AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL (AEI)

INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET)
SECTOR

2007-2010
CONTENTS

1. PURPOSE OF THE INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN VET SECTOR .......................................................... 3

2. AUSTRALIA’S INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING ENGAGEMENT ... 3

3. THE AUSTRALIAN VET SECTOR .............................................................................. 5
   Australian VET Sector ............................................................................................ 5
   International engagement by the Australian VET Sector ......................................... 6

4. WHY IS A VET STRATEGY FOR INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT NEEDED? .... 9
   International Context – opportunities and challenges ............................................ 9
   Proposed Objectives and Strategies .................................................................... 13

5. SUMMARY OF AEI SUPPORT FOR THE VET SECTOR, 2007-2010 ...................... 20

6. REFERENCES ......................................................................................................... 22

7. GLOSSARY ............................................................................................................ 23

ATTACHMENT A: ADDITIONAL STATISTICAL INFORMATION .............................. 24
1. PURPOSE OF THE INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN VET SECTOR

Australian Education International (AEI), the international arm of the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST), has developed this Strategy to articulate its strategic partnership with the Australian Vocational Education and Training (VET) Sector as the Sector seeks to expand and enhance its international engagement over the next three years.

This Strategy provides an overview of the Australian VET Sector as well as Australia's international education and training engagement. The Strategy also identifies opportunities and challenges in the international VET environment and proposes a number of objectives and strategies for the Australian Government, notably AEI, to support the Sector's international engagement.

2. AUSTRALIA’S INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING ENGAGEMENT

International engagement has been a key aspect of Australian education and training for many decades. The Australian Government, through the 2003 Ministerial Statement, Engaging the World through Education, acknowledged the contribution international education and training engagement makes to Australia’s social, cultural, intellectual and economic engagement with the world.

- Australia’s international education and training underpins and fosters trade links. International education and training is Australia’s fourth largest export earner, generating $9.8 billion in onshore earnings in 2005-06.

- International engagement builds linkages between Australian education providers and overseas institutions. These links facilitate the exchange of ideas, research and technology, as well as staff and students. Education providers participating in the international environment also contribute to global knowledge and gain valuable insights into international developments that benefit Australian education and training.

- The presence of international students in our education institutions and local communities enriches the educational experience of Australian students, as well as stimulating their interest in learning other languages, cultures and studying overseas. Educating overseas students provides Australia with opportunities to contribute to the education of the next generation of world leaders.

- The formation of personal and institutional relationships through international engagement establishes enduring friendships and partnerships in business and government. These underpin Australia’s broader national interests in defence and security, environmental protection and trade.

The Australian Government - through AEI, AusAID, Austrade, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIAC) - actively encourages and facilitates Australia's international education and training engagement.

AEI works to create an environment for successful international education and training engagement through: government to government cooperation; underpinning the quality of education and training services delivered to international students; achieving greater diversity of students, modes of education delivery and subjects offered; and coordinating government support in partnership with the Australian education and training industry. AEI provides its
services through a national office in Canberra and the DEST International Network which has a presence in 26 locations worldwide.

The Australian Government works closely with State and Territory Governments to develop a whole of government approach to Australia's international education and training engagement. For their part, State and Territories are actively engaged in:

- promoting Australian education and training internationally;
- recruiting international students;
- facilitating government-to-government and institutional linkages through signing of agreements, hosting visits and delegations, exchanging information and staff;
- providing support for student mobility;
- undertaking international projects and consultancies; and
- monitoring and regulating international activities of Australian providers.

Australian and State and Territory Governments also consult and collaborate closely with the Australian international education and training industry. Industry encompasses both government and non-government organisations providing educational services to international students, as well as peak education bodies that represent these organisations: Australian Council for Independent Vocational Colleges (ACIVC), Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET), Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC), English Australia (EA) and TAFE Directors Australia (TDA).

While the Australian international education and training sector has achieved substantial success over the last ten years, a key priority for both government and industry is achieving sustainable growth for the sector, through diversification and quality:

- **Diversification** – broadening the mix of international students and their countries of origin, the range of courses and levels of study, and modes of delivering education services; and
- **Quality** - protecting and promoting the quality and integrity of Australian education and training, both onshore and offshore.
3. THE AUSTRALIAN VET SECTOR

Australian VET Sector

The Australian VET Sector comprises a diverse group of stakeholders, including: Australian and State and Territory Governments, VET providers (government and non-government), peak education bodies (ACIVC, ACPET, TDA) and peak industry groups such as the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI), Australian Industry Group (AiG) and the Business Council of Australia (BCA).

The Sector plays a key role in ensuring Australia’s ongoing strong economic performance, by equipping Australians with skills for a rapidly changing and globalising world. Key characteristics of the Sector include:

- The VET Sector is the largest Australian education sector, with over 1.6 million students, equivalent to 8% of the population, enrolled in publicly funded VET in 2005.
- Participation in VET extends throughout a persons working life. In 2005 500,000 students were in the 30-54 year age group.
- The Sector operates under a national training system which is industry-led, competency-based, nationally consistent and quality assured.
- Industry and employers play a critical role in influencing training policy, priorities and delivery. The Institute for Trade Skills Excellence, an Australian Government initiative established in 2005, is predominantly industry-led and aims to promote the quality of trade skills training and the status and profile of careers in trade to the wider Australian community.
- VET programmes can be undertaken through multiple pathways connecting schools, postsecondary institutions, the workplace, and articulation between the VET and higher education sectors. Australian Apprenticeships, a national scheme covering apprenticeship and traineeship arrangements, is a key VET pathway. Australian Technical Colleges, a 2005 initiative, enables senior secondary school students to undertake part-time apprenticeships.
- All VET providers must be Registered Training Organisations (RTO). There are nearly 4200 RTOs in Australia. Government funded or public RTOs include colleges and institutes of Technical and Further Education (TAFEs). Non-government or private RTO’s include independent colleges, commercial training businesses and industry, business associations.
- Of the 1,247 CRICOS registered providers, 487 offer VET courses.
- VET qualifications are awarded under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), and include Certificates I-IV, Diploma and Advanced Diploma.
- The Sector is actively engaged internationally and is world-renowned for its capacity to provide flexible, diverse, quality training outcomes. In 2006, the Australian Government provided funding for the establishment and operation of a new Australia-Pacific Technical College, to provide Australian-standard training to students from Pacific islands.

State and Territory Governments have primary responsibility for managing and administering VET, but operate within a framework of national policies and strategies. Some of their functions...
include regulating RTOs, allocating funding to both public and private providers and managing TAFEs.

Commonwealth legislation, the *Skilling Australia’s Workforce Act 2005*, sets out the national objectives and goals for VET as well as governance, funding and accountability arrangements:

- **Governance** - In November 2005, the Ministerial Council on Vocational and Technical Education (MCVTE), comprising Australian and State and Territory Government VET Ministers, was established to provide strategic direction for the national training system. Key groups that advise MCVTE include the National Industry Skills Council, National Senior Officials Committee and National Quality Council.

- **Funding** – The Australian Government will contribute $2.6 billion to VET in 2006-07, with a record $11.3 billion committed over four years (from 2006-07 to 2009-10). State and Territories contribute nearly two thirds of government VET funding. Industry also makes significant investments in the Sector.

**Current reforms**

The Australian VET Sector is focussed on reforming the national training system, in order to meet the skilled labour needs of the Australian economy over the next decade. With the aim of improving productivity and workforce participation, the Australian Government, in partnership with States and Territories and industry, is developing a demand-driven system that will be even more responsive to the needs of industry and employers. Characteristics of this evolving system include:

- industry focus and involvement in curriculum development and training package structures.
- a highly defined system of training packages which provides flexibility in delivery and modification to meet particular needs.
- increased participation by mature age workers, including re-entry to the workforce.
- ease of articulation between education sectors and institutions, based on the AQF.
- quality training outcomes, including safeguarding Australia’s international reputation.
- a mix of public and private sector provision providing a diversity of supply and the ability to quickly respond to particular training requirements.

In 2006, the Australian Government announced the *Skills for the Future* package, allocating $781 million for VET-related initiatives over the next five years. The package is focussed on improving the basic skills of Australia's workforce. New initiatives include: Work Skills Vouchers, Business Skills Vouchers for Apprentices, support for mid-career apprentices, and incentives for increasing training in higher level qualifications, at the Diploma and Advanced Diploma level.

**International engagement by the Australian VET Sector**

The Australian VET Sector has significantly increased its international engagement in recent years, with considerable success. Currently, the Sector engages in three key activities:

1. **International student recruitment, both onshore and offshore** – Onshore delivery of Australian VET qualifications is well established. Attracting international students to study in Australia is core business for many Australian VET providers, with over 83,000 onshore enrolments in 2006. Offshore delivery has also grown substantially. Thirty-five public providers delivered Australian qualifications offshore to 23,300 students in 2004.

2. **Systems development** – A number of countries currently reforming their VET systems have sought advice and assistance from Australia on modelling our internationally
recognised system, in particular, our qualifications and quality assurance frameworks. This is mostly done on a fee-for-service basis.

3. **Sale and delivery of customised training, offshore** – Australian VET providers are selling and delivering customised training methodologies, curriculum and packages offshore, responding to the needs of employers and industry in overseas countries.

There is substantial opportunity for the Australian VET Sector to expand activity in these three areas. ‘Opportunities’ will be discussed in more detail under Section 4 of the Strategy.

**Statistical Overview**

International VET students contributed an estimated $1,448 million to the Australian economy in 2005-06. The table below shows the breakdown of income by State and Territory.

**2005-06 contribution to national income provided by international students enrolled in VET**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>$ million</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>701.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>403.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>150.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>51.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>121.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Territory</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Capital Territory</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Australia</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,448.2</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: AEI estimates, ABS *International Trade in Goods and Services, Australia*, Cat. No. 5368.0

**Onshore enrolments**

Onshore enrolments cover those international students studying in Australia, on student visas\(^1\). The following statistics reflect onshore VET enrolments in 2006.

- In 2006, international student enrolments in Australia totalled 383,818, representing almost 40% growth since 2002. Higher education enrolments accounted for 45% of these enrolments while VET was the second largest education sector with 83,685 enrolments (22% of the market), followed closely by the English language (ELICOS) sector.

- From 2005 to 2006, VET’s growth rate outstripped that of higher education. VET enrolments grew by almost 26%, while higher education increased by 5%. Enrolments in the ELICOS and other sector also increased, to a lesser extent.

- Students from a wide range of countries come to Australia to study VET - 183 different nationalities in 2006. The three largest markets for VET enrolments were China, India and the Republic of Korea. Emerging growth markets include Brazil, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

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\(^1\) AEI derives international student enrolment and commencement data from the Commonwealth Provider Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS) database which only includes students studying in Australia on student visas, with providers registered under CRICOS. Enrolments represent the total number of international student enrolments at a given point in time. Enrolment data in the Strategy is based on Dec 2006 AEI data.
Much of the growth in international VET enrolments between 2002 and 2006 has occurred in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland. With 50% of all VET enrolments, New South Wales dominates the international VET market in Australia, with Victoria as the second largest destination (with a 28% share).

Enrolments have grown for both government (TAFEs) and non-government (or private) VET providers. However, enrolments for non-government providers have increased at a greater rate than those of government providers. In 2006, VET enrolments with non-government providers accounted for 78% of total enrolments (with more than 65,000 enrolments).

In 2006, 80% of enrolments were at the Diploma and Advanced Diploma levels, with 20% at the Certificate I-IV levels.

The top three fields of study for international VET enrolments in 2006, were services, hospitality and transport (up 72% on 2005 enrolments); business administration and management (up 11% on 2005); and computer science and information systems (down 7% on 2005).

Offshore enrolments

Currently, data on offshore enrolments is limited to government-funded Australian VET providers. AEI is working with the VET Sector to consider ways to improve data collection on offshore delivery by private or non-government Australian VET providers.

The following data was collected by the National Centre for Vocational Research (NCVER) on behalf of AEI, and is based on 2004 figures:

- There were approximately 23,300 VET offshore students enrolled with Australian public providers, representing a 27% increase on the 18,300 students studying offshore in 2003.
- Over two thirds of these students (15,900) studied in China, followed by Fiji and Vietnam.
- Diplomas were the most commonly delivered qualifications (to 50% of the students); Management and commerce and information technology the most common fields of education;
- 35 public providers (just over half of all 2004 TAFE institutes) were involved in VET offshore delivery in 2004, delivering to 20 countries.
- Victorian public providers accounted for over half of all VET offshore students.

Additional statistical information is provided at Attachment A.
4. WHY IS A VET STRATEGY FOR INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT NEEDED?

An international engagement strategy for the Australian VET Sector enables the Australian Government to develop and articulate a shared vision for the Sector, as it seeks to expand and enhance its international engagement. At the same time, the Australian Government recognises that VET stakeholders will employ various approaches to international engagement and the Strategy supports them in this work.

The following section highlights some key issues in the international education and training arena including opportunities and challenges for the Australian VET Sector. The section also proposes objectives and strategies for the Australian Government (namely AEI) to support the Sector over the period, 2007-2010.

International Context – opportunities and challenges

World Bank forecasts of future economic growth rates for the world suggest continued significant growth over the next few years. Already, developing countries that have experienced significant growth over the past decade (for example, China and India) are experiencing skills shortages that place education and vocational skills development at the top of national development agendas.

**China**

With a population of 1.3 billion people, China has the largest education system in the world with 260 million students. There are approximately 22.7 million people in vocational training.

In November 2005, the Chinese Central Government announced a substantial increase in funding (US$1.23 billion over the next five years, 2006-2010) to reform and develop the Chinese VET system. The reforms will focus on improving the quality of vocational education and training, raising workers’ skills levels, re-integrating unemployed workers into the labour force, and increased provision to rural areas. The government has set a goal of producing more than 25 million medium-level VET graduates and more than 11 million higher-level VET graduates during 2006-2010.

**India**

India currently faces a challenge of scale – educating a massive population to produce enough qualified people to service rapidly expanding industries. India’s higher education sector has 9.5 million students in 346 universities and 16,500 colleges. In comparison, there are 1 million students in nearly 5,000 VET institutions. The current participation rate in VET is 1% of the eligible population. India aims to increase the participation rate to 23% in the next 15-20 years.

India is experiencing an acute shortage of employable manpower for industry. It has a young population, almost 50 percent of people are under 25 years of age, and almost 75% (close to one billion) is below 40 years of age. Major challenges for India (and opportunities for other countries) include: expanding the provision of VET, developing a national qualifications framework and sourcing technically qualified people.

In his Independence Day address on 15 August 2006, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh reconfirmed his government’s commitment to developing the VET sector: “As our economy booms and as our industry grows, I hear a pressing complaint about an imminent shortage of skilled employees. As a country endowed with huge human resources, we cannot let this be a constraint. We are planning to launch a Mission on Vocational Education so that the skill deficit in our economy is addressed.”

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2 Chinese Government Media Releases, 8 and 10 November 2005
3 Presentation by Professor Damodar Acharya, Chairman of the All India Council for Technical Education, DEST International Education Forum, April 2006
Several Central European countries (Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia and Hungary) are experiencing strong demand for VET skills due to skills shortages arising from rapid economic growth. Significant opportunities for VET capacity building and skills transfer exist in Middle Eastern countries embarking on major domestic reforms, particularly Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates. The Latin American region represents a large, emerging market for VET as countries like Brazil and Colombia seek to educate and skill large, youthful populations. In addition, some South Asian countries (for example, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam) are experiencing VET skills imbalances.

Many developed countries, like Australia, are experiencing labour shortages due to ageing populations and declining birth rates. At the same time, these countries face increased demand for higher levels of skills, often in new industries.

**Australia**

Australia has an ageing population. Over the next 40 years, the proportion of the population over 65 will almost double to around 25%, while growth in the traditional workforce age (15-64) will slow to almost zero. Due to its ageing population, Australia faces a potential shortfall of 195,000 workers in five years’ time.

Australia is also experiencing skills shortages in traditional trades (for example, hairdressers, automotive tradepersons, chefs, carpenters, electricians, bricklayers) as well as professions (including accountants, engineers, childcare workers and health professionals). Based on projections for 2006-2016, the Australian VET sector will need to supply a total of 2.47 million qualifications. Based on current supply, there will be a net shortfall of around 240,000 people with VET qualifications.

Some countries are addressing labour and skills shortages, in part, through skilled migration. Consequently, international students are attracted to study in these countries, as a pathway to permanent residency.

- Under its General Skilled Migration Program, the Australian Government is targeting migrants with ‘skills in demand’, for permanent residency. ‘Skills in demand’ are identified in DIAC’s Migration Occupations in Demand List (MODL). Anecdotal evidence suggests that changes to the MODL are increasingly influencing study choices of international students as well as courses offered by Australian education and training providers.

Demographic shifts, technological advances and trade liberalisation will also alter the shape of the international education and training market:

- The world is experiencing a growing youth bulge with an expected 2 billion teenagers on earth in 2050. This group will be technologically savvy and increasingly mobile, for study and work. As such, they will require global qualifications that are easily accessed, affordable and internationally recognised. This will lead to an increased demand for offshore or transnational education and training, delivered on-line, via offshore campuses or in partnership with local institutions.

- Ageing populations in developed countries will require lifelong learning. Re-educating and up-skilling mature aged workers to improve productivity and workforce participation will be a priority for many countries as they seek to increase their supply of skilled labour.

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4 Commonwealth Treasury – *Australia’s Demographic Challenges* - Appendix
5 Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) report - *Workforce Tomorrow: Adapting to a more diverse Australian labour market, 2005*
6 Centre for the Economics of Education and Training (CEET) report *The Future Labour Market and Qualifications in Australia*
7 Presentation by Andrew Zolli, US Futurist, DEST International Education Forum, April 2006
• With increased trade liberalisation and provision of distance and on-line education, there will be a significant increase in the number of suppliers of international education, particularly from the private sector. This increased competition will put pressure on current suppliers to ‘differentiate’ their products and services. At the same time, consumers (students, parents, teachers, businesses) will be focussed on buying ‘quality’ in this mass education market.

• Curriculum will become more internationalised, with industry and employers exerting greater influence over course content, to meet demand for skills in new industries.

• There will be continued strong demand for English language skills in the global marketplace and more countries are offering courses taught in English to attract international students. In addition, languages of major economies will grow in importance.

Increased competition from traditional and new suppliers of educational services will also alter the way in which countries engage internationally. Diversifying source markets for international students is one way in which countries are responding to increased competition. For example, many countries (including Australia) have a high level of dependence on the Chinese market for international student enrolments, both onshore and offshore. This scenario is likely to continue as China faces a massive task in educating and skilling its population. However, in order to achieve sustainable growth in international student recruitment, countries are identifying and responding quickly to emerging opportunities in other regions, including South Asia (particularly India and Pakistan) and Latin America (Brazil and Colombia).

Opportunities

In the international environment outlined above, there are a number of opportunities for the Australian VET Sector to expand and enhance its international engagement. Many opportunities reflect an expansion of activity already taking place, however, some represent new fields of activity for the Sector:

• **Systems development** – Reforms to the Australian VET system over the last ten years, (focusing on quality, flexibility, diversity and linkages to industry users) have placed Australia in a competitive position to assist other countries in reforming and redeveloping their VET systems. While work in this area is already taking place, there is still huge potential for commercial opportunities in the form of consultancies, intellectual property transfer etc. For example, governments in India and Pakistan have initiated dialogue with AEI in regard to developing VET systems and frameworks, including qualifications frameworks and associated curriculum. Modelling Australia’s VET system and frameworks in other countries also has other long-term benefits, such as facilitating mutual recognition of qualifications.

• **Onshore international student recruitment** – Opportunities exist to expand VET delivery in Australia, attracting international students from traditional source markets (such as China) as well as emerging markets in South Asia, Europe, Middle East and Latin America. In addition to increased economic return, expanded onshore delivery can also lead to articulation to higher levels of training or education (for example, university) and additional course offerings for Australian students.

• **Offshore international student recruitment** – although the Australian VET Sector is already working successfully offshore, opportunities exist to expand offshore delivery or transnational education. In-country provision is an affordable option for locals wishing to access an Australian-based education or obtain an internationally recognised qualification that they cannot otherwise access via home institutions. Expanding offshore delivery also provides opportunities for Australian students to study abroad with these providers and could assist those Australian industries facing global skills shortages, such as the mining
industry. Australian VET providers can take advantage of increased demand for in-country provision by delivering courses in partnership with local institutions.

- **Student mobility** – Scholarships and student exchanges directly increase the number of international students studying in Australia, but also generate opportunities to build people to people linkages and networks, showcase the Australian education and training sectors and encourage Australian students to study abroad.

- **International aid projects** – Increasingly, international aid organisations and multilateral banks (such as the World Bank and Asian Development Bank) are directing development assistance to providing basic education within developing countries. Furthermore development assistance in increasingly untied providing greater opportunities for Australian providers. AusAID’s *White Paper on the Australian Government’s Overseas Aid Program* says that Australia is also increasing its investment in development assistance to improve access to school education, strengthen national school systems and build skilled workforces using technical and vocational programmes. Accessing Australian and internationally funded aid projects will present emerging opportunities for the Australian VET Sector.

**Challenges**

In taking advantage of the opportunities highlighted above, the Australian VET Sector faces a number of challenges:

- **Increasing competition** - with expansion in the number of suppliers and ways of delivering education internationally, Australia is faced with increasing competition from traditional competitors (Germany, United Kingdom and United States) as well as emerging suppliers (Japan, Malaysia, Singapore).

- **In-country regulatory environments** – Lack of transparency regarding in-country regulatory environments is a key barrier to expanding international VET activity, particularly in the field of qualifications recognition.

- **Australian visa system and policies** – Statistical evidence suggests that there is no basis to the perception that the different visa assessment levels for vocational education and training and higher education applying in 14 economies have discouraged student recruitment.

- **Maintaining quality assurance in offshore operations** – The reputation and integrity of Australian VET needs to be protected and supported internationally. While State and Territory Governments are responsible for monitoring and auditing offshore operations of Australian VET providers, a nationally consistent approach is required to safeguard Australia’s quality reputation.

- **Intellectual property transfer** – As Australia continues to promote its VET system internationally, there is concern that providing overseas governments and institutions with free Australian-designed intellectual property (for example, training packages) could diminish Australian’s competitive advantage in the longer term. On the other hand, it is in our interests to ensure that emerging countries model the Australian VET system rather than competitors, for example, Germany.

- **Status** – Internationally, VET qualifications are often accorded lower status than higher education qualifications, particularly in the minds of students and parents. Remuneration (or future earnings) attracted by VET qualifications is often lower than for higher education.
Proposed Objectives and Strategies

Over the next three years, the Australian Government will provide significant support to the Australian VET Sector in expanding and enhancing its international engagement. To provide guidance and focus for its support, AEI is proposing a number of objectives for international VET engagement as well as strategies/activities to meet these objectives – see section below.

- AEI will progress the proposed strategies/activities through staff in National Office and its International Network of counsellors as well as international projects funded under the MCVTE’s Strategic National Initiative (SNI) programme. In 2006, MCVTE allocated close to $1 million in SNI funding to AEI, to undertake international VET projects. These projects will assist in building government-to-government relationships, developing institutional linkages and capacity building of VET providers.

Objectives:

1. (a) Sustain a rate of growth for onshore VET recruitment above that for all international enrolments over the next five years while diversifying source countries.

   (b) Support increased offshore delivery by Australian providers independently, in partnership with Australian industry, in partnership with local business, and in partnership with local providers.

2. Stimulate student mobility through expanding recognition of Australian qualifications internationally including through the use of such tools as Certificate Supplement.

3. Promote recognition of Australia’s VET system as world’s best practice and assist other countries to develop their VET systems through the adoption of relevant elements of the Australian system.

4. Work to ensure that as far as possible activities undertaken to promote international VET engagement by DEST, state and territory jurisdictions and VET related peak bodies support and compliment each other.

Objectives and strategies:

1. (a) Sustain a rate of growth for onshore VET recruitment above that for all international enrolments over the next five years while diversifying source countries.

   (b) Support increased offshore delivery by Australian providers independently, in partnership with Australian industry, in partnership with local business, and in partnership with local providers.

Market intelligence

Currently, AEI provides the Australian education and training industry with comprehensive, quality and timely information about in-country education developments, policies and environments that may affect Australian providers’ ability to operate internationally. AEI also provides international student commencement and enrolment data, qualification assessment information, research reports and publications etc.

AEI will seek to enhance its on-going market intelligence role by undertaking additional research and analysis that responds to the interests of the Australian VET sector, including:
• developing and maintaining a database of regulatory requirements governing offshore operation and quality processes in key international markets.
• providing regular market alerts on international VET contracting opportunities arising from multilateral development banks and international development assistance programmes.
• identifying Australian industries facing skills shortages in the international environment, with the aim of identifying opportunities for Australian education and training providers.
• evaluating the offshore commercial activities of Australian VET providers with the aim of identifying successes and ‘best practice’ activities.
• identifying trends in international VET, in key markets (from the perspective of industry and providers, rather than students).

AEI is also conducting an International Student Survey (ISS) across all education sectors that will provide data on students’ course choices and satisfaction with course quality, pastoral care and student services. Students will also provide information on future plans after completing their study. VET students are currently being surveyed, with the results due in early 2007. AEI will distribute the nationally aggregated results to peak bodies, participating providers and key stakeholders.

Promotion and marketing

AEI undertakes generic promotion of Australian education and training through the Study in Australia brand. The objective of Study in Australia is to raise awareness of the unique study opportunities in Australia, across all education levels, fields and sectors within the Australian education and training system. In June 2006, AEI commenced an evaluation of Study in Australia to gauge how the brand is performing with stakeholders and to recommend any improvements. The evaluation is due to be completed in early 2007.

Without pre-empting the findings of the evaluation, there is scope for AEI to raise the profile of VET under Study in Australia. This could be achieved by producing VET specific promotional materials and organising VET showcasing events.

AEI will also augment generic promotion of the Australian VET Sector by:

• involving broader Australian industry and VET providers in marketing approaches. Industry representatives can act as ‘referees’, attesting to the value of services delivered by providers. Industry representatives can also open doors to colleagues in other countries and provide access to industry segments that providers might have difficulty finding on their own. Industry specific trade shows and/or seminars are also a good opportunity to promote Australian educational services.
• developing alumni networks of VET qualified students. Alumni can be a significant marketing resource, providing ‘word of mouth’ references for providers. Employment and business networks developed by alumni are also very valuable for newly qualified individuals.
• delivering seminars designed to disseminate best practice in (i) marketing in the international environment and (ii) supporting international students, both offshore and onshore.
• developing a standard VET marketing brief for government and Sector representatives to promote consistency of approach and provide up-to-date information on the Australian VET Sector.
• continuing to organise and participate in offshore exhibitions, fairs and symposia to showcase Australia’s VET system as well as provide support for VET industry sponsored conferences and seminars through the provision of speakers and funding for key participants.

AEI will also commit resources to developing niche approaches to marketing. This project will identify and bring together quality providers of niche disciplines (in areas of skills shortages such
as mining), as well as industry users, to develop sophisticated and highly targeted engagement and promotion strategies.

AEI will assist these groups by:

- identifying one or two prospective target markets in which to market onshore and offshore education and training services, customised training and curriculum and other system design services.
- organising trade missions to these target markets, with assistance from AEI’s International Network.
- producing targeted marketing materials, promoting the niche disciplines.
- developing targeted training and best practice case studies to assist providers.

Professional Development for VET providers

Many Australian VET providers are small businesses for which international engagement represents a significant risk. In order to work successfully in an international environment, these providers require personnel with appropriate skills. Relevant skills include marketing skills; business development skills such as risk management, raising venture capital, entrepreneurship, strategic planning and financial management; and skills for managing international students.

AEI can support the professional development needs of providers by identifying, organising and funding relevant training programmes and materials. As mentioned under Promotion and Marketing, AEI will provide a series of seminars on best practice in marketing offshore and management of international students.

AEI also provides professional development opportunities through the Endeavour Executive Awards which enable high achieving Australians working in professional fields (such as business, industry, education or government) to work in an associated field in an overseas host country. These awards allow recipients to spend from one to four months in an overseas work environment and awards can be taken in the form of study tours, workshop participation, internships, residencies, attendance at conferences and mentoring.

Australian visa system and policies

AEI will continue to work with DIAC to address VET issues associated with student visa applications and skilled migration.

- DIAC is supporting AEI and the Australian VET industry to undertake outreach activities designed to improve the quality of student visa applications. This may lead to lower rates of visa refusals, cancellations and fraud and ultimately, lower assessment levels for the VET Sector. DIAC is also reviewing the methodology for determining visa assessment levels. Improved pre-departure counselling by education agents and AEI offshore staff is another strategy to improve the selection of bona fide student visa applicants.

2. **Stimulate student mobility through expanding recognition of Australian qualifications internationally including through the use of such tools as Certificate Supplement.**

Recognition of qualifications

Qualifications recognition is a priority issue for many countries and their governments. The European Union is implementing the Copenhagen Reform Process to increase cross border recognition of VET qualifications, for the benefit of European students and employers. As part of education reforms, a number of countries are developing qualifications frameworks modelled on ‘best practice’ systems in other countries. Australia commits substantial resources to recognising overseas qualifications, in order to safeguard Australia’s educational standards.
AEI does this by providing: timely, reliable, comprehensive intelligence on education systems and qualifications frameworks in key markets (through Country Education Profiles); quality advice and guidance on the comparability of overseas qualifications against the AQF; and professional development services for industry.

Increasing the international recognition of Australian VET qualifications is a goal for both the Australian Government and VET Sector and a key factor in expanding the Sector’s international engagement. AEI proposes to build greater recognition of Australian qualifications in two ways.

Firstly, AEI will continue its significant investment in promoting the Australian approach to qualifications frameworks, or the AQF itself, to overseas governments, industry, employers, providers, students, teachers and parents etc. This will not only lead to increased demand for Australian VET qualifications and systems, but will establish cross border linkages to facilitate mutual assessment of qualifications by education and training providers and employers.

The second area of activity relates to developing mutual recognition arrangements for specific VET competencies. This process would involve identifying niche competencies and establishing teams in partner countries (comprising industry, education providers and recognition experts) to develop mutual recognition arrangements.

To progress these two streams of activity, AEI proposes to:

- undertake, in selected key countries, a stocktake of approaches to qualifications recognition, including the use of frameworks and formal processes for recognising VET competencies.
- organise a seminar on best practice approaches to qualifications frameworks and recognition processes, attended by qualifications experts from key countries;
- seek involvement of key markets in developing processes for recognition of individual qualifications.
- discuss and consider the applicability of the Certificate Supplement in the Australian context (as part of the Copenhagen process, European countries are adopting the Certificate Supplement, a suite of documents reporting on educational outcomes from VET study).
- continue identifying opportunities associated with developing qualifications frameworks in other countries, and inform Australian providers and industry via market alerts etc.

Student mobility

Australian students lag behind their international counterparts in embracing opportunities for international study. Australia has much to gain from encouraging more students in all education sectors to benefit from an international study experience, and to do so in a broader range of countries than is currently the case.

The Australian Government is interested in increasing international study opportunities for Australian students because of the educational and personal growth benefits, the potential to develop intercultural competence and understanding, as well as skills relevant to the needs of Australian business and employers. There is also the broader, more strategic rationale related to Australia's relations with other countries and the need to compete in the international education arena from a position of greater reciprocity.

In this context, the Government announced in April 2006 that DEST would undertake a review of Australian student mobility practices, to identify barriers and strategies the Government could consider to boost participation. The Government will consider options for a national Australian student mobility strategy in the first quarter of 2007.
Increasing international recognition of Australian VET qualifications will assist Australian student mobility in the VET sector. The work of the Brisbane Communiqué Process will be important in this regard, with its aim of creating points of reference and common understanding in education structures and frameworks in the Asia-Pacific region.

Scholarships will also stimulate student mobility. In April 2006, the Australian Government announced Australian Scholarships, a $1.4 billion initiative to double the number of education awards for the Asia-Pacific region over the next five years (to 19,000). AEI and AusAID jointly manage this initiative.

The Endeavour Programme forms part of Australian Scholarships. Endeavour brings high achieving students, researchers and professionals to Australia to undertake short or long term study, research and professional development, in a broad range of disciplines. The programme also encourages Australians to do the same abroad. VET scholarships are offered under the Endeavour Programme. The Endeavour VET Awards enable students from the Asia-Pacific region to undertake a Diploma or Advanced Diploma at an accredited Australian training provider (public or private), located in Australia. Awards are open to all fields of study and are valued up to $AUD95,000. Up to 240 Endeavour VET Awards will be available over the next five years (2007-2011). An additional 100 awards will be available for Pakistani VET students during the same period.

3. Promote recognition of Australia's VET system as world's best practice and assist other countries to develop their VET systems through the adoption of relevant elements of the Australian system.

International government to government engagement

Government-to-government relations provide a sustaining and welcoming environment for international education and training engagement. AEI will continue its significant investment in international government-to-government engagement on VET issues, by:

- organising outbound visits by Australian Ministers, senior government officials and industry representatives, to key markets. Industry representatives will be included in delegations in order to promote the benefits and value of the Australian VET Sector.
- hosting inbound visits by high level VET delegations, from existing and emerging markets.
- sponsoring bilateral or multilateral conferences.
- signing bilateral or multilateral agreements to advance cooperation in VET.
- advancing Australia’s VET interests in key multilateral fora, such as APEC, WTO, OECD etc.

4. Work to ensure that as far as possible activities undertaken to promote international VET engagement by DEST, state and territory jurisdictions and VET related peak bodies support and compliment each other.

Quality Assurance and Consumer Protection Frameworks

Much of Australia’s international engagement success can be attributed to its world class regulatory systems that include quality assurance and consumer protection frameworks, in particular, the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000.

The ESOS Act and its associated legislation is the legal framework governing the responsibility of education institutions towards international students studying in Australia, on student visas. The Act and supporting regulations are currently being reviewed following an independent evaluation. The evaluation found widespread support for the legislative framework and recommended improvements to the National Code of Practice, which provides nationally consistent standards for registration and conduct of providers on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS).
The Australian Government is also taking action to safeguard the quality of Australian education and training delivered offshore. At a meeting in November 2005, Australian Ministers of Education and Training agreed to develop the Transnational Quality Strategy (TQS). The TQS aims to protect and promote the quality of all Australian education and training delivered in other countries.

The TQS will be implemented by an Australian Education Systems Officials Committee (AESOC) Working Group, comprising Australian and State and Territory Government officials and industry representatives. AEI is a member of this group. The group is working to: collect better data on Australia’s offshore education and training activities; strengthen quality assurance arrangements for offshore delivery; and promote Australian transnational education and training more effectively, domestically and internationally. The Working Group has also provided $1.5 million for fifteen good practice projects in transnational VET delivery. A report on the project findings will be disseminated in late 2006.

Collaboration

AEI will continue to consult and collaborate with Australian VET stakeholders involved in international engagement. In particular, AEI will be seeking assistance and support from States and Territories, public and private providers, peak bodies and broader industry in developing, implementing and evaluating many of the proposed strategies and activities contained in this Strategy.

AEI currently consults VET stakeholders through a range of groups and networks – see below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Senior Officials Committee (NSOC)</td>
<td>Australian and State and Territory Government senior VET officials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian TAFE International Network (ATIN)</td>
<td>TAFEs, State and Territory Education Departments, DEST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Industry Stakeholders Consultations (GISC)</td>
<td>Australian Government agencies, peak bodies such as ACIVC, ACPET, AVCC, English Australia, TDA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Education Network (IEN)</td>
<td>Australian Government agencies, peak bodies such as ACIVC, ACPET, AVCC, English Australia, TDA, ATIN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-Departmental Committee (IDC) on International Education</td>
<td>Australian Government agencies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, VET peak bodies and providers are forming networks to create greater focus and collaboration on international VET. For example, TDA recently established an International Executive Reference Group that includes senior business development and student recruitment executives from across the TAFE system. ACPET has established an International Education Committee to oversee all aspects of its international education policies and marketing, within the Australian international education industry.

There is, however, an opportunity for AEI to strengthen consultation by convening a ‘whole of sector’ forum that enables VET stakeholders to consider and debate strategic international directions for the Sector. Attendees could include: Australian Government agencies (AusAID, Austrade, DEST, DFAT, DIAC), State and Territory Governments, VET providers (both public and private), peak bodies responsible for VET (ACIVC, ACPET, TDA) and broader industry (ACCI and AiG).
Joint International Engagement Strategy

The VET Strategy Forum would consider strategic level issues and in particular the development of a joint Commonwealth State/Territory strategy to promote international engagement by the VET sector. The development of a joint strategy can help ensure that high priority actions are undertaken and that those actions support outcomes agreed as key to developing international engagement by the whole sector.
5. SUMMARY OF AEI SUPPORT FOR THE VET SECTOR, 2007-2010

1. (a) Sustain a rate of growth for onshore VET recruitment above that for all international enrolments over the next five years while diversifying source countries.

(b) Support increased offshore delivery by Australian providers independently, in partnership with Australian industry, in partnership with local business, and in partnership with local providers.

Market intelligence
- Database of regulatory requirements in key international markets.
- Market alerts on international VET contracting opportunities arising from international development assistance programmes and multilateral development banks.
- Research on: (i) Australian industries facing skills shortages in the international environment, to identify opportunities for Australian providers, (ii) offshore commercial activities of Australian providers, to identify successes and best practice activities, (iii) trends in international VET in key markets (from perspective of industry and providers).
- Survey of international VET students about course choices, quality of courses and future plans.

Promotion and marketing
- VET specific promotional materials and showcasing events.
- Australian industry and provider involvement in marketing approaches.
- Alumni networks of VET qualified students.
- Seminar on best practice in international marketing and support for international students.
- Standard VET marketing brief for government and Sector representatives.
- Offshore exhibitions, fairs and symposia and support for VET industry sponsored conferences.
- Niche approaches to marketing.

Professional development for VET providers
- Professional development training for VET providers, including seminars on best practice in marketing offshore and management of international students.

Australian visa system and policies
- Outreach activities to improve quality of VET student visa applications and reduce visa cancellations, including pre-departure counselling for international students.

2. Stimulate student mobility through expanding recognition of Australian qualifications internationally including through the use of such tools as Certificate Supplement.

Recognition of qualifications
- Stocktake of qualifications recognition approaches in key markets.
- Seminar on best practice approaches to qualifications recognition.
- Possible Certificate Supplement, in the Australian context.
- Qualifications framework development in other countries.

Student mobility
- VET awards under Australian Scholarships - Endeavour Programme.
3. Promote recognition of Australia’s VET system as world’s best practice and assist other countries to develop their VET systems through the adoption of relevant elements of the Australian system.

International government to government engagement
- High level inbound and outbound VET delegations.
- Bilateral and multilateral conferences.
- Bilateral and multilateral agreements covering international VET cooperation.
- Participation in multilateral fora, such as APEC, OECD and WTO, to advance Australia’s VET interests.

4. Work to ensure that as far as possible activities undertaken to promote international VET engagement by DEST, state and territory jurisdictions and VET related peak bodies support and compliment each other.

Quality assurance and consumer protection frameworks
- Transnational Quality Strategy, including good practice projects in VET.

Collaboration
- ‘Whole of sector’ forum to provide strategic direction on VET.
6. REFERENCES

- Ministerial statement: Engaging the World through Education, October 2003
- Country Education Profiles, AUSTRALIA, 2006
- International Student Data 2006, AEI Statistics Collection, December 2006
- Delivery of VET offshore by public providers 2004, NCVER, December 2005
- Shaping the Future of International Education, speech by Fiona Buffinton, CEO of AEI, ACPET National Conference, August 2006
- Presentation by Professor Damodar Acharya, Chairman of the All India Council for Technical Education, DEST International Education Forum, April 2006
- Presentation by Andrew Zolli, US Futurist, DEST International Education Forum, April 2006
- Australia’s Demographic Challenges – Appendix, Commonwealth Treasury
- The Future Labour Market and Qualifications in Australia, Centre for the Economics of Education and Training (CEET) report
- Chinese Government Media Releases, November 2005
7. GLOSSARY

ACPET Australian Council for Private Education and Training
ACCI Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
AEI Australian Education International
AESOC Australian Education Systems Officials Committee
AiG Australian Industry Group
APEC Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
AQF Australian Qualifications Framework
ATIN Australian TAFE International Network
AVCC Australian Vice-Chancellors’ Committee
CEET Centre for the Economics of Education and Training
CRICOS Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students
DEST Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training
DIAC Australian Government Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs
DFAT Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
ESOS Education Services for Overseas Students
GISC Government Industry Stakeholder Consultations
IEN International Education Network
MCVTE Ministerial Council on Vocational and Technical Education
NCIVC National Council of Independent Vocational Colleges
NCVER National Centre for Vocational Education Research
NSOC National Senior Officials Committee
OECD Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PRISMS Provider Registration and International Students Management System
RTO Registered Training Organisation
SNI Strategic National Initiative
TAFE Technical and Further Education
TDA TAFE Directors Australia
TQS Transnational Quality Strategy
VET Vocational Education and Training
WTO World Trade Organisation
ATTACHMENT A: ADDITIONAL STATISTICAL INFORMATION –

INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF AUSTRALIAN VET SECTOR

Onshore enrolments

The following tables and figures incorporate AEI international student enrolment data from 2002-2006 (based on Dec 2006 AEI data). The data covers onshore enrolments, that is, international students studying in Australia, on student visas.8

Between 2002 and 2006, international student enrolments in Australia grew by almost 109,000 (40%). Table 1 below shows enrolments for each of the five education sectors, and the percentage increase between 2002 and 2006.

Table 1: Time series of Enrolments by Education Sector 2002 to 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher Education</td>
<td>115,897</td>
<td>135,402</td>
<td>151,503</td>
<td>163,779</td>
<td>172,297</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET</td>
<td>54,181</td>
<td>57,524</td>
<td>59,065</td>
<td>66,556</td>
<td>83,685</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELICOS</td>
<td>57,961</td>
<td>62,262</td>
<td>61,873</td>
<td>64,998</td>
<td>77,468</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>23,295</td>
<td>27,044</td>
<td>27,341</td>
<td>25,156</td>
<td>24,717</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Non award, enabling courses)</td>
<td>23,543</td>
<td>25,728</td>
<td>25,574</td>
<td>25,590</td>
<td>25,651</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>274,877</strong></td>
<td><strong>307,960</strong></td>
<td><strong>325,356</strong></td>
<td><strong>346,079</strong></td>
<td><strong>383,818</strong></td>
<td><strong>40%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8 AEI derives international student enrolment and commencement data from the Commonwealth Provider Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS) database which only includes students studying in Australia on student visas, with providers registered under CRICOS. Enrolments represent the total number of international student enrolments at a given point in time.
In 2006, higher education enrolments made up 45% of all international student enrolments in Australia. VET was the second largest education sector for enrolments, with 22% of the market, followed closely by the ELICOS sector – see Figure 1 below.

*Figure 1: Percentage Breakdown of International Student Enrolments, by Education Sector, 2006*

From 2005 to 2006, VET’s growth rate outstripped that of higher education. VET enrolments grew by 26%, while higher education increased by 5%. Enrolments in the ELICOS and Other sector increased, to a lesser extent, whilst Schools enrolments declined slightly.

The top ten source countries for VET enrolments in 2006 are outlined in Table 2 below. The three largest markets for VET enrolments were China, India and the Republic of Korea. Emerging growth markets include Brazil, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

*Table 2: Time series of 2006 Top Ten Source Countries for International VET Enrolments, 2002 to 2006*
Much of the growth in international VET enrolments between 2002 and 2006 has occurred in New South Wales (NSW), Victoria (VIC) and Queensland (QLD) with Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and Northern Territory (NT) experiencing a decline in enrolments over this period. Table 3 shows VET enrolments by State and Territory from 2002 to 2006.

Table 3: Time series of international VET Enrolments by State and Territory 2002 to 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>27,225</td>
<td>29,489</td>
<td>30,374</td>
<td>33,745</td>
<td>41,977</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>12,952</td>
<td>12,938</td>
<td>13,386</td>
<td>16,573</td>
<td>23,644</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>5,591</td>
<td>6,134</td>
<td>6,553</td>
<td>7,091</td>
<td>8,157</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>6,021</td>
<td>6,391</td>
<td>6,271</td>
<td>6,456</td>
<td>6,735</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>1,381</td>
<td>1,640</td>
<td>1,616</td>
<td>1,810</td>
<td>2,217</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>674</td>
<td>646</td>
<td>555</td>
<td>576</td>
<td>605</td>
<td>-10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAS</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NT</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>-23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>54,181</td>
<td>57,524</td>
<td>59,065</td>
<td>66,556</td>
<td>83,685</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With 50% of all VET enrolments, NSW dominates the international VET market in Australia, with Victoria as the second largest destination. See Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Percentage breakdown of international VET enrolments, by State and Territories, 2005
Enrolments have grown for both government (TAFEs) and non-government VET providers. Enrolments for non government providers have increased at a greater rate than those of government providers. In 2006, VET enrolments with non-government providers accounted for 78% of total enrolments. Table 3 shows VET enrolments between 2002 and 2006, based on government and non-government provider type.\(^9\)

Table 3: Time series of VET Enrolments, by Government / Non-Government Providers, 2002 to 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider Type</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>Change between 2002 and 2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>14,822</td>
<td>14,521</td>
<td>14,186</td>
<td>15,746</td>
<td>18,380</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Government</td>
<td>39,359</td>
<td>43,003</td>
<td>44,879</td>
<td>50,810</td>
<td>65,305</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>54,181</td>
<td>57,524</td>
<td>59,065</td>
<td>66,556</td>
<td>83,685</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^9\) Provider type is classified as either government or non-government, depending on the way institutions are identified on the CRICOS (based on advice from State and Territory accrediting authorities).