

CHAIR'S REPORT



I welcome the opportunity to present the report of TAFE Directors Australia Inc. for 2005.

Although I have been involved with TDA since its inception, this was my inaugural year as Chair. I acknowledge my predecessor Gillian Shadwick (NSW), who did an outstanding job of leading our organization through a very turbulent period in our history.

I am pleased to report that TAFE Directors Australia has moved strongly to implement its mission to improve the business performance and operating environments for Members.

"TDA" is into its eighth year of operations, and the year 2005 proved a watershed one for the VTE sector and a turning point for TDA as the peak provider association of the sector.

At an educational level, our member TAFE colleges and institutes enjoyed record increases in student enrolments - especially school students studying VET subjects and an expansion in demand by international students enrolling in TAFE programmes. These are exciting developments and both represent enormous opportunities for the TAFE sector.

At a national level, TAFE as a public provider became a target of scrutiny as the Australian Government concluded education funding agreements with the State and Territory governments.

A fundamental tenet of our advocacy voice on TAFE has been the development of a tripartite partnership between governments, industry and TAFE in providing leadership to drive the national training agenda.

The funding agreements were accompanied in Federal Parliament by the passage of the Skilling Australia legislation. This completed an Australian Government election pledge creating a new governing 'Framework' for the vocational training and education sector. I thank the Board and all Members for their tireless efforts in this regard.

TAFE Directors Australia led an effective advocacy on the "Skilling Australia" Bill and worked to articulate to TAFE colleges and institutes the broad implications of the Framework on their business, to teachers and TAFE students.

The achievements were notable:

- TDA led forceful advocacy on quality standards during the funding review and successfully demonstrated the excellence of quality procedures and tuition assurance processes in the TAFE system. One key outcome was TDA's appointment as public provider representative on the National Quality Council.
- TDA provided effective leadership on long-standing blockages to the Australian training system for various international students. Australian Immigration gazetted streamlined regulations for international student visa travel, bringing improvements to Australia's growing attractiveness as a preferred supplier of vocational education services and products.
- TDA pioneered a strategic position on international VTE education. A highlight was concluding a strategic agreement with Chinese public providers of vocational education, with the signing of a MOU between TDA and the China Education Association for International Exchange (CEAIE).

These were accomplished amid change to the regulator itself.

The Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) was established in 1992 as a Commonwealth statutory authority to create synergies to Australia's VET system. The Government proceeded to dissolve ANTA's functions into the Department of

Education, Science and Training (DEST) in May (Federal Budget, 2005).

Throughout the changes, TDA worked closely to support new strategies outlined by DEST, with a focus on the 10 Industry Skills Councils (ISCs) formed by the Government to develop nationally recognised establishment training products.

One main outcome was the role of TDA to create (reaching across ISCs and private and public providers) a 'Joint Providers Protocol' - a platform of performance and quality informed by the voice of TAFE, to enhance the industry led system.

TDA responded to support the educational objectives for the TAFE system, to see this proud heritage nurtured and the quality of our educational outcomes extended. There can be no compromises as we work in partnership to deliver on TAFE's obligation to its constituents.

Certainly the TDA appointment to the National Quality Council was a highlight in recognition of our expertise. The Council has a crucial role under the Framework to maintain quality assurance and TAFE must be at that table.

This role for TDA as the public sector 'voice' for TAFE was flagged by the Australian Government in its Training Framework. It cited the benefits gained through direct liaison between policy makers (in government) and provider

groups (in VTE sector).

Beyond the Framework, a series of consultative groups and structures was formed ahead of wider policy review and regulation, resulting in the reference by COAG (Council on Australian Government) on Skilling as a priority issue on productivity by the VTE sector for report in 2006.

These developments crystallise the strategic partnership now operating between the Australian Government, State and Territory Governments and TDA, on behalf of the TAFE sector.

The capability by TAFE Directors to contribute at a national level comes after extensive experience in operating major educational enterprises within established public sector governance models, and success with the TAFE system's strong nexus between industry and providers to deliver quality training.

TAFE colleges and institutes take seriously their mission as public educators to all Australians. During 2005, TAFE Directors Australia completed a two-year nationwide engagement with its Indigenous communities to review how education and training should be conducted within the TAFE system and interfaced with Indigenous Australians. TDA believed strongly that the project was a fine opportunity for vocational education and training to be recognised as a major contributor to the social agenda of the nation.

The completed TAFE Charter for Indigenous Education and Training is a remarkable achievement. Full credit should go to the extensive consultations with Indigenous groups -- Burrany Bunitj (WA), the Marr Mooditj Foundation (WA), the Workforce Aboriginal Corporation (Tas), Tranby Aboriginal College (NSW) and the Australian Indigenous Training Advisory Council. As well, I offer my thanks to the TDA Working Group on Indigenous Education and Training, led by Bob Nixon, for its excellent work on this project.

TDA exhibited a strong international focus in 2005.

This began by TDA input to the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA) to streamline immigration restrictions on visa travel for foreign students.

TDA deserves the TAFE sector's praise for its effective leadership within the sector on this issue. This became a useful indicator of how a united TAFE peak body can provide more effective outcomes to national policy - and especially benefiting TAFE and the customers of the system.

Another strategic highlight of 2005 was the signing of a MOU with the China Education Association for International Exchange (CEAIE) on cooperation. This collaborative agreement mirrors the significance of China as Australia's second largest trading partner, especially regarding educational services.

The TAFE Australia - Sino CEAIE programme sponsored a highly successful pilot leadership capacity building project. I thank the Australian and Chinese Governments for special funding allocated to this new programme and more importantly the TAFE institutes who made a huge contribution to this project.

The TAFE - CEAIE pilot project's success laid an excellent basis for future cooperation with the CEAIE, signaling significant potential benefits to both countries.

Many people made a valuable contribution to TDA's work during the year. My thanks go to the Board for its strong debate, support and hard work, especially to my colleagues on the Executive, the Vice-Chairs Bruce Mackenzie and Wayne Collyer. Special thanks also to Bruce Mackenzie for his work as Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee.

During the year we lost three highly valued and long serving members of the Board, Gillian Shadwick (NSW), John Smyth (Tas) and Bob Nixon (NT). TDA is greatly indebted for their contribution to TDA over a number of years: Gillian, my predecessor as Chair since 2001, resigned on appointment to a senior position outside the TAFE sector; John Smyth was appointed head of the Tasmanian Education Department; while Bob Nixon retired. I wish them all well.

Thanks go to the staff of the TDA Office, led by former Executive Director Margaret Fanning. Margaret Fanning retired at the

end of 2005, and I pay tribute to her work as the founding executive director for TDA. I welcome Martin Riordan as the new CEO of TDA, who was appointed toward the close of 2005.

The TDA Board has embraced bi-annual Member Days to create the widest TAFE stakeholder engagement on our strategic directions. The November review, generously hosted by Swan Institute (Perth, WA), significantly shaped input to the new three-year Strategic Plan (2006-08).

Our vision is for TAFE to be recognized as Australia's provider of choice. The TDA mission will be to effectively advance our capabilities through this period of transition.

Looking to the Training Framework, Australia's COAG Skills Review and beyond, ours will be a contribution required to ensure a robust public provider choice in the fast-growing VTE sector.

As Chair of TDA, I am grateful that my optimism for a successful period ahead is shared by Members. We are proud educationalists and I eagerly anticipate a progressive, busy and rewarding year ahead. I look forward to reporting positively on our agenda for 2006.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Barry Peddle". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "B".

Barry Peddle