)
Electricity, gas and water				500	64000
Construction	2000	n.a.	2000	8200 (5%)	713000 (8%)
Wholesale trade				3800 (2%)	442000 (5%)
Retail trade	2700 (1)	100 + (1)	2800 (1)	22200 (13%)	1399000 (15%)
Accommodation, cafes and restaurants	400	100 +	400 +	6100 (4%)	475000 (5%)
Transport and storage	400		400	4500 (3%)	404000 (4%)
Communication services				3100 (2%)	178000 (2%)
Finance and insurance	400		400	4400 (3%)	349000 (4%)
Property & business services	4200	n.a.	4300	25800 (16%)	1057000 (11%)
Government admin & defence (2)				37900 (23%)	404000 (4%)
Education	400	n.a.	400	12600 (8%)	620000 (7%)
Health & community services	1700	100 +	1800	19000 (11%)	916000 (10%)
Cultural and rec. services	500		500	5400 (3%)	241000 (3%)
Personal and other services	1400	n.a.	1500	7800 (5%)	356000 (4%)
Total	14700	600	15200 (3)	167000 (100%)	9231000 (100%)
Total employment in each type of private business	36200	42100	78300		

Sources: ABS 2000, *Australian Capital Territory in focus 2000*, for businesses. ABS 2002, *Labour force employed, industry, Australia, quarterly: tables 8i and 9i*, cat. no. 6291.0.40.001, for employment.

(1) Includes wholesale. (2) The majority are Australian Public Service, the minority ACT Public Service.

(3) There were also an estimated 6000 'non employing' small businesses as well.

4.6 ACT VET Delivery

The ANTA Agreement 2001-2003 defines the planning, reporting and accountability arrangements between the Commonwealth and the states and territories to maintain the national vocational education and training system. In accordance with the Agreement, Commonwealth funds are allocated to the states and territories.

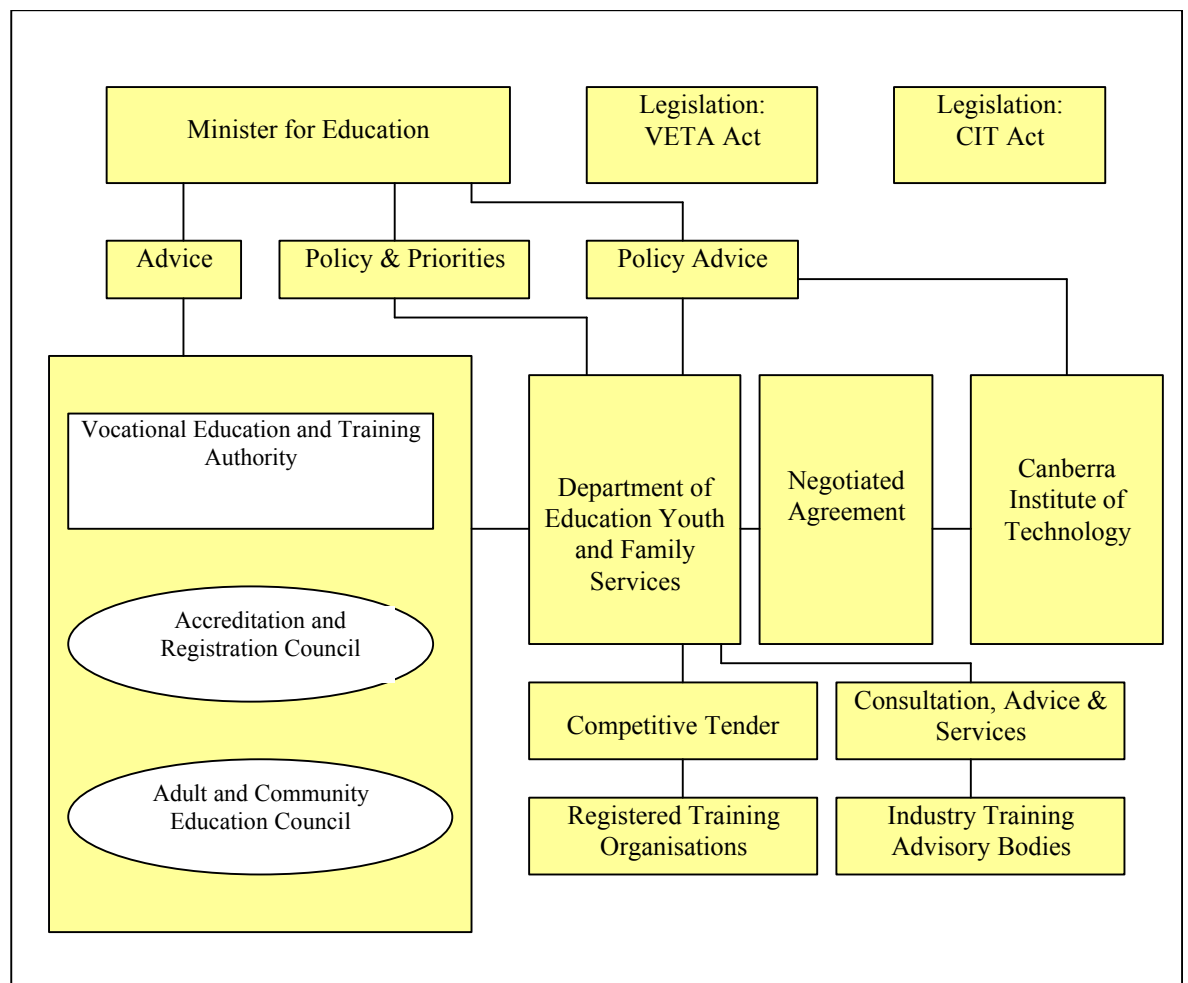
Under the ANTA Agreement, each state and territory is required to report to ANTA through the national VET statistical collection. The National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) is the research arm of ANTA and it collects, audits and publishes the data.

The Department of Education, Youth and Family Services (DEYFS) administers the relevant legislation and is the state training agency for the purposes of the ANTA Agreement.

All government-funded VET in the ACT is delivered by a variety of Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) and Adult and Community Education providers. The RTO community in the ACT is diverse and comprises:

- one public provider, the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT);
- 17 government providers, including Commonwealth agencies and the three defence forces;
- 17 government and non-government secondary colleges;
- 72 private training organisations;
- Numerous ACE providers, of which at any one time around 30 are in receipt of ACT Government funding.

FIGURE 1: ACT VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES



These administrative arrangements are underpinned by The *Australian Capital Territory Vocational Education and Training Act 1995* (the VETA Act), which deals with the regulation, development, planning, and promotion of vocational education and training in the Australian Capital Territory. The legislation:

- establishes the Vocational Education and Training Authority
- establishes the Accreditation and Registration Council
- regulates the registration of higher education and VET providers
- regulates the accreditation of VET and higher education courses

- regulates work-related training (New Apprenticeships – apprentices and trainees)

VETA oversees the administration, funding and delivery of VET in the ACT. The Authority has eleven members appointed by the Minister for a period of five years. Members represent trade unions, employer organisations, public and private providers, ACT community, industry, parents and citizens and the Chief Executive of DEYFS ex officio. There is an amendment in train to add an indigenous member to the Board.

ARC registers higher education and VET providers and accredits their courses and also has eleven members appointed by the Minister for three years. Members represent the interests of employees, employer organisations, public and private providers, higher education sector, industry, and a senior DEYFS executive ex officio.

The *Board of Senior Secondary Studies Act 1997* establishes the Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS), which is the statutory authority responsible for accrediting courses taught by ACT schools to students in years 11 and 12. The BSSS is also responsible for providing certificates and transcripts of their attainment to persons who have undertaken approved courses, including VET courses delivering nationally recognised qualifications, which the BSSS accredits in the same way as other college courses.

The BSSS consists of 14 members, 12 of whom are representative of specific groups. The BSSS has the power under the Act to “appoint such committees and advisory panels as it deems necessary”. Using this power it has created the Vocational Education and Training Committee to advise on VET issues, particularly those relating to national agreements, including quality. This committee also provides advice to the BSSS on training issues for Years 11 and 12 as well as post-school linkages with the VET sector.

The *Canberra Institute of Technology Act 1987* establishes the ACT’s only Technical and Further Education institution with the powers to carry out the functions of the major government funded provider of VET in the ACT.

Another Act, the *Building Industry Training Levy Fund Act*, provides for the collection and allocation of additional training moneys amongst the ACT building and construction industry to support and increase training in the industry. There is a particular emphasis on countering the effects of the traditional cyclic highs and lows in building and construction activity, and on remedying associated skills shortages.

While not established under legislation, the Adult and Community Education (ACE) Council was established in 1996 by the Education Minister to advise on ACE matters, and works with DEYFS to support and promote adult learning and community education. It consists of twelve members and a Chair, drawn from the broad ACT ACE community. The Chair of the ACE Council also sits on the VETA Board as a community representative.

4.7 Programs

4.7.1 Bulk Acquisition from the CIT

CIT is the sole public provider for VET in the ACT and receives funding via DEFYS for this purpose, through an annually negotiated agreement. Its courses are delivered in accordance with the ACT Training Profile, which sets out the planned allocation of training hours to be delivered according to industry areas and qualifications. (See Attachments 4 and 5)

CIT delivery under the negotiated agreement constitutes 72% of all government funded VET delivery in the ACT. CIT also competes successfully amongst other providers to deliver training under the remaining funded programs open to competitive tendering.

The agreement sets out CIT outputs for the calendar year. It specifies the price for the outputs, procedures for variations, reporting and planning obligations, audit information, service standards, payments, agreed joint projects, and special conditions. Performance measures, targets and outputs are reported quarterly and annually and are provided at Attachment 4.

4.7.2 New Apprenticeships

New Apprenticeships combine practical work with structured training to achieve a nationally recognised qualification. New Apprenticeships provide the experience new workers need to get a job, and are designed to provide employers with motivated staff, well trained in the latest systems and technologies.

Traditionally, apprenticeships took three to four years to complete and traineeships lasted for one to two years. New Apprenticeships are "competency based". This means it may be possible for a New Apprentice to complete their training sooner if they have reached the skill level required. They are covered by formal agreements known as either *Training Agreements* or *Contracts of Training*. These agreements set out the training and supervision an employer must provide for the employee, as well as the employee's obligations as a New Apprentice. Employers and apprentices/trainees may also be eligible for government assistance in meeting the costs of the apprenticeship or traineeship, such as off the job training, employer incentives, travel and accommodation allowances.

By national agreement, New Apprenticeships funding is provided through an arrangement called User Choice. This is a model for achieving client responsive New Apprenticeship training and it allows users, such as employers, apprentices and trainees, more choice in their training arrangements. Under User Choice, employers and employees choose an RTO based on the needs of their enterprise and the training needs of the apprentice or trainee, and the RTOs' ability to provide for those needs. The selected RTO is paid for its training by DEFYS. RTOs are responsible for developing and implementing a training plan to achieve a nationally recognised qualification.

Benefits of User Choice include:

- Business, trainees and apprentices can select their preferred RTO and can negotiate how, where and when the training and assessment are to occur
- Choice in the mix of on and off the job training that suits the workplace
- Scope to negotiate the selection, content and sequencing of units of competence
- A national system so that employers who operate in more than one state or territory may be able to choose one provider that can meet all their training needs.

Attachment 2 compares commencements in October 2001 with those in 2002. While reporting lag means that 2002 figures will increase further compared to 2001, it is already clear that commencements in Building, Community Services, and Primary Industries are higher in 2002.

The ACT has for the first time offered traineeships in Museum and Library qualifications and Laboratory Skills qualifications in 2002. 15 students have taken up the courses. These VET qualifications fill the vacuum left by the cancellation of the university programs and are included in the Science, Technical and Other Industry group.

When the 2002 figures are finalised, it is likely that those industry groups currently showing zero or small decreases in the raw figures, such as Arts, Entertainment, Sport and Recreation, Business and Clerical, Textile Clothing and Footware, Furnishings, Computing, and Sales, will be seen to have increased.

Earlier in 2002 there was concern at a significant decrease in the numbers of New Apprentices commencing in Building and Construction industry. While this industry has not appeared to slow in the ACT, employers appear less willing to take on New Apprentices. Consultation with industry indicates this may have been a result of concern about the costs involved in employing New Apprentices.

The ACT Building and Construction Industry Training Fund Board has recently commenced a range of incentives aimed at encouraging greater uptake in the industry. As at October 2002, there has been a 15% increase over the 2001 figures. An example of the success of these incentives is the increase in bricklaying from 4 in 2001 to 12 in 2002 and the overall commencements up to October 2002.

ACT school students can also access New Apprenticeships through the School based New Apprenticeship Program (SNAP). A SNAP involves the employment of a young person who is undertaking a New Apprenticeship part-time while still attending school and enrolled in a program of study leading to a senior secondary certificate. More information on SNAPS is provided in Chapter 5 on VET in Schools.

4.7.3 Industry Training Program

In addition to the negotiated training through CIT and the User Choice Program for apprentices/trainees, training is also acquired from the private sector, through a competitive tendering process, via the Industry Training Program (ITP). ITP spending in 2001-2002 was \$2.6m. CIT also competes to meet this training need. A minimum of 20% of student places in ITP activities are allocated to the needs of equity groups.

The ITP funding priorities are determined by reference to the ACT Training Profile. Twenty-nine contracts were issued in 2002 providing some 110 programs/qualifications.

The ITP objectives are to:

- Increase the responsiveness of training to the skills needs of industry in the ACT;
- Ensure a focused market approach to the purchase of training;
- Improve the quality of provision and value for money by stimulating competition in the training market;
- Encourage enterprises to purchase nationally recognised training; and
- Encourage innovation and flexibility in training delivery.

In 2001, several changes were introduced to the ITP to provide improved outcomes for participants. These changes included:

- Introduction of regulated student fees and fee concessions;
- Access to additional funding for participants with special support needs;
- Increased payment for qualifications awarded through 100% Recognition of Prior Learning;
- Requirement to commence training within 60 days of the issue of the purchase order;
- Eligibility restricted to Australian citizens or permanent residents;
- Quarterly reporting of Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS) data; and
- Encouragement to use VEERA (DEYFS's online AVETMISS reporting system) for regular reporting

An example of one of these flexible and innovative training models is in the community services area where a partnership was developed between two RTOs who jointly delivered a program at AQF 4 for workers in the Community Services and Health industry using the Community Services Training

Package. The qualification being delivered is a Certificate IV in Community Services in 5 different streams. The delivery of this program has been designed to enable participants to gain more than one qualification at a time, by completing the 8 core units and then adding stream specific units for each different qualification. Thus participants can choose any combination of qualifications to suit their working needs, and their qualifications will be more portable across the Industry.

4.7.4 Training Packages

The ACT is at the forefront of training package implementation in Australia. Training packages are sets of nationally endorsed standards and qualifications for recognising and assessing people's skills.

Collectively, the ACT has implemented 42 of the 74 individual Packages representing a diversity of industries and occupations. The remainder are unsuited to the ACT, either because they relate to industries not operating in the ACT (eg Black Coal), or the ACT training market is too small (eg Funeral Services).

Training packages incorporate a number of qualifications and it is estimated that the 42 implemented in the ACT incorporate around 200 individual qualifications.

DEYFS is developing a strategy for the further implementation of training packages in the ACT and a review was recently undertaken to:

- identify and highlight patterns of implementation
- identify leverage areas for increasing opportunities for uptake
- identify appropriate support services

For 2002, RTOs and NACs are marketing new qualifications from the revised Business Training Package. It is expected that a minimum of 19 additional qualifications will be approved shortly and these will be from the newly endorsed Health Training Package and the Film, Television, Radio and Multimedia and Training Entertainment Training Packages.

4.7.5 Equity Programs

The Pathways to Employment Program is a suite of 4 individual programs. Equity programs spending in 2001-2002 was \$188,000. Within these programs there are approximately 15 qualifications being delivered by 7 RTOs.

These programs are aimed at disadvantaged groups in the labour market, including indigenous, and unemployed young offenders from the ACT and region. The objectives of the Program are to:

- Prepare participants for and place them in the job market

- Improve self-esteem of participants
- Enhance life skills of participants
- Provide participants with entry level job skills
- Achieve sustainable jobs

Tenders are called to provide specific training for Indigenous people and people with a disability. These programs must reflect the outcomes of the national strategies *Partners in a Learning Culture* and *Bridging Pathways*.

Each year Equity Programs service a number of equity groups. This includes hearing and vision impaired, people recovering from intellectual disabilities, indigenous men and women's programs. Also included are job ready and peer tutoring programs. Participants are offered pre-vocational training across all areas.

For Indigenous people, DEYFS is has developed *The Partners in a Learning Culture – ACT Indigenous Action Plan 2002-2005*, an ACT strategy for Indigenous people in VET. This strategy is modelled on the national *Partners in a Learning Culture*.

DEYFS is currently researching women's participation in vocational education and training programs across the ACT. This research will be used to determine needs that fit the explicit goals of the *Reaching their potential Women & Girls in Vocational Education and Training in the ACT 2001-2003* strategy, encompassing:

- literacy and numeracy;
- Indigenous women and girls;
- women and girls in the ICT industry;
- mature aged women;
- access to, and completion of VET programs.

As part of the ANTA Agreement on implementing the national policy initiative *Australians Working Together* in 2002, the ACT committed itself to:

- increased activity under existing programs
- an employer incentive scheme to increase participation of target groups
- subsidies for students to support them in their studies

In accordance with these strategies, the ACT has provided new ITP places in:

- Adaptive Technology (for vision impaired people)
- Certificate II in Information Technology (for vision impaired people)

- Certificate II in Information Technology (for hearing impaired people)
- Disability & the Adult Learner (course for trainers of people with a disability)
- Statement of Attainment for People with a Hearing Impairment (Cert II)
- Statement of Attainment for People with a Vision Loss (Cert II)
- Basic Program for People with a Mental Illness (IT, and Mapping Change for Employment)
- the free *Belconnen Open Access* self-paced program for people entering the workforce

Two other new initiatives are:

- the *Koomarri Pilot*, an eighteen month SNAP trial begun in 2002;
- the *Woden School Pilot*, a pre-vocational Hospitality training course in partnership with CIT, operating to December 2002 with the possibility of additional students joining in 2003

The ACT *Skills 500* employer subsidy offers a New Apprenticeship pathway for several disadvantaged groups, including the unemployed, students at risk, Indigenous people, and people with a disability. *Skills 500* allows full access for employers to all forms of Commonwealth incentive payments. As at 30 September the program had attracted over 170 participants. In addition more than 150 normal New Apprenticeships had been initiated as a result of the promotion of the program.

CIT developed a response to the *ACT Vocational Education and Training Strategy for People with a Disability 2000 - 2003*. Called *Alleviating Barriers to Success*, the CIT response contains a comprehensive implementation plan.

In 2002, as part of a joint project with CIT, DEYFS began extracting specific data sets from its database. The purpose is to match delivery trends with targeted budgeting for equity groups. The ACT continues to have participation above the national rate for people with disabilities. – 4.2% in the ACT compared with 4.1% nationally even though only 17.2% of the ACT population is classified as disabled while the national average is 19.4%

4.7.6 Adult English Language Literacy & Numeracy Program

Through Adult English Language Literacy & Numeracy Program (AELLN) the Commonwealth Government provides funds for adult literacy programs on a per capita basis. AELLN spending in 2001-2002 was \$260,000. In 2002 the funding available covered 152 places totalling 35,000 AHC. It is anticipated that there will be a similar number of places and annual hours curriculum made available for 2003. The program funds are allocated through a competitive tendering process with delivery through selected RTOs.

4.7.7 Adult and Community Education

The ACE Council manages approximately 32 programs from 29 providers, which will deliver almost 121,133 hours of training for 1,950 participants in 2002. ACE funding is \$250,000 pa. The number of applicants and program proposals has increased significantly in the last few years demonstrating a high level of interest within the community.

Many programs complement other training provided through the VET system, often providing pathways to further learning opportunities or accredited courses.

A major role of the Council is the promotion of the National Adult Learner's Week and the organising of awards to ACT training providers and learners who demonstrate excellence in learning outcomes for the adult learning community.

4.7.8 Student to Industry Program

The Student to Industry Program (SIP) provides independent centralised work placement for school students. Its core business is the coordination of structured workplace learning (SWL) opportunities for ACT Year 11 & 12 students through vocational placements (VP) in industry. It is funded by the Commonwealth through the Enterprise and Career Education Foundation (ECEP).

SIP aims to provide host organisations with college vocational students who are work-ready and able to undertake and complete tasks in the workplace. SIP works with colleges to achieve a coordinated approach to placing students with host organisations in the interests of both host employers and schools.

The SIP outcomes are shown in Attachment 3. As Table 8 shows there has been continual expansion in enrolments in college VET programs and certificate outcomes. However, since 1999 a downward trend has appeared in vocational placements, ie the structured workplace training component outside the college setting. The reasons for this are discussed at section 5.2.

In addition to the ECEP funds for Vocational Placements, SIP has two pilot programs operating with DEYFS. One coordinates Work Experience placements not linked to a VET course. Two high schools and two colleges are participating. The second pilot is for SIP to broker SNAPS with some of their 2,500 host employers. To date this pilot has been restricted to government colleges. Some non-government colleges have also indicated their interest in participating with SIP as the broker.

Preliminary indications are that this brokerage arrangement will be successful. Negotiations are under way for a group of automotive students. Woolworths, Big W and Coles have approached SIP about the service. Employers have been receptive to SIP approaches, appreciate the consistency of the method, the process whereby students are vetted, the

quality of the students, and the enthusiasm with which some of the colleges accommodate the needs of their New Apprentices.

As a result of the range of services provided by SIP businesses are able to select the type of placement (Work Experience or Vocational Placement) or SNAP that best suits their needs. This flexibility will assist their business to growth over the coming years.

Prior to March 2002, the Joint Industry Training Advisory Board (JITAC) was the grant recipient for the ECEF funds for the SIP program. Since March 2002 the Capital Region School to Industry Association Inc (CRSIA) directs the use of ECEF funds allocated to the ACT. Membership of the CRSIA consists of representatives from both education and industry sectors.

The role of the CRSIA is to provide strategic direction to the SIP and determine priorities. The aim of the CRSIA is to support the effective and efficient transition of students into the workplace. Its objectives are to:

- Identify student and industry needs in terms of the transition of students to employment.
- Support and promote effective programs in Vocational Education & Training in School.
- Develop and promote partnerships between schools, industry and community.
- To develop and implement policies, plans and programs to support career transition.

4.8 Training Delivery Agencies In the ACT

4.8.1 CIT

In 2002, CIT will provide 3.735 million Nominal Hours Supervised (NHS), also known as Annual Hours Curriculum (AHC), in accordance with the ACT Training Profile. This will equate to approximately 13,160 enrolments.

The agreed delivery patterns and performance measures for 2002 are provided in Attachment 4. DEYFS negotiates the delivery of courses in a wide range of disciplines in line with the activity targets for the ACT in the ANTA Agreement. The areas, which are emphasised, are those considered most important to the ACT's economy. The performance measures are intended to allow a view to be formed about the efficiency of delivery of the courses, through measures such as pass rates and employer satisfaction with the graduating students. CIT also has activity and expenditures beyond its agreement with DEYFS.

4.8.2 Private Provider Delivery

The 101 private RTOs active in the ACT are accredited to deliver VET according to their approved scope of operations, as determined by ARC. They have access to ACT Government training funds through the competitive tendering process and User Choice.

In 2002, private RTOs will deliver approximately 1.189 million AHC, equating to approximately 6,118 enrolments.

The ACT Association of Providers of Training Services Inc (APTS) is the peak body of non-government training providers in the ACT and surrounding region. The members of APTS are diverse and include locally based training organisations, individual trainers and members of national organisations.

The Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET) was established in 1992 as a vehicle to provide representation for its members with State and Federal Governments and other agencies. It has over 400 member organisations and is now the largest body representing the private education and training sector in Australia.

4.8.3 Group Training Companies

Group Training is an employment arrangement whereby an organisation employs the apprentice or trainee and then places them with a host employer for the duration of their training agreement. This is particularly important in priority industries where a small employer does not have the capacity to fully employ a trainee or apprentice.

Prior to 1998 most trainees and apprentices employed in group training were in building and construction. In that year the ACT Government made the allocation of group training funds more contestable and allowed new group training providers to operate in the ACT. This initiative led to an increase in the total number of group training places. In 1997/98 there were under 400 training places while in 1999/00 there were approximately 528 places. It also led to wider access of group training service to industries such as Community Services and Health, Retail, Clerical and Tourism.

Group Training is supported through a joint funding program between the Commonwealth and the states and territories. This funding is to support sustained employment and is separate from funding for training provided under New Apprenticeships, through User Choice. Currently there are eight companies receiving funds from the ACT for group training services; several of them are also RTOs. Any training delivered to New Apprentices by group training providers, in their role as a RTO, is paid for separately.

Since 2000 the number of Trainees and Apprentices employed through Group Training has decreased across all industry areas from an average of 528 in 2000 to 470 in 2001. Preliminary figures for 2002 indicates the decrease continues. The trend is reflected in many states and territories and DEYFS is currently examining this issue.

Group Training companies have reported that they must meet escalating costs. They claim that workers compensation premiums, in particular, have come at the expense of employing more Apprentices/Trainees. To address this matter, legislation was enacted in early 2001 to cap workers compensation premiums for New Apprentices employed through Group Training in the ACT at 15%.

At its May 2002 meeting ANTA MINCO adopted the recommendations of the National Review of Group Training. The recommendations included:

- a set of national standards to be applied in each state and territory
- the implementation of a compliance evaluation program by each jurisdiction
- consideration by states and territories of issues raised in the review report in relation to incentives and subsidies, and the impact of rising workers compensation and insurance premiums

The review report outlined new arrangements, which will be put in place progressively over the next 12 months. The new arrangements comprise national quality standards and a revised definition of group training. The national standards will not be compulsory, but Government funding will only be available to organisations that meet the standards.

An ACT implementation plan is under development and includes awareness sessions and training for group training company staff and board members, as well as auditors, to assist organisations meet the new standards.

The national review is yet to complete its work and it must next consider what joint funding should be used to purchase and from whom.

As a follow up to the national review, and because the viability and industry spread of ACT Group Training Companies requires examination, the ACT will undertake its own review, commencing with the collection of baseline data.

4.8.4 Industry Training Advisory Boards

Industry training advisory services are currently managed in the ACT through purchase agreements with the territory's nine Industry Training Advisory Boards (ITABs). The industry areas covered by existing arrangements are:

1. Arts, Sport, Recreation
2. Building and Construction
3. Community and Health Services
4. Wholesale, Retail and Personal Services
5. Tourism & Hospitality
6. Business

7. Automotive/Transport
8. Utilities – Electrical, Water & Light Manufacturing
9. Information Technology

The arrangements for industry advisory services in the ACT have remained largely unchanged since 1994. The current ITAB contracts are due to expire in December 2002. For these reasons, early in 2002 VETA decided to review the industry training advisory arrangements.

Annual funding from ANTA has supported these services. In the May 2002 Federal Budget however the Commonwealth announced that the funding provided to states and territories for industry advice would be reduced by two thirds in the financial year 2002/2003 and to zero in subsequent years. This added to the impetus and urgency of the ACT review.

The aim of the ACT ITAB review was to develop appropriate structures to ensure that the ACT Government is well served with advice on industry training. The review was completed in September 2002.

As a result of the review new arrangements for industry training advice will be implemented early in 2003. The Government has decided to fund a new entity in return for providing the required advice to VETA. The entity would be managed by industry representatives in accordance with an annual business plan approved by VETA. The new entity would also have access to specific purpose project funding.

The ANTA is also undertaking a review of national ITABs.

5 PLANNING AND FUNDING ALLOCATION

5.1 Planning at the Commonwealth Level

Under the terms of the Commonwealth *Australian National Training Authority Act 1992* and the ANTA Agreement, ANTA is responsible for drafting a National Strategy for endorsement by MINCO that sets strategic directions for vocational education and training over the medium term (3-5 years), consistent with agreed national objectives and priorities. The national strategy sets out a vision for vocational education and training, aligned with the key objectives agreed by Ministers, and strategies to ensure that these objectives are achieved. The current version, *A Bridge to the Future*, was developed in 1997-98 and covers the period 1999-2003.

The development of a new national strategy for 2003 to 2010 is under way. This presents an opportunity to provide vision and leadership that takes account of developments within the VET sector and within society more broadly since 1997-98. In particular, there is the opportunity to consider what further refinement of VET is needed to help Australia deal pro-actively with our changing world.

The evaluation and consultation process, which is part of developing the new strategy, will be undertaken in collaboration with industry, the community, the states, territories and the Commonwealth. It will include a formative evaluation of *A Bridge to the Future*, regional community forums and a national forum aimed at building partnerships, and ensuring robust consultations with industry and providers and the active engagement of equity interest groups.

Activity targets are established which set out the amount of training which a jurisdiction is required to deliver with the ANTA funding. The activity targets are established for training in Associate Professional, Trades, Operative and Clerical, and General and unspecified areas. In the ACT, the Associate Professional area is allocated about half of the training followed by Trades and Operative and Clerical. Community Services, Health & Education and Business and Clerical sectors receive the largest allocations of training, with Tourism, Computing and Building and Construction also receiving significant allocations. These areas reflect the priority areas defined for the ACT by VETA.

Activity targets for the ACT under the current ANTA Agreement for 2002 and revised targets for 2001 are summarised in the tables shown in Attachment 5. For 2001 to 2003 the ACT revised its level of planned activity for 2001 upwards from 4.796 million adjusted Annual Hours Curriculum (AHC) to 4.816 million AHC

As a result of the revision to 2001 targets, CIT provided additional places in the Information Technology area. This change occurred as an early part of

the wider ACT pattern of shifts in planned delivery, occasioned by developing VETA priorities. Between 2001 Revised Projections and 2002 Projections for example, hours allocated to General and Unspecified qualifications have fallen 13.7% while hours allocated to Operative and Clerical qualifications have risen by 3.5%. Hours allocated to Trades and similar qualification levels have risen by 7.4% and hours allocated to Associate Professional levels have risen by 4.1%.

These shifts especially reflect an increased emphasis on higher-level qualifications. They are a result of attention to the need for upskilling and cross-skilling for existing workers, particularly in priority industries such as Community Services and Health. The shifts also reflect the relationship between higher-level qualifications and priority industries like Computing. Another, though smaller, contributor to these figures has been the preparation of a capacity for growth in emerging ACT industries such as Photonics.

5.2 Growth Through Efficiency

Over the period 1998 to 2000 there was no increase in funding from the Commonwealth. The theme for the period was “growth through efficiency”. Over this period, in the ACT, the hourly cost of training delivered was significantly reduced and the number of hours of training delivered annually was significantly increased. This was accompanied by the transfer of New Apprenticeship funding to the competitive training market.

In 2000, the ACT delivered 4.891 million adjusted AHC, an increase of 15% above 1997 levels. Student enrolment growth of 3,168 was achieved above 1997 levels. The ACT’s efficiency improvement over the period of 1997 to 2000 was 25%. A quantitative summary of the ACT’s performance over the period of the ANTA Agreement 1998-2000 is provided below:

TABLE 4: EFFICIENCY IMPROVEMENTS 1998 –2000

Measure	Actual performance
Adjusted AHC Growth (m)	0.637
Adjusted AHC Growth (%)	15.0%
Derived Enrolment Growth (valid)	3,168
Efficiency Improvement (%)	25.2%

The ACT achieved these improvements in productivity and efficiency in several ways. The first was through improvements in administration and reporting at CIT, which reduced the level of invalid enrolments and hence improved both productivity and efficiency measures. The second was the growth in training provided through competitive purchasing arrangements, as more providers entered the field and expanded the range of training options. This included the expansion of flexible training delivery options.

5.3 2001 – 2003 ANTA Agreement: Targeted Growth Funding

The Commonwealth contributed \$14.2 m in recurrent funds for vocational education and training delivery in the ACT in 2000 and by 2003 this is estimated to increase to \$17.2 m.

The ACT's obligations, in return for this additional funding are to:

- match the growth funding dollar for dollar in each year;
- deliver an additional 70,000 Annual Hours Curriculum of activity in 2001 and an additional 110,000 hours in 2002. The 2003 activity target has not yet been negotiated;
- achieve a target of an additional 320 New Apprenticeships by 30 June 2002;
- undertake an Innovation Strategy to increase training in emerging industries; and
- continue to comply with User Choice policy and principles.

The ACT is meeting these obligations, with the exception of the additional New Apprenticeships target. Meeting the target is made more difficult because of a particularly high target set by ANTA.

5.4 Planning at the ACT Level

The provision of VET is in accordance with priorities set by VETA, within the policy framework set by:

- The ACT Government
- The VETA Strategic Plan; and
- National priorities set by ANTA.

Under the Vocational Education and Training Act 1995, the VETA is responsible for the development, coordination, monitoring and implementation of a strategic plan for vocational education and training in the ACT.

The 2002-2004 ACT Vocational Education and Training Strategic Plan (Attachment 6) was launched by the Minister for Education Youth and Family Services in February 2002 and was the result of extensive consultation with key stakeholders during 2001.

The plan is a key element in the Government's commitment to assisting people of the ACT to be part of a highly skilled workforce that will promote a strong and vibrant ACT economy. It provides a framework from which priorities are set, programs are implemented, and effectiveness is measured.

The plan has 5 key focus areas:

1. Knowledge and awareness of the vocational education and training system

2. Supporting innovation
3. Equitable outcomes
4. Quality outcomes and accountability
5. Systems and resources

Each of these Key Focus Areas is supported by strategies and measures for monitoring performance.

The 1999-2002 ACE Strategic Plan will be reviewed shortly. The plan provided the framework for the ACE Council to promote and value the benefits of ACE, foster opportunities for a diversity of adult and community learning, strengthen the lifelong learning connections of ACE, and foster the contribution of ACE to community well being and development.

The June 2002 meeting of the VETA endorsed a revised list of VET priority industry areas for the next six to twelve months. The priority industry areas reflect the nature of the ACT economy, with the needs of both the public and private sectors being taken into account, and the cultural and social requirements of the ACT community. In addition, VETA intends to continue to focus on small and micro business and to give attention to matters such as existing workers, the ageing workforce, sports and arts administration, library work and bricklayers and plasterers. These priorities are reflected in the hours allocated to each of the categories in the tables in Attachment 5.

The ACT VET priorities are the outcome of a comprehensive and consultative planning process which is summarised at Attachment 7.

Planning and priority setting occur within the parameters established by the National VET Strategic Plan, the *ACT VET Strategic Plan*, VETA priorities and ACT Government policy. For the purpose of adjusting priorities and establishing patterns for purchasing VET services in the short to medium term, DEYFS manages a cyclic process of research, consultation, analysis, reporting, authorisation, and publication.

The key product of this process is the *ACT VET Half-Yearly Outlook*, which is updated and approved by VETA for publication every six months. The Outlook is published at www.decs.act.gov.au/services/training. The process is iterative, and the document is interactive with its preparation including stakeholder consultation and detailed ITAB input. Stakeholders may respond to its published contents at any time to advise on adjustments. Planning inputs include consultation with industry, training providers, community and business organisations, as well as surveys, forums and submissions. Other inputs include data from the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), the Commonwealth Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR), the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), the ACT Treasury and the ACT Chief Minister's Department, as well as specialised forecasts of industry outputs, employment and demand for VET.

Consistent with ACT Government Policy, VETA is pursuing strategies and programs for addressing disadvantage and achieving equitable outcomes as an important priority, to be incorporated in training delivery across all industry areas.

5.4.1 Indigenous, Disabled and Women

In collaboration with the ACT Indigenous community, the strategy for indigenous people in VET has been finalised. *Partners in a Learning Culture – ACT Indigenous Action Plan 2002-2005* is aligned to the national strategy *Partners in a Learning Culture*. The strategy reflects Indigenous national industry goals such as training in IT skills and in IT usage.

Since 2001, DEYFS has been implementing the *ACT Vocational Education and Training Strategy for People with a Disability*. This strategy is modelled on the national *Bridging Pathways* disability blueprint. One of the goals is purchasing appropriate pre-vocational education programs for people with a disability, through the competitive purchasing process and the CIT negotiated agreement.

DEYFS is implementing the strategy *Reaching Their Potential - Women and Girls in Vocational Education and Training in the ACT 2001-2003*. One goal of this strategy is increasing the number of women and girls completing programs in ICT industries.

5.4.2 Innovation

The ACT is being innovative in two distinct ways. The first is to develop policies and deliver training programs in emerging industry areas to support growth in those industries in the ACT. The second is to foster flexibility and innovative delivery of training in the ACT to enhance the positive impact of training on ACT industry.

The IT Cadetship Program, which was the first of its kind in Australia, is an example of an innovative training model which was developed in 2000 after extensive industry consultation. It is a working example of creating flexible training opportunities in close collaboration with employers and training providers. The Program places cadets into full-time IT employment positions, with a part-time accelerated off-the-job training component. Since its inception, a total of 125 cadets have commenced training under the cadetship in the following areas:

- Software Development
- Network Engineering
- Multimedia Integration

An evaluation of the IT Cadetship was undertaken late in 2000 after the program's first year of operation. Recommendations from that evaluation were incorporated in the 2001 and 2002 programs. A second evaluation of the program is now complete and recommendations are being used to plan the future operation of the program.

5.5 Recurrent Funding

Recurrent funding for VET in 2002-03 is \$66.2m, of which funding to CIT represents around 72% (\$48m) (2002-03 Budget Paper 4 Department of Education Youth and Family Services p29). This represents an increase of \$3.5m on 2001-02

TABLE 5: NON-CIT EXPENDITURE

Program	\$ million
User Choice Trainees	3.6
User Choice Apprentices	5.4
Industry training program (ITP)	2.6
Flexible learning leaders	1.5
Other training and resource support	3.5
Administration support	1.7
Total	18.3

User Choice and training purchased via competitive means (ITP) accounts for 17.5% (\$11.6m). Administrative costs represent 2.53% (\$1.7m).

The Flexible Learning Leaders expenditure is for a national program to identify, support and develop emerging leaders in the field of flexible delivery of vocational education and training. CIT successfully tendered to run the program and the funding is administered through DEYFS.

Other Training and Resource Support comprises a range of miscellaneous programs and projects such as Adult and Community Education, Adult Education Language, Literacy and Numeracy, Skills 500, National Consistency etc.

Commonwealth funding comprises \$17m (26%) of total funding in 2002-03, an increase of approximately \$1 million (including the growth funding under the ANTA Agreement) on 2001-02.

Not included in the above figures is an additional \$16m in revenue generated principally by the CIT through student fees, fee for service and other operating revenues.

In the financial year 2002-2003 CIT will provide 3.735m AHC, in accordance with the profile at Attachment 4. The user charge for the delivery of the agreed output is \$48.003 million at an average of \$12.9 per annual curriculum hour.

5.6 Capital Funding

Both the ACT and the Commonwealth contribute to the funding of VET capital. In 2002-03 total funding is \$4.3m of which \$1.4m is provided by ANTA. The ANTA funding is predominantly used by CIT.

ANTA also provides additional infrastructure funding available on a project specific submission basis. In the ACT this has been obtained for industry and school based skills centres. Over the past five years, funding has been provided for four industry based skill centres and eleven school based skills centres.

Industry based skill centres have been established for automotive, business, transport and construction.

School based skill centres established are:

Dickson College	Computer centre
Daramalan College	Pathways restaurant
St Clare's College	Childcare/community/aged care centre
Narrabundah College	IT centre and website
Lake Ginninderra College	Multimedia, graphics and communication centre
Copland College	Multimedia
Lake Tuggeranong College	Multimedia
MacKillop Catholic College	IT centre
Erindale College	IT practice firm
Hawker College	IT practice firm
Canberra College	IT practice firm

For 2002 ANTA funding for school based skill centres totals \$0.41m (three schools) and for industry based skill centres is \$0.18m (Outward Bound, Tharwa).

5.7 Infrastructure - Future Directions

Under ANTA's 2001 *Accountability Framework for VET Infrastructure*, states and territories are required to have three year strategic infrastructure management plans and report on them annually. The ACT develops its plan jointly with the CIT.

In all jurisdictions infrastructure planning and resourcing has been mainly concerned with the acquisition, construction, maintenance and disposal of

buildings, usually TAFE sites. In the near future CIT's focus will be on upgrading campus service infrastructure and refurbishment.

Attention is now being directed to non-building support systems such as IT networks and to industry and school based skills centres. During 2002-04 DEYFS will investigate alternative uses for ANTA infrastructure funding including the scope for public/private collaborations including schools as well as the needs of equity groups.

6 VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN SCHOOLS

(**NOTE:** Consistent measures of vocational education and training activity between states/ territories and between school sectors is not yet available. As a consequence most of the performance data presented in this section relates only to government schools where we have comparable data over the five years since the program began in the ACT. Nationally consistent data is expected to be available from 2003.)

6.1 *Funding*

The ACT has no definitive measure of the cost of delivering VET in colleges. A comprehensive nationwide study of the cost of delivery of VET in schools is being managed jointly by the Commonwealth and the states and territories and is expected to be completed late in 2002. However we know that government colleges in the ACT delivered a total of 495,000 hours of VET in 2001 and that the best available estimate of delivery cost (Ernst and Young April 1999) is around \$6.80 per hour, \$2.50 more than the average for other subjects. Therefore the cost of VET delivery in government colleges is estimated at around \$3.4 million with the non-government sector contributing around \$1 million more.

The Commonwealth makes a contribution to the cost of delivery of VET in schools through ANTA. In 2001 this amounted to \$648,000 for the ACT, of which approximately \$200,000 was for non-Government schools. These funds are provided to encourage increased availability of VET programs for school students and for quality improvement. This funding has assisted in professional development for VET teachers and in offering a wider choice of programs as well as in achieving RTO status for all colleges.

The Commonwealth position is that any sustainable increase in VET activity in schools must be funded by shifting resources from other subject areas that are less in demand. There is no certainty that the Commonwealth contribution will continue.

6.2 *The VET in Schools Program*

The current program to conduct VET programs in secondary colleges in the ACT was put in place four years ago in accordance with Commonwealth funding guidelines and has been overseen at the national level by a MCEETYA Task Force.

The objective of VET in Schools (VETIS) is currently limited largely to providing vocational education for college students within a comprehensive general education that maximises students' employment and post school training opportunities.

VET in schools:

- is attractive to all senior secondary students and has equal standing to other courses in the school curriculum;
- provides graduating students with training and qualifications that are credible and attractive to employers;
- provides vocational qualifications for occupations in demand;
- provides direct links with and experience of training and employment outside school;
- includes on-the-job training; and
- provides qualifications at a level that leads directly to employment and post school training.

The VETIS is part of the national agenda for vocational learning. MCEETYA guidelines define vocational learning as general learning that addresses broad understandings of the world of work and develops in young people a range of knowledge, skills, competencies and attributes relevant to a wide range of work environments.

In the ACT, all government colleges are RTOs. A regulatory and quality assurance framework has been established involving the BSSS as well as the ARC. The BSSS is responsible for course accreditation and student credentialing consistent with the Australian Qualifications Framework. Vocational education qualifications in the ACT contribute to the Year 12 Certificate. The BSSS processes for vocational activities comply with all national agreements for VET.

The extent of VET activity in ACT government colleges in 2001 is summarised at Attachment 8. There is an emphasis on courses related to business, hospitality, IT and tourism. The courses offered in colleges are limited to Certificates I and II and some units of competency at Certificate III. Some students may only achieve partial completion (receiving statements of attainment rather than full certificates) before they complete their year 12 studies.

A network of VET coordinators at government colleges continues to share best practice implementation of VET in colleges. VET teachers have also been meeting each term to share ideas and experiences with VET programs.

6.2.1 Performance of the Program

In 2001, ACT Government Colleges had 3017 students enrolled in 20 VET courses. 115 VET teachers delivered these VET programs. The BSSS Year 12 Study shows that 13% of units completed and recognised on the Year 12 Certificate are VET.

The ACT has experienced an increase of around 160% in enrolments and around 140% in certificate outcomes since 1997 (Table 6). Concurrently colleges have adopted the new higher quality standards required by their RTO status.

During 2001, Government schools delivered 494,626 hours of VET through 12,105 module enrolments and units of competence enrolments (sometimes multiple enrolments for the same student). Catholic schools delivered 156,612 hours through 4,506 module and units of competence enrolments and Independent schools delivered 11,138 hours through 438 module and units of competence enrolments.

The combined government and non-government schools delivery represented approximately 10% of total government funded VET hours delivered in the ACT in 2001.

6.2.2 Success of the Program

The following performance measures for the VET programs in ACT colleges were established in 1997 in the absence of national performance indicators.

- the number of students enrolled in vocational courses;
- their achievements in terms of Certificates I and II and Statements of Attainment,
- the number of work placements completed by students in VET courses

(The development of nationally consistent performance measures for VET in schools is a MCEETYA priority and implementation is expected in 2003.)

TABLE 6: VOCATIONAL COURSE ENROLMENTS IN GOVERNMENT COLLEGES

Year	Enrolments
1997	1757
1998	2498
1999	3444
2000	4648
2001	4566 *

* To be confirmed after NCVER audit (report due late 2002).

There has been a major increase in the number of students enrolling in the VET courses since they were introduced in 1997. The 2001 enrolment appears to have decreased slightly on the previous year, but the provisional figure might be affected by changes in data collection.

In June 2002 approximately 58% of students in ACT Government colleges were participating in VET programs.

TABLE 7: CERTIFICATE OUTCOMES IN GOVERNMENT COLLEGES

Year	Certificate I	Certificate II	Statement of Attainment
1997	156	83	670
1998	222	142	845
1999	169	253	1105
2000	459	325	1449
2001	343	622**	1639

** There has been a 98% increase in the number of Certificate II qualifications awarded in 2001.

The majority of courses offered lead to the award of Certificate I or II qualifications although several courses also offer the opportunity to acquire some units of competencies required for the award of a Certificate III.

The number of students enrolled in courses has increased by more than the qualifications awarded. The gap between commencements and completions is being analysed but it seems to be largely due to the fact that some students choose not to undertake the necessary work placements (the training component conducted outside the college setting “on the job”) and therefore do not satisfy all of the requirements of their course. As a result the courses which do not require work placements (either because the college can provide a simulated workplace or the training package does not require a work placement) tend to have higher completion rates.

TABLE 8: VOCATIONAL PLACEMENTS IN GOVERNMENT COLLEGES

Year	Placements
1997	836
1998	1526
1999	1858
2000	1643
2001	1404

The expansion in enrolments and certificate outcomes has, since 1999, been accompanied by a downward trend in vocational placements. There are several contributors to this trend. Placements are no longer compulsory for some training packages. Also, as explained above, many students choose to do the VET course but do not undertake the work

placement. Also, from the year 2000, cancellations, “no shows” and unacceptable absences are no longer appearing in the placement figures.

Other notable characteristics of the vocational courses offered to students at ACT government colleges are:

- Currently 23 courses have been written for college delivery under the training packages. This development was supported with ANTA funding. A number of these courses are also tertiary accredited. Information Technology and Hospitality are examples.
- The development of additional courses will be determined by local training needs and will be funded through an allocation from the ANTA funding provided for ACT VETIS.
- Students have the opportunity to select VET courses offered by the CIT. (Section 5.4)
- The progressive implementation of courses under training packages will enhance the status of VET by increasing the range of pathways available to all students. For example they may be able to more easily gain employment or a New Apprenticeship. In particular vocational courses that are also tertiary accredited enable students who seek to enter university to include their tertiary accredited vocational courses in the calculation of their University Admission Index.

6.2.3 Program Evaluation

An evaluation of the ACT VETIS program was undertaken in the last quarter of 2001. It entailed collection and analysis of data related to the 1999-2000 student cohort and included:

- Qualitative data on the perceptions of students, principals, VET Coordinators/teachers, parents, the CIT and employers/industry
- Qualitative and quantitative data on student outcomes.

Key issues explored during research include those related to:

- Structural changes required in schools and industry to facilitate implementation of VETIS
- Relationship of SNAPs to other VETIS delivery areas
- Any possible tensions between VETIS and general education delivery
- Implementation of structured workplace learning arrangements to underpin VETIS delivery
- Assessment and reporting of student outcomes (especially on the job)
- Ongoing supply of qualified teachers
- The degree to which VETIS provided alternative pathways
- Addressing the needs of students at risk

- Student to industry placement scheme and its role in VETIS
- Success of skills centres in meeting their objectives
- Current status of years 8-10 in VETIS delivery
- Career education and the curriculum areas in which it is being developed

The evaluation confirmed that the VETIS program is strongly supported by extensive delivery in all schools. It identified the following issues for future program development:

6.2.4 Target Setting and Reporting

- Of 4,162 students who gained a Year 12 certificate in 2001, 1,964 achieved at least one VET qualification (Certificate I or II or Statement of Attainment). 60-70% students do not proceed to university. Despite large numbers of students achieving VETIS qualifications, the ACT may not have the industry base to support the up-take of these students once they have left school.
- Student destination data indicates that 20% of VETIS participants are currently enrolled in university.

6.2.5 Client Perception vs Industry Perceptions

Clients (students and employers) indicated a high level of support for VETIS, however nationally, industry has raised concerns about the delivery of training packages in schools. Colleges are increasing the number of training packages delivered but there appears to be recurring issues from schools around managing the change to delivery of training packages.

6.2.6 Staffing Issues

- Teacher resistance to AQTF requirements for Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training qualifications
- Difficulties for teachers in managing administrative requirements of the RTO role including information management
- Perceived additional teacher workload for delivery of VETIS
- Professional development requirements including improving teacher participation in RTO forums etc and in networking with other RTOs
- Succession planning for staffing (including via training of high schools staff and of relief teachers)

6.2.7 Enhancing Partnerships Arrangements

- There is a need to build industry confidence in the quality of the VETIS program. This may be assisted by an enhanced role for employers in the development of programs.
- Collaboration is required between schools and other RTOs such as CIT to expand the choice available to students
- High Schools and Colleges need to cooperate around resource sharing, as do government and non-government schools.

6.2.8 Balancing General Education and VETIS

Issues for principals in managing the overall education program are:

- To increase VETIS or rationalise delivery
- Ways of resourcing VETIS programs and access to ongoing on additional funds (especially to implement innovation)
- the need to define and develop a strategy to embed the relationship between VETIS and general education

6.3 School Based New Apprenticeship Program

ACT colleges in both government and non-government sectors have provided opportunities for School Based New Apprenticeships (SNAPs) for students through various pilot programs and other delivery modes since their introduction in 1998.

Students undertaking a SNAP are given the option to enrol in a range of courses that meet their individual needs and the timetable and other organising processes allow for this.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the introduction of SNAPs has encouraged students who might otherwise have left school early to continue their studies and achieve a senior secondary certificate. Students have the opportunity to achieve a nationally recognised qualification. SNAPs appears to have increased options for students by further broadening the range of ways that students can participate in VET. The partnership between schools and employers seems to have enhanced both employment and education opportunities for young people.

SNAPs have been piloted in a range of industry areas including Building and Construction, Electrotechnology, Automotive Engineering, Sport and Recreation, Viticulture, and Information Technology. Students in 2001 signed Training Contracts for a number of additional industry areas: Business (Office Administration), Community Services and Telecommunications (Call Centres). One college has been successfully implementing IT SNAPs where, as the RTO, they deliver both the formal

and 'on job' training. In this model students are working in many of the local schools and providing invaluable IT support.

Students have become increasingly aware of the benefits that are available through SNAPs, and have entered into agreements on their own initiative. In the past, SNAPs have been initiated predominantly by GTCs and industry organisations. Large employers, for example McDonalds, are providing training opportunities for young people in the SNAPs arena.

In 2000 then ACT had 111 SNAP commencements and in 2001 this rose to 182, an increase of over 60% and representing approximately 5.5% of all New Apprenticeships commencing in that year. The estimate for the number of SNAPs commencing in 2002 is 200.

A national review of the SNAP program by ANTA is underway and is expected to report to the ANTA MINCO meeting in November 2002.

6.4 Courses Delivered by CIT

Through partnership arrangements with CIT, college students also have opportunities to engage in courses in the following areas (most of these courses lead to Certificate of Attainment qualifications):

- Commercial cookery
- Horticulture
- Floristry
- Food and beverage
- Interactive entertainment
- Veterinary nursing
- Auto electrical
- Hairdressing.

These programs offer student's opportunities to gain entry-level competencies in VET areas not offered to the college system at large.

These arrangements were piloted during 2000 and have broadened the range of VET offerings available. They will enable many students to undertake courses at higher certificate levels and importantly, in industry areas not offered by the colleges, for example 3D Electronic Animation and Hairdressing.

In Semester 1, 2002, there were 56 college students in these courses and a further 41 students from 3 high schools undertaking specially designed CIT courses in combined Metals/Automotive, and Food and Beverage.

DEYFS is currently evaluating this program to determine what improvements may be desirable for 2003.

6.5 Career Advisory Services

The 2002-03 Budget provides \$100,000 for a review of the current arrangements for providing career advice to students with a view to identifying options for providing sustainable support services to schools, colleges and students. In particular, the review is to provide:

- An overview of existing career advisory service arrangements and advice on the support needs of teachers and students;
- An analysis the effectiveness of existing arrangements in meeting the identified needs; and
- Prioritised and costed options for enhancing career advisory support services including advice on possible management structures.

Career advisory services are the responsibility of schools and colleges. The review will help to identify opportunities for enhancing the school to work transitions for students and strengthening links with VET initiatives in schools.

7 OUTCOMES

7.1 Introduction

The performance of the VET system is reported to ANTA and details of the VET system are published in the ANTA Annual National Report. At the ACT level, VETA examines the performance of the delivery of VET using both ACT and national data.

The National Key Performance Measures used by ANTA are:

- Skill outputs produced annually within the domain of formally recognised VET (this covers Participation Rates and Load Pass Rates)
- Employers' views on vocational education and training
- Student outcomes from vocational education and training
- Vocational education and training participation, outputs & outcomes achieved by equity groups
- Public expenditure per output

The key performance indicators used by VETA for reporting on ACT specific matters are:

- Apprentices and trainees In-training
- Vocational Education and Training expenditure as a proportion of State Final Demand
- Efficiency Performance
- Student Outcomes Survey
- Apprentice/Trainees and Employer satisfaction surveys
- Equity group enrolments

Regularly updated reports against these indicators are included in the ACT VET Half-Yearly Outlook under Key Performance Indicators.

State by state comparisons show that the ACT has a relatively small VET sector (in terms of participation rates), but one that performs very well (in terms of overall load pass rates, equity group load pass rates, graduates' employment outcomes, and the efficiency measure). Data drawn from the Australian National Report of the Australian VET System is current to 2000. Data for 2001 was not available at the time of preparing this submission.

7.2 ACT Performance Over the Period 1997 – 2000

The performance of the ACT VET system may be measured against the factors identified above. The performance of the system against each factor over the period 1997 – 2000 is described below.

7.2.1 Skill outputs produced annually within the domain of formally recognised VET

Participation rates are a measure of the percentage of the working age population undertaking publicly funded VET. Whilst participation is not an output measure per se, such information assists with interpretation of output measures.

Table 9 shows the participation rate in the ACT compared with the national performance between 1997 and 2000.

TABLE 9: PARTICIPATION RATES IN THE ACT COMPARED WITH NATIONAL PERFORMANCE

	1997	1998	1999	2000
ACT	7.0	7.4	8.0	8.9
<i>Aust</i>	<i>10.0</i>	<i>10.7</i>	<i>11.4</i>	<i>12.1</i>

Source: 2000 Annual National Report (Table C1.1), ANTA

Compared with the national average, the ACT's overall VET participation rate is low, although rising, as is the national rate. Growth in participation has been fuelled by increased demand for VET as well as by various initiatives to achieve growth, which have been discussed elsewhere in this submission. A table showing the participation rates for all jurisdictions for the period 1998 to 2000 is at Attachment 9.

The breakdown of participation amongst age groups in Table 10 demonstrates the impact of the relatively high school retention rate. The complete table is shown Attachment 9.

**TABLE 10: VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING PARTICIPATION RATES 2000
ALL PERSONS BY AGE AND STATE/TERRITORY, 2000 (PERCENT)**

Age	ACT	Australia
15	1.5	8.9
16	6.0	21.4
17	14.2	26.1
18	29.6	34.9
19	34.6	31.7
20	25.5	25.9
21	18.5	20.7
22	16.3	17.6
23	12.2	15.5
24	12.5	14.5
25–29	9.7	12.5
30–34	8.2	11.4
65+	0.2	1.3
15-64	8.9	12.1

While participation rates in the ACT during college years is markedly lower than elsewhere in Australia, the rates become comparable for older age groups. Participants in ACT VET tend to take higher level and longer courses than elsewhere in Australia. This is assumed to be the effects of high socio-economic and educational levels of the overall ACT population, and a preference for university qualifications amongst the ACT's dominant employing industries.

7.2.2 Load Pass Rates

The 'load pass rate' measures the number of hours of assessable training that students have passed, as a proportion of the total hours of assessable training. As shown in Table 11 the ACT has shown steady improvement over the years, ranks third amongst jurisdictions on this measure, and remains consistently above the national average.

**TABLE 11: LOAD PASS RATES OVER TIME: BY STATE/TERRITORY,
1998 TO 2000 (PER CENT)**

Year	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Aust
1998	74.3	75.1	74.0	85.4	75.7	85.4	69.0	76.5	75.5
1999	71.9	73.6	75.5	85.7	73.3	83.4	69.5	79.8	74.5
2000	73.9	74.8	74.6	86.9	72.6	82.8	69.2	80.6	75.4

7.2.3 Participation in New Apprenticeships

Attachment 10 provides the numbers of apprentices and trainees who were in-training as at 31 December 2001 as a percentage of total numbers in training.

It shows a similar age participation rate to that shown above although the participation for the 20 – 24 age group is significantly above the national average. It is also noteworthy that trades and related workers have a high representation as do clerical and administration groups.

The gender breakdown is broadly in line with the national average.

The proportion of students undertaking shorter two year courses is larger than the national average, probably due to the proportion of traineeships in the service sector, while the proportion undertaking full time studies is slightly lower than the national figure.

7.2.4 Employers' views on vocational education and training

The best, and most recent, state by state comparisons for this are available in a publication issued by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), *National Report on 2001 Survey of Employer Views on VET*. As shown in Table 12 overall satisfaction with VET in the ACT is comparable with the national results.

**TABLE 12: EMPLOYERS OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH TAFE -
1995, 1997, 1999 AND 2001**

State	1995 – Completed TAFE before employment	1995 – Completed TAFE after employment	1997 – Employers of TAFE graduates	1999 – Employers of TAFE graduates	2001 – Employers of TAFE graduates
Australia	6.4	6.5	6.6	7.0	6.9
ACT	6.2	5.9	6.4	6.8	6.8

In 2001, ACT employers' satisfaction with course delivery was also comparable with the national average.

TABLE 13: EMPLOYERS' SATISFACTION WITH COURSE BALANCE BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE

Satisfaction level	ACT (n=213) (%)	Aust (n=2,517) (%)
1. Very satisfied	13	17
2. Quite satisfied	55	54
3. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	13	16
4. Quite dissatisfied	9	8
5. Very dissatisfied	1*	1*
6. Can't say	9	5
Total	100	100

* Estimate subject to high sampling variability and should be used with caution

Employers in the ACT report satisfaction levels for the course balance between theory and practice in line with the national average although some care has to be taken because of the small samples sizes in some cases.

7.2.5 Student outcomes from vocational education and training

This measures student employment outcomes and prospects as a result of undertaking VET. It also looks at students' experiences with their VET course, the reasons they undertook it, and their perception of its relevance to their needs.

Table 14 examines the success that TAFE graduates have in finding employment while Table 15 examines the success that graduates who were unemployed when they began the course have in finding employment after graduation. Both tables refer to 2000.

TABLE 14: LABOUR FORCE STATUS OF 1999 TAFE GRADUATES MAY 2000: STATE/TERRITORY (PER CENT)

	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Aust
Employed	74	76	79	83	74	80	80	82	76
Unemployed	12	12	9	9	11	11	8	8	11
Not in labour force	13	11	11	8	14	9	11	9	12
Total (a)(b)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number of respondents (a)	11 402	10 151	8 489	2 819	5 707	1 588	487	1 017	41660

(a) Includes 'not stated' (b) Components may not add to totals due to 'not stated' responses to some survey questions or rounding

TABLE 15: EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES FOR TAFE GRADUATES WHO WERE UNEMPLOYED PRIOR TO COMMENCING COURSE: MAY 2000, BY STATE/TERRITORY (PER CENT)

	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Aust
Employed	47	51	51	57	54	57	55	61	50
Unemployed	38	37	29	29	31	30	35	27	35
Not in labour force	14	11	19	13	15	11	7	9	14
Total (a)(b)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number of respondents (a)	1847	1433	1247	316	694	247	42	103	5929

(a) Includes 'not stated'

(b) Components may not add to totals due to 'not stated' responses to some survey questions or rounding

The ACT's performance under these measures is excellent with some of the best results in both categories.

7.2.6 Vocational education and training participation, outputs & outcomes achieved by equity groups

This measure reports on groups more likely to be under-represented, or to report poorer outcomes. These student equity groups include women, people living in rural and remote areas, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from non-English speaking backgrounds and people with a disability. See Attachment 11.

The ACT tends to perform very well in VET outcomes for these groups, although female participation (like all persons' participation) as a percentage of population is low. Closer analysis of ACT figures for New Apprenticeships indicates one area for improvement, for example, is the involvement in VET of ACT Indigenous women.

7.2.7 Public expenditure per publicly funded output (ie cost in dollars, per hour of VET curriculum delivered)

The tables at Attachment 12 compare the expenditure on VET within the ACT, the other jurisdictions and the national average using a range of criteria.

The ACT tends to have a high rate of government expenditure per person on VET, compared with most other jurisdictions. However, this rate of expenditure has been declining significantly for the ACT, consistent with the national trend. The ACT has achieved very strong improvements on efficiency measures since 1997. For example the cost per hour of curriculum delivered was reduced by 25% between 1997 and 2000.

The ACT's cost of delivering a successful VET result for a student, is also lower than the national average, and has fallen between 1999 and 2000, reflecting efficiency improvements. However, the number of hours of VET undertaken by ACT people is greater per capita than the number undertaken by Australian people as a whole. Furthermore the ACT figure has also risen faster than the Australian figure between 1997 and 2000. ACT students tend to take higher level, and therefore longer courses, than the national average.

TABLE 16: GOVERNMENT RECURRENT EXPENDITURE PER HOUR OF SUCCESSFUL MODULE COMPLETION IN GOVERNMENT-FUNDED PROGRAMS, 2000: BY STATE/TERRITORY

	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Aust
\$ per govt funded load completion in 2000 prices (course mix adjusted)	21.39	14.42	23.60	15.53	21.66	25.59	36.82	18.59	19.43

This reflects the efficiency with which the ACT obtains positive student outcomes.

7.2.8 Vocational Education and Training Expenditure and Efficiency

Expenditure on VET as a proportion of ACT State Final Demand fell from 2.24% in 1997 to 1.55% in 2001 for the ACT. However, over the same period efficiency improved significantly with the cost per AHC falling by 25%.

These changes were consistent with national trends. The 1998 to 2000 ANTA Agreement provided no increase in funding from the Commonwealth. The theme for the period was "growth through efficiency". Consequently, over this period, the ACT took steps to significantly reduce the hourly cost of training. Concurrently the number of hours of training delivered annually was significantly increased. A major contributing factor was the transfer of New Apprenticeship funding to the competitive training market.

7.2.9 Student Outcomes Survey, 2001 (results in per cent)

The ACT results at Table 17 are taken from the national survey of students who undertook VET during 2000 at a TAFE institution. Graduates were those students who completed their course and graduated. Module completers were those who successfully completed some training. Graduates were more likely to have a higher level of schooling and to have undertaken at least twice as much training as module completers.

TABLE 17: OUTCOMES OF GRADUATES AND MODULE COMPLETERS

	Graduates	Module Completers
Employed	80.3	77.2
Employed (first job)	29.8	18.4
Employed (u/e before study)	58.8	43.8
Employed or in further study after training	92.2	n/a
Enrolled in further study	42.2	n/a
Moved to a higher skilled occupation after training	40.0	17.7
Achieved (wholly or partly) main reason for doing training	80.2	67.4

Source: 2001 Student Outcomes Survey: Australian Capital Territory At a Glance, ANTA

The above figures indicate that the ACT enjoys strong employment outcomes particularly for its graduates, less so for module completers.

7.2.10 Apprentice/Trainees and Employer satisfaction surveys

Table 18 shows the results of survey of a representative sample of ACT employers and apprentices/trainees active in the training market during 2000. They were asked to express their level of satisfaction with training under New Apprenticeships. The Accreditation and Registration survey surveys all organisations registered as training providers.

TABLE 18: EMPLOYERS SATISFACTION WITH TRAINING

	1999	2000	2001	2002
Percentage of Apprentices satisfied with their Training under New Apprenticeships	79	88	82	88
Percentage of Employers satisfied with their employees training under New Apprenticeships	75	93	84	76
Percentage of satisfied users of accreditation and Registration services	88	88	96	87

Source: DEYFS Survey of RTOs

The responses reveal that VET in the ACT enjoys strong satisfaction levels amongst New Apprentices and employers although there are some year-by-year variations.

8 QUALITY ASSURANCE

8.1 Registration of Providers

The ACT has 103 RTOs recorded on the National Training Information Service. The providers are drawn from a range of backgrounds, including small businesses, public service departments (ACT and Commonwealth), the public TAFE provider (CIT) and the Australian Defence Force. Seventeen government and non-government colleges are RTOs.

ARC registers training providers and accredits courses in the VET and non-university higher education sectors pursuant to the *Vocational Education and Training Act 1995*.

States and territories have agreed to legislate for simplified nationally consistent VET registration standards. Model clauses for inclusion in state and territory legislation to give effect to the standards have been jointly developed by states and territories. Final wording is to be considered by ANTA MINCO in November 2002.

8.2 National Quality Assurance Arrangements

Over the last several years there have been extensive revisions made to the quality assurance arrangements by which training organisations are registered and courses are accredited.

The most recent development is the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF), which was developed by ANTA in conjunction with states and territories, the Commonwealth and industry.

Ministers endorsed the AQTF for vocational education and training on 8 June 2001.

The AQTF introduced clearer standards for state and territory registering/course accrediting authorities and for RTOs.

The ACT has provided RTOs with training and professional development in conducting internal quality audits, required of them by the AQTF. Workshops are currently under way linking the training and assessment requirements of the AQTF with best practice in assessment, using acknowledged assessment experts from interstate and locally.

Longer term, providers will be required to sign off that they are conducting an annual self-assessment of their compliance with the AQTF. The ACT ARC will conduct compliance audits to check ongoing quality.

A risk-managed approach to monitoring and audit of providers is the future of VET quality assurance. Nationally developed and endorsed key risk areas will guide the targeting and frequency of audits. Examples of risk triggers include unusual variation in training effort (very short or long delivery

patterns), formal complaints and the delivery of the workplace assessor qualification.

There are 28 standards for state and territory registering/course accrediting authorities. DEYFS complies with these standards and follows the agreed processes for:

- Evaluation of training organisations to ensure they meet the standards for RTOs set out in the AQTF;
- Registration of training organisations
- Accreditation of courses; and
- Mutual recognition, to ensure national effect.

Each state and territory registration body conducts an annual self-assessment against the Standards and a report from an external source on compliance is forwarded to the National Training Quality Council.

The outcomes of the reporting process are also reported to the ACT Accreditation and Registration Council.

The AQTF has also introduced clearer, higher and nationally consistent standards for RTOs, relating to all aspects of a quality training and assessment organisation. A training organisation must be registered if it wants to issue nationally recognised qualifications in the VET Sector and to deliver the associated training and/or undertake the associated assessment. To obtain and maintain registration, RTOs must meet all twelve *AQTF Standards for Registered Training Organisations*.

Qualified auditors audit the RTOs in a nationally consistent manner with the targeting and frequency of audits based on a fully developed risk management approach including:

- An audit preceding the initial registration of a training organisation;
- An audit at least within the 12 months of the RTOs initial registration;
- Audits for targeted RTOs, within the registration period, undertaken in response to identified risk factors or as part of a program of strategic industry audits, or in response to complaints; and
- An audit of the RTO prior to renewal of its registration, resulting in a minimum of three audits during the RTOs five-year registration cycle.

The new AQTF Standards have imposed additional work for both RTOs and the ACT ARC. It is expected however that the time involved for RTOs in AQTF compliance will greatly reduce once the first self-assessment is submitted and the initial audit successfully completed.

9 GLOSSARY

ACPET	Australian Council for Private Education and Training
AELLN	Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy
AHC	Annual Curriculum Hours (formerly known as NHS)
ANTA	Australian National Training Authority
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
AQTF	Australian Quality Training Framework
ARC	Accreditation and Recognition Council
APTS	Association of Private Training Services
AVETMISS	Australian Vocational Education and Training Information Statistical Standards
BSSS	Board of Senior Secondary Studies
CIT	Canberra Institute of Technology
CRSIA	Capital Region School to Industry Association Inc
DEWR	Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
DEYFS	Department of Education, Youth and Family Services
ECEF	Enterprise and Career Education Foundation
GTC	Group Training Company
ITAB	Industry Training Advisory Board
ITP	Industry Training Provider
JITAC	Joint Industry Training Advisory Board
MCEETYA	Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs
MINCO	Ministerial Council (ANTA MINCO)
NAC	New Apprenticeship Centres
NCVER	National Centre for Vocational Education Research
NETTFORCE	National Employment and Training Taskforce

NHS	Nominal Hours Supervised
NTB	National Training Board
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
SIP	Schools to Industry Program
SNAP	School-based New Apprenticeship
SWL	Supervised Workplace Learning
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
UAI	University Admission Index
Veera	DEYFS's online AVETMISS reporting system
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VETA	Vocational Education and Training Authority
VETIS	Vocational Education and Training in Schools

10 ATTACHMENTS

Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) Bulk Purchase Agreement

Attachment 2 (p 22)

Comparison of Commencements October 2001 to October 2002

Group Title	2001	2002	Change (%)
Arts, Entertainment, Sports and Rec	68	56	-17.65
Automotive	200	148	-26.00
Building and Construction	165	190	15.15
Business and Clerical	511	395	-22.70
Communications	78	20	-74.36
Community Services, Health and Education	284	339	19.37
Computing	35	31	-11.43
Engineering and Mining	26	13	-50.00
Finance, Banking and Insurance	406	237	-41.63
Food Processing	72	40	-44.44
Manufacturing	1	0	-100.00
Primary Industry	54	64	18.52
Sales and Personal Services	539	510	-5.38
Science, Technical and Other	0	15	N/A
TCF and Furnishings	28	28	0.00
Tourism and Hospitality	337	250	-25.82
Transport and Storage	154	115	-25.32
Utilities	90	64	-28.98

NB Due to lag in the provision of data from RTOs, the final figures for 2002 will be higher than those quoted above.

TABLE I: SIP OUTCOMES

Industry	1999	2000	<u>2001</u>
Automotive	300	155	166
Building Construction	66	72	81
Comm Serv & Hlth	408	497	426
Electrotechnology	62	80	45
Fashion	44	34	62
Furniture Construction	43	34	17
Hospitality	472	313	245
IT/Multimedia	193	222	206
Lab Skills	0	0	1
Metal/Engineering	37	38	36
Contemporary Music	48	41	11
Office	367	358	289
Retail	217	186	175
Sport & Recreation	33	51	102
Theatre	5	0	0
Tourism	59	85	104
Languages	0	2	0
Work Education	46	47	6
Total	2400	2215	1972

Delivery Patterns and Performance Measures agreed by DEYFS and CIT

TABLE II: AGREED PURCHASE OF ANNUAL HOURS CURRICULUM BY ANTA GROUPS FOR 2002

Industry Group	Industry Activity Table Description	Professional / Para professional	Trades persons	Operative / Clerical	General VET and Unspecified	Total
1	Arts, Recreation and Entertainment Workers				0	261,600
2	Automotive Workers and Salespersons	0		0		30,000
3	Building Trades and Construction Workers	157,100	40,300			236,900
4	Community Service, Health and Education Workers					470,000
5	Finance and Insurance and Property Service Workers		0	0	0	160,000
6	Food Processing Workers				0	19,000
7	Textile, Footwear and Clothing Trades and Associated Workers					67,000
8	Communications including Printing Workers					200,000
9	Engineering Workers and Mining Workers				0	65,500
10	Farmers, Animal Husbandry Workers, Fisheries Workers, Horticultural Workers and Forestry Workers.					97,000
12	Salespersons and Personal Service Workers					123,000
13	Hospitality, Travel and Tourism Workers			119,760	0	341,500
14	Transport Trades, Storage Workers and Associated Occupations					20,000
15	Utility Workers				0	128,000
16	Business and Clerical			178,375		450,000
17	Computing	470,000				480,000
18	Science and Technical	107,220				188,500
19	General Vocational Education and Training				322,000	322,000
	Subtotal					3,660,000
	RPL					75,000
	Total	2,285,510	351,875	527,735	494,880	3,735,000

Note that the blank boxes in Schedule 1 indicate that DEYFS has no specific requirement for the balance of allocation of hours across those qualification levels, whereas the boxes containing figures do indicate an explicit DEYFS requirement. Note also that the activity identified in Schedule 1 is restricted to the bulk purchase, exclusive of activity funded through competitive tendering, New Apprenticeships under User Choice, the Adult English Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program, or any other activity outside the bulk purchase. No adjustments are included in this schedule for Invalid Module Enrolments.

The NCVER Audit Report shows that, during the year 2000, CIT delivered 4,616,394 hours of publicly funded training to 16,266 clients.

TABLE III: PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Performance Measure	Definition	2000 Target	2001 Target	2002 Target
Annual Hours Curriculum of VET - ¹ Direct Delivery (Q)	AVETMIS Standard	3.533m	3.56m	3.66m
Annual Hours Curriculum of VET - RPL (Hrs foregone) (A)	Method agreed between the ACT & ANTA for Maintenance of Effort ²	0.075m	0.075m	0.075m
Total AHC		3.608m	3.635m	3.735m
Course Enrolments (Q)	AVETMIS Standard	11,793	12,000	12,100
Units of competency completion		77%	77%	77%
Load Pass Rates (A)	ANTA Benchmarking	75%	75%	75%
Course Completions (A)	Students who complete a course and apply successfully for an award.	3,000 ⁴	3,000	3,000
Invalid Module Enrolment	ANTA Benchmarking	8%	7%	7%
Invalid Module Hours Rate	ACT Benchmark	6%	6%	6%
Graduate Satisfaction Rate (A)	Proportion of graduates at least "generally satisfied" with their course ⁵	90%	90%	90%
Employer Satisfaction Rate (A)	Proportion of employers of CIT graduates at least "generally satisfied" with training provided to staff ⁶	80%	80%	80%
Compliance with requirements under this agreement (Q)	Percentage of items in Schedule 3 provided by the due date	100%	100%	100%
Enrolled students advised of confirmation of enrolment details by: • 27 March (Sem 1) • 4 September (Sem 2)		98%	98%	98%
Result notices issued to students enrolled in mainstream traditional delivery by: • 24 July (Sem 1) • 8 January (Sem 2)		98%	98%	98%
Average User Charge per Annual Hour Curriculum	AVETMIS standard	\$11.41	\$12.39	\$12.73
Average cost per Annual Hour Curriculum (A)	AVETMIS standard	\$16.08	\$15.13	\$15.61
Total Cost (Q) (\$'000)^{7,8}		58,000	55,000	58,290
User Charge (Q) (\$'000)⁸		41,172	45,068	\$47,561
Financial Period		2000	2001	2002

¹ Frequency of reporting: Q = quarterly, A = Annually. CIT's academic programs are offered on a calendar year basis.

² The contribution of teaching hours to AHC via Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) will be recognised through the ANTA formula which is: *for module enrolments reported with an outcome of RPL, hours are counted using the formula of five hours plus 10 percent of module curriculum hours. For modules of less than five curriculum hours, the full curriculum hours are used.*

³ Outcomes reported are one year in arrears, e.g. 1999 outcome represents students completing courses in 1998 plus completions not included in previous years.

⁴ For 1999 and following years AVETMISS reporting, AQF Statements of Attainment are no longer counted in course completions.

⁵ Based on either a national survey funded by ANTA or a sample survey agreed between the parties for accredited courses of at least 200 hours duration.

⁶ Based on either a national survey funded by ANTA or a sample survey agreed between the parties

⁷ This figure includes capital.

8 Subject to change following completion of the budget process.

Activity Level Tables – 2001 and 2002

TABLE IV: REVISED 2001 ACTIVITY LEVELS TO GIVE EFFECT TO ANTA AGREEMENT 2001-2003

Revised Government funded activity, 2001 Annual Hours Curriculum-projected					
Industry area	General & unspecified	Operative & Clerical	Trades	Associate Professional	Total
Arts, entertainment, sports & recreation		26,716	17,691	199,890	244,297
Automotive	7,261	3,142	95,958		106,361
Building and construction	529	51,138	103,242	134,346	289,256
Community services, health & education.		94,717	151,884	382,023	628,624
Finance, banking & insurance		16,386	23,614	168,699	208,699
Food processing	1,035	3,881	32,683		37,599
Textiles, clothing, footwear and furnishings		3,751	37,300	25,680	66,732
Communications		17,646	8,047	167,239	192,932
Engineering and mining		745	32,286	44,171	77,202
Primary industry		27,719	90,750	2,410	120,879
Process manufacturing		90			90
Sales and personal services		194,313	108,491	69,003	371,807
Tourism and hospitality		170,882	97,392	160,501	428,775
Transport and storage		25,767	6,899		32,666
Utilities		15,196	122,054	57,293	194,544
Business and clerical	55,541	241,804	64,862	249,186	611,393
Computing	10,774	6,557	6,172	472,291	495,793
Science, technical and other	46,177	13,084	880	110,364	170,505
General education and training	428,814				428,814
Yet to be allocated (ITP)	109,126				109,126
Total	659,257	913,532	1,000,205	2,243,100	4,816,094

TABLE V: 2002 TRAINING PROVISION (PROJECTED), BY ANNUAL HOURS CURRICULUM (AHC)

Category/Group	General & unspecified	Operative & Clerical	Trades	Associate Professional	Total
Arts, entertainment, sports & recreation	0	29275	19960	212115	261350
Automotive	7495	3245	99040	0	109780
Building and construction	545	52780	106560	138665	298550
Community services, health & education.	0	97760	156755	394300	648815
Finance, banking & insurance	0	16910	24370	174120	215400
Food processing	1065	4005	33730	0	38800
Textiles, clothing, footwear and furnishings	0	3870	38495	26505	68870
Communications	0	18410	8405	173310	200125
Engineering and mining	0	770	33320	45590	79680
Primary industry	0	28610	93665	2485	124760
Process manufacturing	0	95	0	0	95
Sales and personal services	0	200555	111975	71220	383750
Tourism and hospitality	0	176370	100520	165660	442550
Transport and storage	0	26585	7115	0	33700
Utilities	0	15685	125975	59130	200790
Business and clerical	57325	249575	66945	240680	614525
Computing	11120	6765	6370	478175	502430
Science, technical and other	48760	14505	1010	119010	183285
General education and training	442260	0	0	0	442260
Recognition of Prior Learning (CIT)	0	0	40000	35000	75000
Totals	568570	945770	1074210	2335965	4924515

2002-2004 ACT Vocational Education and Training Strategic Plan

Message from the Minister

This plan is a key element in the Government's commitment to assisting people of the ACT to be part of a highly skilled workforce that will promote a strong and vibrant ACT economy. The plan provides a framework from which priorities are set, programs are implemented, and effectiveness is measured. It allows for a more focused delivery of services, and improves responsiveness to customer needs.

Over the past 5 years there has been a steady increase in the number of people undertaking vocational education in the ACT. Nevertheless we can do even better. To achieve this we need to ensure that the benefits of vocational education are widely recognised by the community. The first key focus area of the plan 'Knowledge and awareness of the vocational education and training system' addresses this issue.

The ACT Government understands that education is central to the quality of the lives of the people of Canberra and is keen to highlight the significant role played by vocational education and training in developing good citizens as well as enhancing opportunities for members of our community. We will therefore take a leadership role in this area, by ensuring that New Apprenticeships are not only readily available within the ACT public service environment, but are encouraged.

I am confident that the implementation of the *2002-2004 ACT Vocational Education and Training Strategic Plan* will contribute to our long-term vision for the future prosperity and well-being of the people of the ACT. I would like to thank all those who were involved in its development.

Simon Corbell
Minister for Education, Youth and Family Services

10.1.1 The ACT Vocational Education and Training Environment

The vocational education and training system has undergone major change over the past few years. While the need to respond to change will continue, a period of consolidation is required to ensure that these changes are embedded in a robust, integrated system.

A major focus for the ACT in the period 2002-2004 will be on driving national consistency in the vocational education and training system and implementing new and more demanding Australian Quality Training Framework standards.

Another key focus of the Plan is on *clients* and *suppliers* of the vocational education and training system.

The key client groups are:

- Business and Government (Federal and Local);
- Individuals seeking pre-employment training, initial employment training, job-related training or job-switching training.

The key supplier groups are:

- public registered training organisations;
- private registered training organisations (including ‘not for profit’); and
- public and private employer registered training organisations.

The ACT vocational education and training system has a strong base to build on and is well positioned to take advantage of opportunities and meet challenges in the future. The outlook for the ACT’s economy is positive, with predictions for higher levels of employment, higher than average levels of income and higher education levels than the rest of Australia.

The ACT and Commonwealth Governments have committed to a new Australian National Training Authority Agreement for the period 2001 to 2003. This will inject additional funds into the ACT system to support innovation and growth in vocational education and training activity.

Vision

The ACT is a learning community which recognises that the skills acquired through vocational education and training underpin its social and economic well-being. We are recognised nationally and internationally for our world-class vocational education and training system.

“Vocational education and training skills drive the ACT”

Mission

Through partnership with government, industry and training providers, be an effective, responsive and efficient vocational education and training system.

Values

- Achieving quality outcomes
- Making the ACT competitive
- Being consultative and responsive
- Being informative and accessible
- Being transparent and accountable
- Being supportive to its client base
- Focusing on the future

Key Focus Areas

To achieve the Vision, the following Key Focus Areas will be addressed:

1. Knowledge and awareness of the vocational education and training system
2. Supporting innovation
3. Equitable outcomes
4. Quality outcomes and accountability
5. Systems and resources

Key Focus Area No 1 - Knowledge and Awareness of the Vocational Education and Training System

Objective: To increase public understanding of the value of vocational education and training.

Strategy	Performance Measure
1. Ensure vocational education and training activity contributes to the achievement of a learning community (including life-long learning) in the ACT	• ACE Council agrees that range of provision of ACT VET meets the needs of persons in all age groups • ACE Strategic Plan includes strategies to develop life-long learning
2. Identify and communicate vocational education and training pathway options	• Pathways identified • Explanatory documentation developed • Brochures developed and distributed to schools and RTOs
3. Develop and implement a marketing plan and communication strategy for vocational education and training	• Marketing plan and communication strategy developed and implemented
4. Support the dissemination of vocational education and training information (including careers advice to schools)	• Information provided to schools and other venues as appropriate (eg careers market)
5. Encourage private sector (including business) investment in education and training.	• Increased private sector investment in vocational education and training

Key Focus Area No 2 - Supporting Innovation

Objective: To increase participation in vocational education and training through a dynamic and responsive system.

Strategy	Performance Measure
1. Undertake research into the vocational education and training needs of client and supplier groups	- VET demand reported in ACT VET Half-Yearly Outlook - Client satisfaction surveys
2. Develop long-range planning cycles which take account of industry, business, government and community sector trends	- Emerging trends included in ACT VET Planning Framework and Half-Yearly Outlook - Training purchased in line with Half-Yearly Outlook
3. Support and facilitate the establishment of collaborative partnerships/strategic alliances between industry, providers and the community and cross-sectoral alliances between higher education and RTOs (including schools) to enhance vocational education and training outcomes for clients	Number and range of alliance types
4. Encourage Registered Training Providers to improve their online training delivery	Number and range of improvement initiatives
5. Improve arrangements to recognise existing skills within the community	Number and range of RCC arrangements

Key Focus Area No 3 - Equitable Outcomes

Objective: To encourage and enable the participation of equity groups¹ in vocational education and training.

Strategy	Performance Measure
1. Promote customisation of training for equity groups	Number and range of programs
2. Promote availability of assistance to students and employers	Range of support methods available and accessed
3. Encourage people from equity groups to complete training	Completion rates of members of equity groups
4. Support the development and implementation of ACT and national equity strategies	Number and range of strategies/policies in place mirroring national strategies/policies

¹ Equity groups are – Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, people with disabilities, people with literacy and numeracy needs, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people unemployed for one year or more, early school leavers under 25 years of age, who have not completed either Year 10 or Year 11, women returning to the workforce after 12 months continuous unemployment.

Key Focus Area No 4 - Quality Outcomes and Accountability

Objective: To ensure the vocational education and training system provides quality outcomes in a transparent and accountable manner.

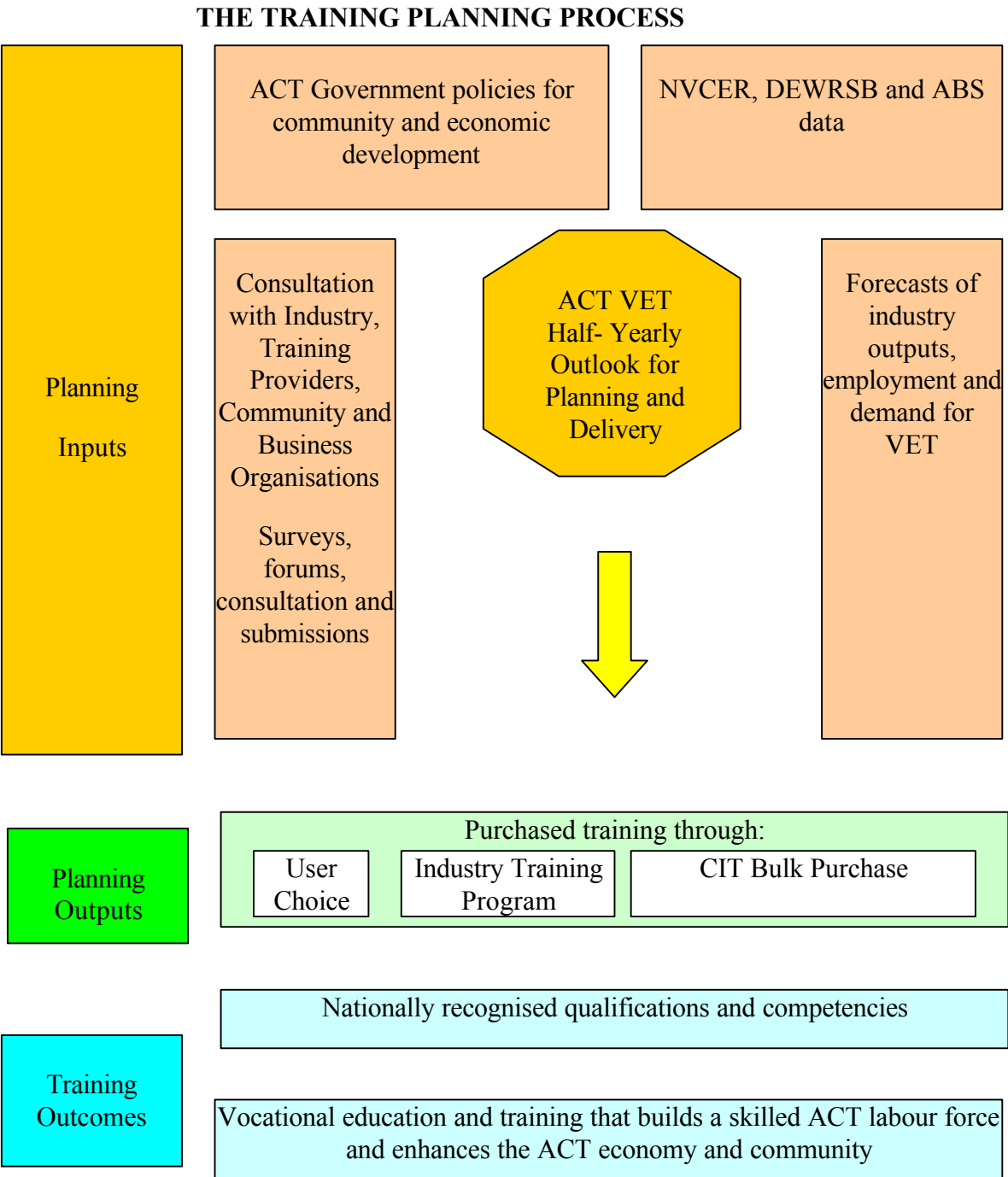
Strategy	Performance Measure
1. Implement the Australian Quality Training Framework Standards for Registered Training Organisations and State and Territory Registering/Course Accrediting Bodies	Standards implemented
2. Measure and report on the quality of the ACT vocational education and training system	- Number of audits undertaken - Customer satisfaction
3. Ensure the ACT view on vocational education and training is provided in national and international forums	Number of meetings with ACT representation/input
4. Review, evaluate and promote the ACT quality assurance system for vocational education and training	Documentation of internal quality arrangements

Key Focus Area No 5 - Systems and Resources

Objective: Expand and support innovative and collaborative business practices to ensure effective and efficient resource management.

Strategy	Performance Measure
1. Develop, implement and maintain systems to research and prioritise client needs, including emerging needs and unmet demand	- Systems developed and/or upgraded - Training Plan produced and training purchased according to Plan
2. Monitor the operation of current funding models to ensure effective and efficient provision	- VET expenditure as a proportion of State Final Demand \$ per head of population within 15-64 age group
3. Support the strategic development and maintenance of facilities and equipment to meet emerging needs	ANTA Accountability Framework for VET Infrastructure implemented
4. Ensure high standards of public purchasing for vocational education and training services	Public expenditure per publicly funded output
5. Develop partnership/strategic alliances to ensure optimum use of available resources	Number and range of partnership/strategic alliances

ACT VET Planning Framework



Attachment 8 (P 41)

Extent of Vocational Education activity conducted in ACT colleges in 2001

TABLE VI: VET PROGRAMS AVAILABLE IN GOVERNMENT COLLEGES

Qualification	C o p l a n d	D i c k s o n	E r i n d a l e	H a w k e r	L a k e G i n n i n d e r r a	L a k e T u g g e r a n o n g	N a r r a b u n d a h	C i l l i n g
Business Cert I				X				
Business Cert II				X				
Business (Office Administration) Cert II		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Business (Office Skills) Cert I	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Construction Cert I	X	X						X
Food Processing (Wine) Cert I	X							
Hospitality (Kitchen Operations) Cert I	X	X	X	X	X			X
Hospitality (Operations) Cert I	X	X	X	X	X			X
Hospitality (Operations) Cert II	X	X	X	X	X			X
Information Technology Cert II	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Multimedia Cert II	X					X		
Tourism (Sales/Office Operations) Cert II		X	X	X	X			X
Tourism (Attractions and Theme Parks) Cert II		X	X	X	X			
Automotive Cert I	X	X		X	X	X		
Retail Cert I		X			X			X
Retail Cert II					X			
Community Services (Children's Services) Cert I			X	X		X		
Community Services (Community Work) Cert II					X			X

Entertainment Cert I			X					
Entertainment Cert II			X					
Fitness Cert II			X					
Sport and Recreation (Sports Administration) Cert I			X	X		X		
Contemporary Music (Performance) Cert II		X		X	X		X	
Contemporary Music (Production) Cert II				X				
Contemporary Music Cert I					X		X	
Metals & Engineering Cert I					X			X
Clothing Production Cert I							X	
Clothing Production (Complex or Multiple Processes) Cert II							X	

Participation Rates 1998 – 2000

TABLE VII: VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING PARTICIPATION RATES: BY STATE/TERRITORY, 15 TO 64-YEAR-OLDS, 1998 TO 2000 (PER CENT)

Year	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Aust
1998	10.5	12.3	10.1	11.6	8.6	8.7	11.0	7.4	10.7
1999	11.0	13.5	11.2	11.4	9.2	9.4	12.7	8.0	11.4
2000	13.1	13.5	10.3	12.0	9.4	10.2	14.1	8.9	12.1

TABLE VIII: VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING PARTICIPATION RATES 2000 ALL PERSONS BY AGE AND STATE/TERRITORY, 2000 (PERCENT)

Age	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Aust
15	9.1	8.6	10.2	5.5	10.4	1.7	25.5	1.5	8.9
16	24.9	19.9	21.2	12.2	21.4	22.5	42.4	6.0	21.4
17	29.0	23.5	26.3	18.8	28.8	28.4	35.8	14.2	26.1
18	37.9	38.6	29.6	31.2	31.6	29.5	31.5	29.6	34.9
19	34.0	38.0	24.3	30.0	25.2	27.3	26.6	34.6	31.7
20	28.0	30.9	19.9	26.2	19.5	21.2	22.9	25.5	25.9
21	21.9	24.4	16.6	21.7	15.7	18.2	21.1	18.5	20.7
22	18.8	19.9	14.2	18.9	13.3	15.3	17.4	16.3	17.6
23	16.5	18.0	12.9	17.1	11.2	14.6	14.1	12.2	15.5
24	15.2	16.3	12.2	16.1	10.9	13.5	14.3	12.5	14.5
25–29	13.0	14.1	10.8	14.3	9.6	11.9	13.3	9.7	12.5
30–34	11.8	12.7	9.9	12.8	8.8	10.3	13.4	8.2	11.4
65+	1.9	1.5	0.7	1.1	0.6	0.4	1.1	0.2	1.3
15–64	13.1	13.5	10.3	12.0	9.4	10.2	14.1	8.9	12.1

Apprentices and Trainees

TABLE IX: APPRENTICES AND TRAINEES IN-TRAINING AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2001* (AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL NUMBERS IN TRAINING)

Age	ACT	<i>Australia</i>
19 years or less	21.4	24.5
20 to 24 years	40.5	33.1
25 to 39 years	23.8	24.4
40 years or more	14.4	17.9
Sex		
Males	64.9	65.7
Females	35.1	34.3
Occupation (ASCO) group		
Managers & administrators	0.0	1.8
Professionals	0.0	1.5
Associate professionals	1.6	4.3
Trades & related workers	46.2	38.9
Advanced clerical & service workers	4.2	0.9
Intermediate clerical, sales & service workers	21.8	17.9
Intermediate production & transport workers	10.9	10.1
Elementary clerical, sales & service workers	8.8	14.2
Labourers and related workers	6.5	10.4

	ACT	<i>Australia</i>
Qualification level		
Certificate II or lower	19.4	18.5
Certificate III	76.9	74.4
Certificate IV and above	3.8	7.2
Expected duration of training		
Two years and less	55.3	41.2
More than 2 years	44.7	58.8
Full-time status		
Full-time	75.5	78.5
Part-time	24.5	21.4
Total number ('000)	4.83	333.19

*Does not show missing or unknown data. As a result, the percentages for selected characteristics may not sum to 100.

Source: Australian Apprentice and Trainee Statistics, December Quarter 2001, NCVER

Participation and Outcomes for Equity Groups

TABLE X: VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING PARTICIPATION RATES: BY SEX AND STATE/TERRITORY, 2000 (PER CENT)

Student group	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Aust
Females (aged 15 to 64)	13.5	12.8	10.2	11.7	9.1	9.3	14.5	8.5	12.0
Males (aged 15 to 64)	12.6	14.1	10.4	12.1	9.7	11.2	13.8	9.2	12.1
All persons (aged 15 to 64)	13.1	13.5	10.3	12.0	9.4	10.2	14.1	8.9	12.1
All persons (all ages)	9.5	9.7	7.3	8.6	6.7	6.9	10.9	6.4	8.7

TABLE XI: LOAD PASS RATE BY INDIGENOUS STUDENTS: BY STATE/TERRITORY, ALL AGES, 2000 (PER CENT)

Student group	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Aust
Reported as indigenous	58.0	60.3	59.3	74.2	54.7	67.6	64.0	73.1	60.1
Reported as non-indigenous	74.8	74.8	75.3	87.7	75.3	83.2	76.2	80.9	76.2
Client group not reported	72.8	76.6	77.9	85.5	68.2	86.6	52.0	71.2	74.1
All persons	73.9	74.8	74.6	86.9	72.6	82.8	69.2	80.6	75.4

TABLE XII: LOAD PASS RATE BY COUNTRY OF BIRTH: BY STATE/TERRITORY, ALL AGES, 2000 (PER CENT)

Country of birth	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Aust
Non-English-speaking country	71.7	70.8	63.7	82.5	67.3	80.1	65.1	75.7	70.9
Mainly English-speaking country	74.7	76.2	75.8	87.8	75.0	82.9	69.2	81.2	76.6
Not reported	73.0	73.3	77.7	84.7	68.4	84.9	74.0	83.8	73.7
All persons	73.9	74.8	74.6	86.9	72.6	82.8	69.2	80.6	75.4

TABLE XIII: LOAD PASS RATE BY REPORTED DISABILITY: BY STATE/TERRITORY, ALL AGES, 2000 (PER CENT)

Student group	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Aust
Students reported as having a disability	66.2	66.4	65.1	82.4	64.4	69.1	67.0	72.2	67.1
Students reported as not having a disability	74.6	75.3	75.0	87.2	74.2	83.2	69.0	81.0	76.0
Students with disability not reported	72.8	72.3	74.8	86.3	68.2	86.6	75.3	80.9	73.7
All students	73.9	74.8	74.6	86.9	72.6	82.8	69.2	80.6	75.4

TABLE XIV: VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING PARTICIPATION BY REPORTED DISABILITY: BY STATE/TERRITORY, ALL AGES, 2000, (PER CENT)

Student group	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Aust
VET STUDENTS									
Students reported as having a disability	3.8	3.6	3.7	3.4	2.6	4.0	2.7	4.5	3.6
Students reported as not having a disability	67.8	90.7	78.1	78.6	66.8	83.5	89.6	91.1	77.4
Students with client group not reported	28.4	5.7	18.2	18.0	30.6	12.6	7.7	4.3	19.1
All persons	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
AUSTRALIAN POPULATION									
Persons with a disability as proportion of total population	19.3	18.0	19.9	22.4	19.5	22.3	13.3	17.2	19.3
Persons with a disability (aged 15 – 64) as proportion of total population (aged 15 – 64)	14.3	13.1	15.1	17.3	14.3	17.1	10.4	12.0	14.4

Expenditure and Efficiency Measures

TABLE XV: PUBLIC EXPENDITURE PER PUBLICLY FUNDED OUTPUT: BY STATE/TERRITORY, 1997, 1998, 1999 AND 2000 (\$)

	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Aust
2000	13.8	9.5	15.2	12.2	12.8	15.0	20.7	13.1	12.7
1999 (in '00 prices)	14.8	9.5	13.6	12.0	13.3	16.1	20.0	15.4	12.8
1998 (in '00 prices)	15.6	10.6	12.5	13.8	13.6	16.9	28.2	17.4	13.5
1997 (in '00 prices)	15.3	10.7	15.1	15.9	15.4	19.3	29.3	17.5	14.2
% annual change '99 to '00	-6.7	+0.4	+11.3	+1.8	-3.3	-7.2	+3.4	-14.9	-1.1
% change '97 to '00	-9.8	-10.7	+0.1	-23.1	-16.6	-22.4	-29.4	-25.2	-10.9

The ACT has achieved very strong improvements on efficiency measures since 1997.

TABLE XVI: PUBLIC EXPENDITURE PER MODULE LOAD COMPLETION (PUBLICLY FUNDED PROGRAMS): BY STATE/TERRITORY, 1999 AND 2000 (\$000, ACCRUAL)

	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Aust
2000	21.4	14.4	23.6	15.5	21.7	25.6	36.8	18.6	19.4
1999 (in '00 prices)	24.2	14.7	21.2	16.3	22.2	26.5	34.8	22.7	20.2
% annual change '99 to '00	-11.6	-2.1	+11.5	-4.8	-2.5	-3.6	+5.8	-18.2	-3.8
% change '97 to '00	-12.0	-17.0	+1.7	-33.7	-10.9	-27.1	-36.3	-30.9	-13.9

This table, and the one below, demonstrates that the ACT's cost of delivering a successful VET result for a student, is lower than the national average, and has fallen between 1999 and 2000, reflecting efficiency improvements.

TABLE XVII: PUBLIC EXPENDITURE PER MODULE LOAD COMPLETION (ALL FUNDED PROGRAMS): BY STATE/TERRITORY, 1999 AND 2000 (\$)

	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Aust
2000	16.2	13.5	16.6	12.2	16.4	15.0	25.2	14.3	15.3
1999 (in '00 prices)	18.4	11.9	15.5	13.4	17.1	17.4	27.1	19.6	15.6
% annual change '99 to '00	-12.0	+13.2	+7.2	-8.7	-4.1	-13.7	-7.0	-27.1	-2.2
% change '97 to '00	-14.3	+11.4	-2.4	-31.6	-7.2	-16.1	-24.7	-29.4	-7.6

TABLE XVIII: ANNUAL HOURS CURRICULUM (AHC) PER PERSON: BY STATE/TERRITORY, AGED 15 TO 64, 1997, 1998,1999 AND 2000

	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Aust
2000	21.0	22.8	16.1	19.6	19.4	16.3	24.1	22.1	20.2
1999	20.2	22.9	17.0	20.8	18.9	15.3	22.5	20.7	20.1
1998	19.7	21.6	18.4	17.3	17.8	14.1	17.6	20.3	19.4
1997	19.9	20.5	15.9	15.8	16.2	12.8	15.5	19.3	18.4
% change '97 to '00	+5.3	+10.9	+1.0	+24.3	+19.5	+27.6	+55.2	+14.3	+9.7

This table demonstrates that the number of hours of VET undertaken by ACT people is greater per capita than the number undertaken by Australian people as a whole. The ACT figure has also risen faster than the Australian figure between 1997 and 2000. This table indicates that ACT students tend to take higher level, and therefore longer courses, than the national average.

TABLE XIX: GOVERNMENT RECURRENT EXPENDITURE PER HOUR OF SUCCESSFUL MODULE COMPLETION IN GOVERNMENT-FUNDED PROGRAMS, 2000: BY STATE/TERRITORY

	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	ACT	Aust
\$ per govt funded load completion in 2000 prices (course mix adjusted)	21.39	14.42	23.60	15.53	21.66	25.59	36.82	18.59	19.43

This reflects the efficiency with which the ACT obtains positive student outcomes.

TABLE XX: COST OF CAPITAL PER ANNUAL CURRICULUM HOUR, 2000 (\$)

NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
1.81	1.49	1.84	1.48	1.77	2.22	2.00	2.84	1.71

This is regarded as a good result for the ACT, given our particular circumstances.

TABLE XXI: VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING EXPENDITURE AS A PROPORTION OF STATE FINAL DEMAND (\$M) AND EFFICIENCY

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Total operating expenses	87.42	90.36	82.09	79.50	80.48*
State Final Demand (SFD)	3895	4251	4701	4693	5176
% SFD	2.24%	2.13%	1.75%	1.69%	1.55%

**Unpublished figure*

Source: Derived from Statistics 2000 Financial Data, ANTA and Quarterly State Final Demand (Trend series), ACT Department of Treasury.

This table shows there was a fall in the proportion of VET spending over the period.

TABLE XXII: ACT EFFICIENCY PERFORMANCE 1997-2000

	1997	1998	1999	2000
Government Recurrent Expenditure (\$m)	69.25	74.83	67.34	63.44
Adjusted AHC (m)	4.254	4.429	4.561	4.891
\$ per Adj. AHC*	17.53	17.43	15.41	13.10

** includes a derived course mix weighting and is adjusted for 2000 prices (\$).*

Source: 2000 Annual National Report (Table D.33), ANTA

From 1997 to 2000 the efficiency performance improved in the ACT with the cost per AHC (Annual Hours Curriculum) falling 15% over the period. This is in line with national trends.