

Pre-conference Sessions

SESSION 1

TAFE Rural & Regional discussion:
Spotlight on Australia's regions

Chair: Denise Janek, Managing Director, TAFE SA Regional, Chair Regional Advisory Group to TDA Board

Presenter: Sally Sinclair, CEO, National Employment Services Association

SESSION 2

Australian TAFE International Network:
Spotlight on China in the Year of the Tiger

Chair: Stephen Conway, Managing Director, TAFE SA – Adelaide South

Presenter: Liu Jiantong, Deputy-Director, Department of Vocational and Adult Education, Ministry of Education, People's Republic of China

Discussant: Iain Watt, Minister Counsellor (Education) Beijing



Sally Sinclair

CEO National Employment Services Association

Sally is a representative on the Minister's Consultative Forum on Mature Age Participation, the Business Leaders Forum – Indigenous Employment and Enterprise Action Group, the Workforce Development Supply and Demand Committee and the Employment Services Industry Reference Group. She also participated in the Prime Minister's 2020 Summit. Sally is a Board member of the OECD LEED Program's Forum on Partnerships and Local Governance.

TAFE Directors Australia 2010 National Conference

The tiger as collaborator rather than competitor:
Strengthening the connections between employment
services providers and TAFE

Presented by: Sally Sinclair
CEO National Employment Services Association



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Who We Are

NESA is the voice of the employment and related services industry

Our Vision

"Opportunity through employment and inclusion"

Our Mission

To lead a sustainable, effective and diverse employment and related services industry through:-

- Influential representation and advocacy
- Strong partnerships and
- Member support and development



Our Membership

NESA:

- Represents all providers of Government contracted employment and related services
- Supports all the agencies (community, not for profit, private and Government sector providers) who are working to help Australians find and keep a job
- Is focussed on creating a more inclusive Nation, where the most disadvantaged jobseekers are not left behind
- Members are focussed on the job seekers' needs, and helping employers to find the right person for the job.



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Reform of Australian Employment Services

A comprehensive review of Employment Services was undertaken in 2008. The need for reform – Policy Environment and Government considerations.

- Streamlined programmes/red tape reduction
- More emphasis on disadvantaged job seekers
- More flexibility to tailor employment assistance services
- More opportunities for work experience
- More focus on human capital development and addressing skills shortages



Reform of Australian Employment Services

Significant Reforms

Job Network
 Personal Support Program
 Job Placement & Employment
 Training
 Community Work Coordinators
 Green Jobs Corps
 Harvest Labour Services &
 Harvest Labour Information
 Services
 NEIS

Job Services Australia



Employment and Related Services Delivered by NESA Members

- Job Services Australia – Generalist and Specialist
- Disability Employment Services
- Job Capacity Assessors
- The National Panel of Assessors
- NEIS
- Indigenous Employment Programs
- National Green Jobs Corps
- Group Training Organisations
- Apprenticeship Services
- Jobs Fund
- Innovation Fund and Employers Brokers

Employment, Education and Training A Joined Up Service

- Australian employment services and the VET Sector share many goals and priorities
- Prime focus is on building skills to increase opportunities for individuals to access sustainable employment and find pathways out of poverty and to be socially included



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Employment Services Providers and the Role of Training



Skills/Attributes that Employers are Seeking

- Less than 30% of job seekers were regarded as 'suitable' by employers
- Reasons for unsuitability included:
 - Applicants having insufficient experience
 - Applicants having insufficient qualifications or training
 - Applicants lacking basic employability skills
- Lower skilled occupations difficult to fill

Source: DEEWR, Survey of Employers' Recruitment Experiences, Combined Results of all surveys conducted in 12 months to March 2010



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Basic Employability Skills

Most importance placed on:

- 33% personality traits and qualities only
- 24% technical skills only
- 42% both equally important

Personality traits and qualities employers wanted:

- Motivation
- Communication skills
- Enthusiasm
- Reliability
- Confidence
- Good personal presentation

Training Policy and Initiatives

- Need to emphasise development of foundation skills including literacy and numeracy
- Equip job seekers with the skills and qualifications required by business including employability skills
- Encourage more pre-employment training by business
- Detailed analysis of skill and labour demands of local economies matched with authentic analysis of supply
- Appropriate supports to maximise training completion
- Flexibility and responsiveness required in training delivery



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Strategic Workforce Development approaches

- OECD LEED Forum on Partnerships and Local Governance
- Local level partnerships between ESPs, RTOs and employers
- Career clusters, skills ecosystems (University of Sydney research)
- Keep Australia Working: Priority Employment Areas: Local Employment Co-ordinators

Assistance Provided

Each Priority Employment Area:

- access to projects under the Nation Building – Economic Stimulus Plan
- supported by a Local Employment Coordinator
- Keep Australia Working forum with local community and business leaders
- Keep Australia Working Jobs Expo for job seekers
- receives targeted assistance through the Jobs Fund, Apprentice Kickstart Extension, National Green Jobs Corps and other government initiatives
- Regional Employment Plan which sets out employment and training goals and strategies for the region.



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The Local Employment Coordinator Initiative

The role of Local Employment Coordinators :

- Assist local employers to take advantage of stimulus projects and government funded opportunities
- Assist local stakeholders to take advantage of government training and employment programs
- Link local job seekers and retrenched workers to employment opportunities
- Develop local projects in partnership with stakeholders to create employment and training opportunities.
- Link local stakeholders to develop career pathways and to address the recruitment needs of local businesses.
- Work with local stakeholders to produce a Regional Employment Plan

Case Study – Taree manufacturing redundancies

Assisting retrenched workers into new employment and/or training opportunities

- 210 workers made redundant in an automotive manufacturing plant based in Taree.
- Mid-North Coast LEC worked with key stakeholders to provide information & assistance to the retrenched workers.
- JSA providers were linked with the retrenched workers at information sessions held at the manufacturing plant.
- A business open day was held to showcase the skills of retrenched workers to local employers.
- 78 retrenched workers were assisted into employment.
- Many of the remaining retrenched workers were assisted into training courses in emerging growth sectors such as aged care.



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Case Study – Hospitality Training Courses

Increasing employment and training outcomes through stronger links between stakeholders

- Bundaberg-Hervey Bay LEC worked with JSA providers and training organisations to deliver training and employment outcomes in the hospitality industry
- 12 job seekers completed Certificate III qualifications and were given on the job training with three local employers
- LEC promoted the program to local business
- All participants were placed in employment
- The program has now been adopted by another local JSA provider.



Way Forward

- Policy development to strengthen integration between education, training and employment
- Involvement of employment services at the front end of policy development
- Address siloed approach
- Align incentives
- Strengthen local collaboration between VET and ESPs
- International and national benchmarking
- Range of options including combined pre-vocational and post-placement training strategies and strategies to address labour market mobility



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Thank You

Questions?





Presenter

LIU JIANTONG

Deputy-Director, Department of Vocational and Adult Education Ministry of Education People's Republic of China

From August 1984 to November 1987 Liu Jiantong held a post graduate position in the Department of History, Beijing University and then from November 1987 to September 1998 was Program Official for the Department of vocational-technical education sector of China. From this time he became Division Chief for the Department of Vocational and Adult Education. Liu Jiantong became Deputy-Director for the Department of Vocational and Adult Education in December 2007.



Discussant

IAIN WATT

Minister Counsellor (Education) Beijing, Post jurisdiction: PRC (with AEI Managers in Guangzhou, Shanghai and Hong Kong)

Iain Watt has been a key player in the international dimension of Australian education and training for the past 15 years. His current posting to Beijing as the Minister Counsellor (Education) commenced in February 2008. It is his third posting following service at counsellor level in Taipei (1995–1998) and Beijing (1998–2002).

Iain was the Director, International Development and Co-operation, at the Australian National University in 2004–2007. He has managed several branches within Australian Education International and has been an important contributor to international education policy development since 1992.

We acknowledge the input of Dr Kate Dempsey, Executive Officer, Victoria TAFE International Inc. in providing the following notes about this session.

International perspectives (China)

Presenter: Liu Jiantong

Vocational education and training (VET) is regarded as an important foundation for social and economic development in China and in 2002, 2004 and 2005, the Chinese central government held national conferences on VET.

In China, VET is a system separate from mainstream education. It comprises VET school, VET secondary college and VET post secondary training (similar to TAFE). Twenty per cent of secondary vocational schools are privately operated, although primary level VET is 'fading out', that is, there is less emphasis now on that level. 'Privately operated' schools does not imply that they are operated for profit.

By the end of 2009, there were 14,400 secondary vocational schools in China with 8.69 million enrolments. There are 1,100 tertiary vocational colleges (which are like TAFE) and in 2009, they had 3.1 million students enrolled. Enrolment in tertiary VET colleges accounts for half of the total enrolment in the tertiary sector. The total population in China is around 1.4 billion with some 150 million people involved in training.

In 2005, the central government invested heavily in VET capacity building. From 2006 to 2010 it set up and funded 2,000 VET practicum-training bases, improved facilities for 27,000 secondary VET schools and supported 100 demonstration tertiary VET colleges. Funding and administration are controlled

at the province level, but the central government oversees the capacity building plan. There is also a capacity building plan for teacher training with more than 30,000 master VET teachers having been trained.

Funding in China

In 2007, the central government set up a scheme to provide financial support for poor students in all VET sectors with support for training provided, principally for accommodation costs. About 90 per cent of secondary students can get financial assistance, with 20 per cent of tertiary students receiving assistance. In 2009, free VET was provided for 15 per cent of secondary VET students.

The central government is also engaged in the reform of management of VET schools including the closer involvement of industry, human resources improvements and better teacher pay. The key reform is an increased emphasis on leadership at the local level.

The reforms are directed at making the VET sector responsive to industry and the market and also to support regional/rural areas in terms of employment where there is a skills shortage. The central government priority is not simply to support the manufacturing industries but to train skilled workers for the future.

Issues for the future in China

Secondary VET is identified as a 'weak link' in the VET system in China. It often has old-fashioned teaching methods, poor facilities, insufficient investment and a poor public perception. Liu Jiantong made the point that Chinese students seem to prefer Australian TAFE to China's own VET secondary system. China wants not only high-level scientists

and technical experts but to improve the level of education and skills of all citizens.

China plans to continue encouraging its VET teachers and principals to study overseas, offer co-operative programs with institutions overseas (as well as with various institutions in China), and establish an 'expert panel database' to assist with research on VET studies.

Discussant: Iain Watt

Chinese authorities are of the view that education is not a field for profit making. Anyone wanting to work in China needs to understand the importance of this view. 'Private colleges' simply means those colleges are 'run by the people' and does not indicate that they are operated for private profit.

Iain identified three reasons why Chinese students like the Australian system:

1. It is a pathway to permanent residence.
2. Equally important is the framework of the Australian system and pathways to university, a pathway that does not exist in China.
3. The Chinese government values the Australian system and as well, the German system. Both are the most highly regarded VET systems.

It is important for Australia to remember that the Chinese VET system is managed at the local and provincial levels. We tend to provide courses in the affluent south where there is a match: the desire for an international qualification and the funds locally to 'buy' it. Parents want international trade, tourism or business qualifications for their children in China, whereas the government wants highly skilled technical people – this creates a mismatch.

Questions and discussion

In the discussion period that followed the presentations, Liu Jiantong was asked if Australian TAFEs make any mistakes when they come to China. He said China welcomes Australians; we have a sound relationship. Having said that, he suggested that Australians offering courses in China need to look at the government's training needs and priorities not just parents' desires for their children's future.

Another participant noted that Australia needs to broaden what it offers for a successful longer term relationship, including working with China on our pathways system and on teacher training and teaching methods.

It was noted by another participant that it seems that China suffers from the same problem as we have in Australia, namely that VET is a 'second best' option. It was suggested that, somehow, we need to work to raise the profile of VET in both countries as a viable option for students. Perhaps our pathway system may help with this issue.

Liu Jiantong responded that this is a complex question. We need a more learner-centred approach. The Chinese government is trying to raise local awareness of the value of VET and make VET more responsive to the market. He reiterated that there is a conflict between personal desires and society's needs, that is, parents have aspirations (understandably) for their children, but China needs all types of workers. This mismatch is unavoidable.