

DEVELOPING A TECHNICAL TRAINING SYSTEM IN SAN LUIS, ARGENTINA

Background

In 2013 the Governor of the Province of San Luis (Claudio Poggi) led a delegation to Australia to discuss Australian agricultural practices as the two countries share similar climatic conditions and lines of agricultural production. On that trip, the Governor left the delegation to travel to Canberra to investigate the Australian Government's sports policies. In Canberra, the Governor had the opportunity to visit a technical and further education training institute. On this visit, the Governor was appraised of the Australian Qualifications Framework and its flexibility as well as the operations of a tertiary technical training institution.

The Governor recognised that continued economic prosperity for the Province would be augmented by the existence of a skilled workforce. Another major consideration was the fact that, after completing secondary school, young people had limited options to continue further tertiary study. The development of a vocational education and training system delivering courses aligned with the skills demanded by industry would meet both objectives.

In March 2014 the Governor dispatched another small delegation to Australia to visit vocational education and training organisations in Victoria and New South Wales. The purpose of this visit was to determine if the Australian Qualifications Framework would be an appropriate model for the Province in developing its unique VET system. An analysis of the investigations undertaken resulted in the decision to model a San Luis VET Qualifications Framework on the principles of the Australian Qualifications Framework and to engage a consultancy with extensive experience in the Australian VET sector to assist with this development.

Scope of the Project

On April 7 2014, the Government of the Province of San Luis presented the provincial legislative branch with a bill creating a provincial university that aimed to create an education system modelled on the Australian vocational education and training system and the Australian Qualifications Framework. The objective included the development of qualifications for post secondary technical training including qualifications for tradespeople as well as pathways for diploma and associate degrees in these disciplines. This Bill promoted two significant objectives: the development of a vocational education and training system; and the establishment of the University of Eva Peron.

To implement a VET system, the Province first needed to determine the structure of a Qualifications Framework suited to their environment but aligned with an international benchmark. Once created, qualifications appropriate to the skills needs of local industries would be designed in accordance with the San Luis VET Qualifications Framework.

Establishing the University of Eva Peron would involve the following:

- Designing an appropriate Governance model
- Developing operational policies and procedures
- Designing buildings for delivery of the identified qualifications
- Developing a web site
- Identifying a suitable student management system and other software applications
- Inducting potential teacher trainers to the San Luis VET Qualifications Framework

- Training potential teachers.

On 1 July 2014 (the anniversary of Juan Peron's death), the Governor of the Province publicly launched the establishment of the University of "Eva Peron" through the promulgation by decree of the law passed by the legislative branch. Delivery of courses would begin on 7 May 2015 in the fields of engineering, welding, plumbing, electrical and mechanical.

Stage 1 – Investigation and Planning

1. **Consultation with stakeholders** including the legislative assembly, a range of enterprises representing the local industries, syndicates (construction industry), technical secondary school sector, secondary schools, university representatives, government departments and members of communities including all mayors.
2. **Analysis of stakeholder feedback** indicated that:
 - the flexibility provided by the Australian qualifications model was supported
 - the principle of competency based training was beneficial to industry's needs
 - rural areas required access to training without leaving their localities
 - the skills in urgent demand included engineering, welding, plumbing, electrical and mechanical (engines)
 - students of the University of Eva Peron (UPrO) would be graduates from the secondary school system or people more than 25 years of age.

Senior officers of the Province's Ministry of Education conjunction with Carrick Vale Consulting led the consultation process which included a presentation on the Australian Qualifications Framework. At the conclusion of this phase, Carrick Vale Consulting provided a report and recommendations to the Governor for his consideration.

Stage 2 – Design and Development

Following the conclusion of Stage One, the Government of San Luis engaged Carrick Vale Consulting to provide specialised consulting services, advice and support for Stage 2 and subsequent phases of the project.

In stage two the following work was completed:

- Development of the San Luis Vocational Education and Training Framework (SL-VET-QF)
- Design of qualifications for engineering, plumbing, welding, electrical, mechanical, hairdressing, beauty and massage
- Architectural design for the new engineering and aesthetics buildings
- Identifying equipment for installation in the new buildings
- Architectural design for renovation of existing buildings on the site of the University of Eva Peron
- Governance documents for operating the University of Eva Peron
- Development of a teacher training course
- Designing student selection and application processes

Stage 3 – Implementation: Providing Human and Physical Resources

This stage occurred from January to March and focussed on the following:

- the construction and renovation of the buildings on the site of the University of Eva Peron
- the development of teacher training courses materials
- implementation of the governance arrangements for the University of Eva Peron
- selection of staff for the University of Eva Peron
- communicating with the public about the University of Eva Peron and its offerings
- designing a web site and identifying appropriate software solutions for the operational functionalities required for the University
- attracting applications for enrolment in the courses commencing on 7 May 2015
- selecting and training potential teachers for course delivery commencing 7 May 2015.

Stage 4 – Implementation: Opening the Doors to Success

This stage occurred from April to May 2015 and focussed on finalising University governance and operational requirements ready for commencement of classes on 7 May 2015.

This stage included preparation for additional qualifications to be delivered in August 2015 for Aesthetics.

Consultant and Client Partnership

The vision and foresight of the Governor of the Province of San Luis provided the motivation and momentum for this ambitious project. After careful consideration the Governor chose to engage an Australian expert to partner with the Province to realise the project's objectives. The Victorian State Government through the Department of State Development Business and Innovation provided substantial support to achieve the vision detailed by the Governor of San Luis. This support was a critical element in the success of Stage 1 and continued to be highly valued in subsequent phases. From the beginning, the relationship formed between the Australian consultant and representatives from the San Luis' Ministry of Education was positive, respectful and trusting. A theme of "shared knowledge for shared success" provided the foundation for "Team Eva Peron". Clear articulation of expectations and objectives constantly provided by the Governor was a major factor in generating and maintaining energy and enthusiasm for this large project.