

TAFE Directors Australia

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ANNUAL
REPORT **2004**



TAFE Directors AUSTRALIA

ANNUAL REPORT 2004





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TAFE DIRECTORS AUSTRALIA

TAFE Directors Australia (TDA) is the national association of Institutes of Technical and Further Education and the TAFE divisions of multi-sector universities in Australia. It is incorporated in the ACT as an independent non-profit association.

TDA provides national leadership in promoting the role and contribution of public vocational education and training to Australian social, cultural and economic development.

TDA provides a forum for cooperation and exchange of ideas on vocational education matters, as well as a mechanism for providing effective input into national policy formulation. TDA also represents the TAFE sector on key committees and boards dealing with vocational education and training matters and consults with other sectors of education on matters of mutual interest.

Additionally, TDA undertakes research, develops relationships with other countries on vocational education and training matters, provides opportunities for the professional development of Directors and other TAFE staff, and undertakes projects of benefit to TAFE.

Mr John Maddock
Director
Box Hill Institute of TAFE

Mr Brian Smith
Acting Director
Wodonga Institute of TAFE

Mr Ray Griffiths
Director
Kangan Batman Institute of TAFE

Mr David Riley
Chief Executive Officer
William Angliss Institute of TAFE

Mr Peter Ryan
Director
Goulburn Ovens Institute of TAFE

Ms Virginia Simmons
Director
Chisholm Institute of TAFE

Mr Bruce Baehnisch
Acting Chief Executive Officer
Bendigo Regional Institute of TAFE

Dr Ron Wild
Director
Sunraysia Institute of TAFE

Tasmania

Mr John Smyth
Chief Executive Officer
TAFE Tasmania

Western Australia

Ms Wendy Burns
Managing Director
South West Regional College of TAFE

Mr Michael O'Loughlin
Acting Managing Director
Pilbara TAFE

Mr Adrian Mitchell
Managing Director
Kimberley College of TAFE

Mr Malcolm Goff
Managing Director
Challenger TAFE

Mr Brian Paterson
Managing Director
Central TAFE

Mr Bert Beevers
Director
Central West College of TAFE

Mrs Sue Slavin
Managing Director
West Coast College of TAFE

Mr Wayne Collyer
Managing Director
Swan TAFE

Mr Peter Whitley
Director
Vocational Education and Training Centre
Curtin University of Technology

Associate Members

Mr Robin Shreeve
Mr David Williams
Ms Maureen Morton
Mr Brenton Marshall

Honorary Associate Member

Ms Margaret Hamilton

Mr Steve Ghost
Director
Yeronga Institute of TAFE

Mr Wayne Bradley
Institute Director
Moreton Institute of TAFE

Mr Craig Sherrin
Director
Southbank Institute of TAFE

Ms Carol Webb
Institute Director
Brisbane North Institute of TAFE

South Australia

Mr Allan Sanderson
Acting Director
Torrens Valley Institute of TAFE

Mr Brian Pudney
Institute Director
Onkaparinga Institute of TAFE

Mr Steve Conway
Acting Director
Regency Institute of TAFE

Ms Denise Janek
Executive Director
TAFE SA Regional

Ms Ros Cheales
Executive Director
TAFE SA Adelaide South

Mr Adrian Marron
Executive Director
TAFE SA Adelaide North

Ms Nancye Stanelis
Acting Director
Douglas Mawson Institute of TAFE

Ms Sue Sachs
Director
Adelaide Institute of TAFE

Victoria

Mr Barrie Baker
Director
South West Institute of TAFE

Mr Allan Ballagh
Director TAFE
RMIT University

Mr Richard Carter
Deputy Vice Chancellor & Director
TAFE
Victoria University of Technology
(TAFE Division)

Mr Alistair Crozier
Divisional Deputy Vice Chancellor
(TAFE)
Swinburne University of Technology

Mr Angela Hutson
Director
East Gippsland Institute of TAFE

Mr Joe Piper
Acting Chief Executive Officer
Central Gippsland Institute of TAFE

Ms Martha Kinsman
Director
Gordon Institute of TAFE

Mr Terry Lloyd
Deputy Vice Chancellor
University of Ballarat (TAFE Division)

Mr Bruce Mackenzie
Director
Holmesglen Institute of TAFE

OBJECTS & PURPOSES OF THE ASSOCIATION

The formal objects and purposes for which the Association is established are:

- To provide national leadership in relation to vocational education and training, and to promote the role of TAFE institutes, and the contribution they make to the development of Australian society, culture and economic achievement
- To provide a forum for TAFE Directors to consider matters of common concern, formulate advice for TAFE institutes collectively, and take other appropriate action whenever this is seen to be useful
- To undertake or commission research or information collection relating to the needs and development of TAFE institutes and their relationship with government, industry, other educational institutions and organisations, and the community; and to publish or otherwise disseminate the results of such research
- To promote international cooperation and to assist in the development of relationships with a variety of countries on vocational education and training matters
- To promote the representation of TAFE Directors on committees and the like which are set up to undertake work of significance affecting vocational education and training nationally or internationally. As appropriate, to undertake or arrange such representation
- To consult with other sectors of education including schools and higher education on matters of mutual interest
- To facilitate the development of TAFE staff through a variety of means including staff exchange programs
- To promote the welfare of students, staff and graduates of TAFE institutes
- To facilitate opportunities for Members to develop their knowledge and skills
- To receive and manage fees, donations, bequests and other contributions from individuals or organisations and apply these to pursuing the objects of the Association
- To do all such other lawful things as are conducive to the attainment of the Association's Objects

CHAIR'S REPORT

It gives me great pleasure to present the TAFE Directors Australia report of activities for the year 2004.

TDA was established in 1998 and is therefore still a relatively young organisation. Given this, the scope of work in which TDA is now engaged and the extent to which we are now approached as the peak body for the TAFE sector for input and comment on a very wide range of education and training issues, is very noteworthy.

2004 was an extremely challenging and productive year, especially with the extra demands and challenges that a federal election year brings.

A very high priority was given by the TDA Board to the development of a series of TDA position papers and a policy statement addressing the national strategies required to meet the skills challenge facing Australia. It was agreed that there was no more important task than articulating the reasons and need for a comprehensive approach to skills formation with TAFE being properly resourced to play a central role. We needed to draw attention to the links between the development of cutting edge, world class skills and Australia's future economic growth and prosperity. We also needed to underline what education and training means for individual

Australians in terms of improving their job prospects and earning a satisfactory income.

The policy statement *Investing in Australia's Future: Essential Strategies to Meet the Skills Challenge* was launched at the end of August. It outlined an integrated set of strategies for improving the outcomes from vocational education and training. These included a recommended strategy for improving opportunities for youth through vocational education and training, recommended actions for addressing skills shortages especially in the traditional trades, recommended action to build the skills of the existing workforce and strategies for fostering applied research, sustaining regional communities and better meeting the needs of disadvantaged students.

Over 2004 there was a growing appreciation and much greater public commentary and debate on the importance of skills development. The genesis of this new interest in skills issues lay in the emergence of some critical skills shortages especially in the traditional trades.

While the focus on current skills shortages and action to address

Mr Steve Ghost
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Mr Wayne Bradley
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Moreton Institute of TAFE

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Ms Carol Webb
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Brisbane North Institute of TAFE

South Australia

Mr Allan Sanderson
Acting Director
Torrens Valley Institute of TAFE

Mr Brian Pudney
Institute Director
Onkaparinga Institute of TAFE

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Regency Institute of TAFE

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Ms Ros Cheales
Executive Director
TAFE SA Adelaide South

Mr Adrian Marron
Executive Director
TAFE SA Adelaide North

Ms Nancy Stanelis
Acting Director
Douglas Mawson Institute of TAFE

Mr Sue Sachs
Director
Adelaide Institute of TAFE

Victoria

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Director
Gordon Institute of TAFE

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Deputy Vice Chancellor
University of Ballarat (TAFE Division)

Mr Bruce Mackenzie
Director
Holmesglen Institute of TAFE

TDA MEMBERS DECEMBER 2004

Australian Capital Territory

Dr Peter Veenker
Director and Chief Executive
Officer
Canberra Institute of Technology

New South Wales

Ms Di Murray
Acting Institute Director
TAFE NSW South Western Sydney
Institute

Mr Neil Black
Director
TAFE NSW North Coast Institute

Ms Rosemary Campbell
Director
TAFE NSW Riverina Institute

Mr Kevin Harris
Director
TAFE NSW Northern Sydney
Institute

Dr Gaye Hart
Director
TAFE NSW Hunter Institute

Mr Barry Peddle
Director
TAFE NSW Illawarra Institute

Ms Marie Persson
Director
TAFE NSW Sydney Institute

Mr Gary Pollock
Director
TAFE NSW New England Institute

Ms Gillian Shadwick
Director
TAFE NSW Western Sydney Institute

Mr Jim Thorpe
Director
TAFE NSW Western Institute

Northern Territory

Ms Veronica Arbon
Director
Batchelor Institute of Indigenous
Territory Education

Mr Don Zoellner
Pro Vice Chancellor
Community & Access
Alice Springs Campus
Charles Darwin University- TAFE
Division

Queensland

Mr Rod Arthur
Director
Open Learning Institute

Mr Mike Anderson
Director
Cooloola Sunshine Institute of TAFE

Ms Deb Daly
Director
Gold Coast Institute of TAFE

Ms Kaylene Harth
Acting Director
The Bremer Institute of TAFE

them is welcome, TDA made opportunities to stress that there was and is still disturbingly little recognition that success in the future will depend on a sound long term approach and that issues relating to Australia's future skills needs go far beyond the traditional trades. National policy needs to be directed to skills formation generally. A comprehensive approach is required that meets the needs of all in the workforce, both young and older workers, across all sectors of the economy.

We also attached a high priority to meeting with political leaders and others involved in shaping VET policy as well as the strengthening of relationships with other key stakeholders.

Among the highlights of the TDA year was our very successful National TAFE Congress. It attracted substantially more participants than previous conferences and also attracted significant sponsorship. This reflected the thought and energy that went into its planning, organisation and promotion.

My heartfelt appreciation goes to Barry Peddle who chaired the steering committee for the Congress and brought his considerable experience and skill to this task. Our thanks go as well to TAFE NSW Sydney Institute who hosted the conference and Fran Cane and the Sydney Institute team who played

such an important part in its organisation and success. Kris Newton in the TDA Secretariat, supported by her colleagues Nicole Rojas-Terry and Paula Ware, worked hard over many months in developing the Congress concept and the program, identifying and organising speakers, attracting sponsors and organising the entertainment. They all deserve our very warm thanks.

May 2004 marked the start of a new triennium for the Board. Many of the existing Board members offered to continue in their role and TDA is very fortunate again to have their services. I am most appreciative of the very substantial contribution they have made over a period of years to TDA's work. I am particularly grateful to my fellow members of the TDA Executive, the two Deputy Chairs Bruce Mackenzie and Wayne Collyer, who have provided me with strong support.

There were a few Board members who were unable to continue, either because they were moving elsewhere or because of the pressure of other commitments. We were sorry to lose the services of Peter Veenker, Veronica Arbon, Phil Clarke and Mike Mulvihill from the Board. All made an invaluable contribution to TDA as Board members. Peter's contribution, of course, as a founder of TDA and as its inaugural chair deserves our continuing strong appreciation.

Stephen Conway, Steve Ghost and Don Zoellner brought new blood to the Board. We have already benefited from the diverse strategic and operational experience, expertise and perspectives that they bring to the Board's discussions.

Action taken during the year has helped the Board in better managing its business. Two standing committees have now been established: a Finance and Audit Sub-Committee and a Strategic Directions Sub-Committee, and the benefits have already been evident.

The Members of any successful organisation are its backbone. TDA Members, who are the CEOs of their organisations, together with their Institute and College staff continued to make an enormous contribution to TDA's work. They did this in many ways. They were integrally involved in the development of our position papers and in our strategic thinking, they took part in ANTA and DEST forums and consultations in which TDA was involved, and represented TDA on a number of national committees, advisory bodies, working groups and the like. They contributed comment and suggestions on significant issues as they arose, enabling TDA to make informed submissions to government on a wide range of policy matters. Several Members were also closely involved in developing TDA's relationships with the new Industry Skills Councils.

Our Members assisted in other ways as well, notably through the support provided in organising various functions and activities.

TDA is very ably supported by a small team of professionals in the Secretariat. I cannot speak highly enough of the extraordinary work the TDA Secretariat does on our behalf, LED with absolute commitment by Margaret Fanning, the Secretariat works hard to assist us with policy development, the organisation of projects and support for member activities, and in promoting TDA's views on how we can achieve the best possible vocational education and training system.

The October federal election and the policies developed at that time by the Coalition Government have produced a shifting and challenging landscape for the TAFE sector. There is no doubt that this presents some very significant challenges for TDA, not least because the new initiatives do not seem to be capitalising on what TAFE has to offer.

TAFE offers a formidable capacity. Its network of colleges and campuses and its distance education capacity stretch into every part of Australia. It is able to meet very diverse needs and has arrangements in place that facilitate access to education and training by all equity groups. Investing in TAFE should be

TDA STAFF DECEMBER 2004

Executive Director	Margaret Fanning
Assistant Director	Kris Newton
Office Manager	Nicole Rojas-Terry
Policy Advisor	Paula Ware

TDA REPRESENTATION

TDA, as a peak body, is frequently approached to nominate representatives to sit on boards, committees, reviews, working parties and the like and also to represent Australia in international delegations and conferences. As a result, TDA is now represented on a number of bodies. In most instances the opportunity to represent TDA is offered to members or the staff of their institutes. In some other cases, TDA is represented by the Executive Director or Secretariat staff.

Examples of representational activities in 2004 include

Board of the World Federation of Associations of Colleges and Polytechnics

TDA was represented on the Board by its Chairperson, Gillian Shadwick. Barry Peddle (Director, TAFE NSW Illawarra Institute) served as an alternate.

Australian Disability Training Advisory Council.

John Heneker (Murray Institute of TAFE).

ANTA Advisory Group for the Strategic Evaluation of Reframing the Future

Steve Ghost (Institute Director Yeronga Institute of TAFE)

ANTA Training.com Steering Committee

Steve Ghost (Institute Director Yeronga Institute of TAFE)

IT Skills Hub

John Maddock (Chief Executive Officer, Box Hill Institute)

AEI Promotions Advisory Committee

Jeff Gunningham (Director, Central Gippsland Institute of TAFE)

NCVER Research Advisory Panels

Gillian Shadwick (TDA Chair and Director TAFE NSW Western Sydney Institute), Martha Kinsman (Director, Gordon Institute of TAFE), Wayne Bradley (Director, Cooloola Institute of TAFE)

Affiliation of International Education Peak Bodies

Margaret Fanning (Executive Director, TDA) and David Endean (Director International Centre, Holmesglen Institute of TAFE)

DIMA Working Group on Student Visa Arrangements.

Margaret Fanning (Executive Director, TDA) and David Endean (Director International Centre, Holmesglen Institute of TAFE)

National Assessors and Workplace Trainers Body National Steering Committee for the review of the Training Package for Workplace Training and Assessment

Kris Newton (Assistant Director, TDA Secretariat).

at the core of any serious national strategy to address skills needs. This cannot be said too often and is a message that we must continue to promote in 2005.

Having said that, TAFE is also pragmatic. TAFE Institutes are keen to work with government in developing and implementing the new arrangements. TDA has had early discussions with the new Minister for Vocational and Technical, the Hon Gary Hardgrave, and senior officials and we will be seeking to contribute to policy thinking and be as actively involved as possible in the new system. We are keen also to seize new opportunities. The TAFE sector already works closely with industry in many ways especially at the local and regional levels. Building and strengthening links and partnerships with industry, including through the Industry Skills Councils, will be at the top of our agenda for the coming year.

Another priority area for the coming year will be consolidating and

further extending our membership. TDA's membership now extends through all States and Territories and we represent the great majority of TAFE Institutes and Colleges. Some Institutes in regional areas have, however, still to join the association. Achieving universal membership remains a very important goal for the association.

This is my last report to you as Chair of TDA. It has been an enormous privilege to be the chair over the last four years. It has been absolute pleasure to work with Institute and College Directors and CEOs from across Australia to help shape our national approach and strengthen our national voice. I leave the TDA Board in very good hands with Barry Peddle in the Chair, with such strong State and Territory Board membership and with Margaret Fanning as Executive Director. I will continue as a proud and active associate member of TDA.

Gillian Shadwick

NATIONAL BOARD MEMBERS 2004

Ms Gillian Shadwick
Chair
Director
TAFE NSW Western
Sydney Institute

Dr Peter Veenker
Immediate Past Chair & Member
(until May 2004)
Director and Chief
Executive Officer
Canberra Institute of
Technology

Mr John Smyth
Member
Chief Executive
Officer
TAFE Tasmania

Mr Wayne Collyer
Deputy Chair
(Member, Deputy Chair
from May 2004)
Managing Director
Central West College of
TAFE

Mr Phil Clarke
Deputy Chair
(until May 2004)
Director
Brisbane North
Institute of TAFE

Mr Bruce Mackenzie
Deputy Chair
Director
Holmesglen Institute of
TAFE

Ms Veronica Arbon
Member
(until May 2004)
Director
Batchelor Institute of
TAFE

Ms Martha Kinsman
Member
Director
Gordon Institute of TAFE

**Mr Steve Conway
Member
(from April 2004)**
Acting Institute
Director
Regency Institute of
TAFE

**Mr Barry Peddle
Member**
Institute Director
TAFE NSW Illawarra
Institute

**Mr Steve Ghost
Member
(from May 2004)**
Institute Director
Yeronga Institute of
TAFE

**Mr Mike Mulvihill
Member
(until April 2004)**
Director
Douglas Mawson Institute

**Mr Kevin Harris
Member**
Director
TAFE NSW Northern
Sydney Institute

**Mr Don Zoellner
Member
(from May 2004)**
Pro Vice Chancellor
Community and Access
Charles Darwin University
TAFE Division

The National Board has established two standing Board sub-committees:

Finance & Audit Sub-Committee

Chair Bruce Mackenzie
Members Barry Peddle
Stephen Conway

Strategic Directions Sub-Committee

Chair Martha Kinsman
Members Steve Ghost
Kevin Harris

In addition the National Board has established other committees and working groups to advise the Board and to assist it in the management of various activities. Where appropriate these committees include representation from key stakeholders as well as TDA members.

The Members Day held in conjunction with the AGM enabled the association to consider and discuss draft position papers on Meeting Australia's Skills Needs, Youth, TAFE's Role in Regional and Remote Areas and Funding. Issues relating to User Choice and Student Loans Schemes were also discussed, as was the approach to be taken on key priority issues in the context of a Federal election campaign.

The meeting in September focused on the new Industry Skills Councils and the approach to be taken by TDA in engaging with the ISCs and developing strong and productive relationships with them. The meeting also discussed outcomes of the High Level Review of Training Packages and implementation issues.

The November meeting held in conjunction with the ANTA National Training Awards provided a very timely opportunity to discuss the Government's new policy agenda on VET and its implications for TAFE. It also enabled members to review TDA's priorities and strategy for the coming year.

Members Days have proved invaluable in helping the association to develop positions on key policy issues and it is envisaged that at least two

Members meetings will be held in the course of 2005.

Looking Ahead

In 2005 TDA will be seeking to contribute to the Government's thinking on the new structural arrangements to be put in place following the abolition of ANTA and to contribute where we can to the implementation of its policy agenda.

Another high priority will be continuing to build our relationships with other stakeholders particularly industry, with a view to further development of partnerships and alliances between TAFE providers and industry including working through industry organisations and the Industry Skills Councils.

We will continue to need to work towards securing greater recognition of TAFE's contribution to the Australian economy and society and, in particular, its role in meeting a very diverse range of individual and community needs.

A further important aim is to continue to grow the organisation and achieve universal membership in the TAFE sector which is important both in terms of TDA's standing and influence and in helping to maximise the association's potential benefits for members.

Paul Byrne gave us an informative presentation on the National VET Strategy and ANTA's role, as well as some important recent developments including Training Package reform.

Jack Dusseldorp delivered a thoughtful and at times provocative address on the contribution of TAFE/VET to Australia's social and economic well-being. Dr Laurie Bassi of McBassi and Company, a guest speaker from the United States, gave a presentation on *What CEOs and CFOs Need to Know About 'HR Stuff'* which attracted a great deal of interest. This presentation synthesised a growing body of research that points to human capital management as the most important driver of business results. She focused particularly on the returns on investing in human capital, what this means for training and workforce skill development and implications for government policy in promoting workplace education and training.

Bill Wilson, Co-Chair of the Australian Indigenous Training Advisory Council, discussed the contribution TAFE makes to communities, particularly regional and remote communities; and Elaine Henry, CEO of the Smith Family, spoke about the powerful impact of TAFE on the lives of individuals.

The keynotes were followed by a series of illustrative concurrent sessions, with many stimulating contributing speakers. A special feature of the program was several concurrent sessions where the speakers were students and recent graduates who reflected on their experiences of TAFE and ways in which TAFE had changed their lives.

A plenary session with an invited panel and facilitated by Julie McCrossin provided a lively and thought provoking finish to the Congress.

Membership

As at the end of 2004 there were 56 full members of TDA. Most TAFE Institutes are now members of TDA and this has strengthened our position as the national peak body. However, there are still a few institutions in some parts of regional Australia who have yet to join the association. It remains an important objective for TDA to achieve universal membership. Amalgamation of Institutes in some States has had the effect of reducing TDA's potential membership numbers and this poses a challenge for the future in terms of ensuring that the association's income is maintained at satisfactory levels.

Members Meetings

Three Members Meetings were held during 2004: on 31 May, 22 September, and 19 November. All were well attended.

2004 NATIONAL TAFE CONGRESS PLANNING COMMITTEE

<i>Chair:</i>	Barry Peddle	Director, TAFE NSW Sydney Institute (May – December 2004)
<i>Members:</i>	Gillian Shadwick	Director, TAFE NSW Western Sydney Institute
	Margaret Fanning	Executive Director, TDA
	Kris Newton	Assistant Director, TDA
	Fran Cane	Director, Promotions Information & Marketing Services, TAFE NSW Sydney Institute
	Sharon Nellies	Project Officer – Events Coordinator, TAFE NSW Sydney Institute

WORKING GROUP ON INDIGENOUS EDUCATION AND TRAINING ISSUES

<i>Chair</i>	Gillian Shadwick	Chair TDA, and Director TAFE NSW Western Sydney Institute
<i>Members</i>	Marie Persson	Director, TAFE NSW Sydney Institute
	Bob Nixon	Director, Centralian College
	Veronica Arbon	Director, Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Territory Education
	Paul Callaghan	Manager, Access & Equity, TAFE NSW Hunter Institute
	Peter Veenker	Director and Chief Executive Officer, Canberra Institute of Technology
	Rod Brightman	Senior Manager, Office of the Director, Canberra Institute of Technology
	Peter Mahler	Managing Director, Cy O'Connor College of TAFE
	Anne Jenkins	Indigenous Education Officer, Swinburne University of Technology – TAFE Division
	Sharon Rice	Swinburne University of Technology – TAFE Division
	Adrian Mitchell	Kimberley College of TAFE
Margaret Fanning	Executive Director, TDA	
Kris Newton	Assistant Director, TDA	

the possibility of forming a regional association. This is a matter that we intend exploring further in 2005.

GATS and Free Trade Agreements

TDA was briefed and consulted by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade on issues relating to the negotiations on education services under the Doha Round of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) and on issues relating to the United States Australia Free Trade Agreement and proposals for other bilateral free trade agreements.

National TAFE Congress

TDA conferences have always been an important part of our annual calendar. They have provided an excellent opportunity for members and colleagues to get together to discuss important topics relevant to TAFE and vocational education and training, to exchange ideas and learn from others' experiences. They have also helped foster the development of networks and contacts among TAFE Institutes across Australia.

The evaluation of the 2003 TDA conference suggested, however, that the annual conference was widely perceived as catering mainly for TDA members rather than the broader TAFE community. A decision was

therefore taken to re-badge the conference in future as a National TAFE Congress with the aim being to encourage broader participation.

The 2004 Congress was held on 22-24 September at the Ultimo College campus of TAFE NSW Sydney Institute, with the theme being *Realising Australia's Potential* which focused on the new National VET Strategy and its main strands: VET working for communities, business and individuals. The Congress attracted close to 300 participants and was judged to be a very successful event, with feedback being generally very positive. The Congress was also financially successful, reflecting the strong sponsorship that we were able to attract.

TDA was greatly assisted in the organisation of the Congress by Sydney Institute staff, especially Fran Cane and Sharon Nellies.

Keynote speakers were of a high calibre. The opening address was given by Senator John Tierney representing the Minister for Education, Science & Training. Anthony Albanese, the Shadow Minister for Employment Services and Training, delivered a hard-hitting speech entitled *TAFE: It's time for a renewed commitment*. He spoke about current skills shortages, the need to lift public investment in education and training and the ALP's agenda for TAFE.

China Education Association for International Exchange

Representatives of the China Education Association for International Exchange visited Canberra in 2004 and had discussions with TDA on possible areas of cooperation between the two organisations, including the possibility of a shadowing/mentoring program. The aim of this project would be to strengthen the management expertise of senior administrators of vocational education and training institutions in China through giving them the opportunity of shadowing counterparts in Australian institutions and gaining an in-depth understanding of management approaches and systems in TAFE Institutes including, in particular, quality assurance requirements and their implementation.

The two associations are agreed that projects such as these would strengthen linkages between the Australian and Chinese VET sectors. The project would also serve to promote the capabilities of the Australian VET sector and the Australian training system.

Support has been sought from the Australian and Chinese Governments for the proposal.

It is envisaged that the shadowing/mentoring project in

its initial phase in 2005 will comprise

- An initial visit by two Australian representatives to China to brief prospective Chinese participating institutions on the Australian VET system including the Australian Quality Training Framework and to discuss the details of the shadowing/mentoring program.
- A two week visit by up to six senior Chinese VET administrators to Australia as the initial participants in the program. The visit would include an orientation briefing in Canberra, attachment to an Australian TAFE Institute for a shadowing/mentoring program for 7-10 days, a visit to one or two other Institutes in another State for 2-3 days, and a day's final round-table discussion in Sydney prior to return to China.
- A follow up visit by the Australian mentors to China to take part with Chinese counterparts in a seminar on VET directions, the quality system in Australia, the role of management and related quality issues.

Regional links

During the year TDA gave thought to how we might foster closer links with other organisations in the Asia/Pacific region with an interest in VET including

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

2004 was a challenging year for TDA. We set ourselves some ambitious targets which included the development of strong positions on a number of major policy issues, strengthening our relationships with key stakeholders, and building a stronger media presence. All of these activities are important ones for peak bodies such as TDA, but they assumed particular significance and urgency in an election year.

At the same time, we continued to work closely with government departments and agencies and other stakeholders on a very wide range of vocational education and training issues, including a number of policy areas and programs which were under review.

We also staged a National TAFE Congress which was a larger event than the annual conferences held in the past. Considerable thought and energy was put into this event with successful results.

Many people contributed to TDA's successes over the year but special mention should be made of the invaluable role played by TDA's staff who continued to work

hard and with enthusiasm to achieve TDA goals.

Policy Development

One of TDA's key goals in 2004 was to develop and publicly articulate strong positions on a number of important policy issues relating to vocational education and training and the contribution TAFE makes to Australia's economic and social development. The results of this work were reflected in a TDA Policy Statement *Investing in Australia's Future: Essential Strategies to Meet the Skills Challenge* that was released at the end of August. This document pointed to the major workforce challenges facing Australia and the urgent policy initiatives needed to help overcome skills shortages, lift Australia's skill levels, increase productivity and improve job prospects for many younger and older people.

The Statement noted that Australia's future economic growth depends on increasing productivity and labour force participation. Both of these will require substantial investment in the training of young people and older workers.

The Statement recommended strategies designed to meet Australia's future skills needs, improve labour

force participation, build the nation's innovative capacity, ensure meaningful and rewarding employment for young people and the disadvantaged and strengthen regional communities.

A key element advocated in the paper was to establish a national goal that all Australians will have the opportunity to undertake a minimum of two years of recognised and appropriate post-school education and training, including vocational education and training qualifications typically to at least Certificate III or IV level.

The Statement underlined the pivotal role that TAFE can play and was accompanied by four supporting position papers analysing the challenges faced by the nation and TAFE's recommended approach. These papers covered

- A National Youth Strategy
- A National Strategy for Meeting Australia's Skills
- The Role of TAFE in Regional and Remote Australia; and
- Funding for TAFE

In addition, a set of six Fact Sheets were prepared covering funding, youth, TAFE in regional and remote areas, a profile of TAFE students and graduates, the diversity and inclusivity of TAFE, and key outcomes for TAFE students.

After the Federal election in October, work began on assessing the implications of new policies announced by the Government as a response to skills shortages, as well as the implications of the abolition of ANTA and transfer of functions to the Department of Education, Science and Training with effect from 1 July 2005. Consideration of how TDA can best respond and contribute to the Government's policy agenda on vocational education and training will be a key priority for TDA in 2005.

Building Relationships

During the year, TDA representatives had meetings covering a range of matters with Minister Hardgrave, advisers in Minister Nelson's Office, Ms Jenny Macklin, Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Shadow Minister for Employment Education and Training, and Mr Anthony Albanese, Shadow Minister for Employment and Training. Meetings were also held with Democrats Senator Lyn Allison and Senator Meg Lees of the Australian Progressive Alliance.

We had a number of meetings on VET policy and international education and training issues with senior officers of the Department of Education, Science and Training including very useful meetings with Jeff Harmer and later Lisa Paul in their capacity as Secretary of DEST.

We met also with officials from the Treasury, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Department

requirements, and pastoral care issues relating to international students.

Meetings with DEST

TDA also participates with other education sector peak bodies in regular meetings with DEST on international education issues. Matters discussed during the year included issues relating to developments in overseas markets, student enrolment statistics, compliance with regulatory requirements and the evaluation of the ESOS Act, issues relating to foundation studies, Australian student engagement in international education, and the proposed Australian International Education Conference in 2005.

In addition TDA is a member of a VET Exports Working Party convened by DEST that was set up to examine means to improve the VET sector's performance in international education. This Working Party met three times during the year but has yet to make significant progress.

Review of the ESOS Act

TDA participated in consultations and made a written submission to the ESOS Act Evaluation which commenced in the second half of 2004. While TDA supports the objectives of the ESOS Act and the general approach embodied in the Act and the National Code, there are a number of shortcomings in the Act and the

way in which it operates which impact adversely on TAFE Institutes and their capacity to attract international students.

TDA's submission pointed to some of the main problems including tensions and inconsistencies with migration policy, inconsistencies in administration of the ESOS Act among the various jurisdictions, unnecessarily burdensome requirements placed on TAFE providers, inequities between sectors and excessively high CRICOS registration charges. The submission also made some specific recommendations on ways in which the system can be improved. TDA's general view is that a more effective and efficient approach would place more weight on initial provider registration requirements and take a less onerous approach to compliance. The consultants conducting the evaluation were not due to report to the Department of Education, Science and Training until 2005.

ATIN

Ongoing contact is maintained with members of the Australian TAFE International Network on international education issues including through participating in meetings of the Network which are held three to four times a year. The ATIN network provides very useful input to developing TDA positions.

representatives are being supported by the TDA Office.

Reports on TDA's relationships with the ISCs are a standing item on the TDA National Board agenda and there is a rotating spot for meetings with ISC CEOs or Chairs at Board meetings.

While progress in developing relationships with the ISCs and setting collaborative projects in train was somewhat slower than originally anticipated, largely because of the time taken to set up and declare the ISCs themselves, TDA is strongly of the view that on-going partnerships between the Skills Councils and the TAFE sector can be expected to make a major contribution to skills development in Australia and that this would be of great national benefit. TDA has therefore recommended to ANTA that the Service Agreement and associated funding arrangements be extended so that action can be taken to consolidate and build on the steps that have already been taken.

International Education & Training Student Visa Program

TDA continued to make representations on student visa issues and ways in which the Student Visa Program can be improved. While there have been some improvements achieved in

the student visa regime, there are aspects of the current approach that continue to cause TDA concern.

In particular, we are concerned that the design of the current system means that it operates in a way that precludes many genuine potential students from studying in TAFE Institutes. The key issue is that the system fails to distinguish between providers regardless of their track record. In mid-2004 TDA made a written submission to the Government arguing for the adoption of an approach that more accurately reflects the actual performance of individual providers and that would allow VET providers with a good track record of student compliance with DIMIA requirements to be classified at a lower risk assessment level. Unfortunately, the Government has indicated its reluctance to consider changes along these lines.

We were also actively involved in more general discussions on the review of the risk assessment methodology and provided written comments in response to a discussion paper.

DIMIA Working Group

TDA is a member of a DIMIA Working Group on International Education. Student visa issues have been the focus of this Group's discussions. Other matters discussed have included trends in student visas granted, the introduction of eVisas, professional development visas, issues relating to education agents, English language

of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs.

We continued to give a high priority to fostering a close working relationship with ANTA and we met on a number of occasions with senior ANTA officials including the CEO Janina Gawler and later Paul Byrne, as well as participating in and contributing to a range of consultative processes conducted by ANTA.

As reported last year, there is scope to work more closely with industry peak bodies and we have been begun to explore possibilities with them. The Board has agreed that this will continue to be a priority area for TDA and further effort will be put into this.

TDA also has some interests in common with the Australian Council of Private Education and Training. Over the course of the year we had a number of discussions with ACPET and have agreed that there would be mutual benefit in working together in some areas, including making joint representations to government where appropriate.

We commenced building relationships with the Industry Skills Councils as they were set up and regard the future strengthening of these relationships as a very important part of TDA's activities.

We continued to work collaboratively with other education peak sector bodies on international education issues of mutual interest.

High Level Review of Training Packages

TDA took an active part in the consultations on the High Level Review of Training Packages that commenced in mid 2003. We made both written submissions and participated in discussions with the consultants, as well as taking part in forums that were held in the course of the review.

A Consultation Paper issued in December 2003 identified issues that were seen by the consultants, commissioned to undertake the review, as being central and critical to the future of Training Packages. TDA provided considered comment on this paper in a response submitted in February 2004.

TDA endorsed much of what was in the Consultation Paper. We agreed with the basic points made about the importance of national industry-defined standards and nationally portable qualifications. We strongly agreed that the existing system was too narrow, too prescriptive, required capacity building and that a much more flexible approach was required to meet both industry and individual learner needs. This was very much the position that TDA had argued in earlier submissions.

The TDA submission commented in some detail on ways in which Training Packages could be improved and flexibility enhanced. We stressed the need for more emphasis on

- generic skills and underpinning knowledge
- a cross-occupational approach
- facilitation of the recognition and portability of similar cross-industry competencies
- likely future skills needs vis-a-vis current needs
- approaches that can accommodate industries experiencing rapid change, and
- approaches that can accommodate the nature of work and the requirements of particular communities.

We commented as well on the importance of involving providers in the design and review of Training Packages, having better regard to pathways, better teaching and assessment strategies, strengthening the capacity of the VET workforce to develop and deliver Training Package-based training, and the need to adjust funding models to take adequate account of the costs involved in implementing Training Packages.

But while there was much to support, we did note a fundamental concern that has long been held by TDA. Central though Training Packages are to the VET system, they are not always the most appropriate approach to meeting either businesses or individuals' vocational education and training needs. TDA is not persuaded that Training Packages are necessarily the right answer for all industries, especially new or rapidly emerging industries.

More generally, at higher qualification levels and particularly in areas where there is an emphasis on underpinning knowledge and conceptual skills, it is TDA's view that a curriculum based approach may better meet those needs. TDA considers that there should be sufficient flexibility in the system to allow for that. It is also highly questionable whether Training Package based qualifications have proved to be generally acceptable in the international market.

Other Submissions

TDA made a submission to the Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education Committee's Inquiry into Indigenous Training and Employment Outcomes.

This inquiry was broad ranging. Its terms of reference included examining

- the effect of the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) scheme on the education and long-term

ANTA covering the period 1 April 2004 to 1 March 2005.

The Action Plan that was agreed with ANTA had four objectives:

- strengthening existing and developing new strategies as a framework for collaboration and partnership between TAFE providers and ISCs;
- exploring the potential through TDA to drive new partnerships between TAFE providers and industry at local, state, national and international levels;
- providing a point of contact for ISCs to engage with TAFE Institutes about the review of Training Packages in order to inform ISC planning cycles; and
- co-ordinating and providing a point of advice and reference for broader, collective TAFE provider input to the consideration of ISC working parties, steering committees and reference groups.

Initial action focused on two main areas: developing strategies for collaboration and partnership with the Industry Skills Councils; and contributing to their work and

strengthening dialogue between TDA and key industry bodies.

Important initial steps in building relationships with the new ISCs were to nominate a TDA Member to be the main contact point/conduit for each of the Councils on strategic issues and establishing programs of meetings with the CEOs of the ISCs. The TDA nominees for each of the ISCs are

Innovation and Business	Martha Kinsman
Community Services and Health	Kevin Harris
Construction and Property Services	Barry Peddle
ElectroComms & Energy Utilities	Stephen Conway
Resources & Infrastructure	Malcolm Goff
Agrifood	Barrie Baker
Transport & Logistics	Wayne Collyer
Manufacturing	Steve Ghost
Services	Bruce Mackenzie

These representatives are all strongly committed to developing productive connections between the TAFE sector and the ISCs, working with them on issues of mutual interest and contributing to their agenda.

In several cases the TDA representative is being supported by another TDA member whose Institute has particular knowledge and expertise in the sector. In all cases, the TDA

notwithstanding the reluctance to date of government to give VET a higher priority.

Charter on Indigenous Vocational Education and Training

As an association representing Australia's TAFE Institutes, TDA is committed to taking a leading role in Indigenous education and training and to achieving the vision of ANTA's Australian Indigenous Training Advisory Council's *Partners in a Learning Culture: Strategy for Vocational Education and Training 2000-2005*.

TDA, with financial support from ANTA, is undertaking a national project to develop a Charter for Indigenous Education and Training to which all TDA Members and other VET providers will be invited to subscribe. The Charter is intended to be in the form of a template which VET providers would then use as a basis, or model, for developing a unique Charter for their own organisation which would reflect the needs and circumstances of their local Indigenous community. Institutions which sign up to the Charter would be expected to develop action plans and report on progress in achieving these.

A second part of the project is the development and publicising of best practice case studies or

exemplars. It is expected that these will provide a guide and be of assistance to other providers interested in following similar paths.

Following extensive discussions with AITAC and DEST, the Charter project was formally initiated in late 2004.

As a first step, a Stakeholders Forum was held in Canberra on 14 December. This meeting discussed the key issues to be addressed in the Charter, the key outcomes which might leverage change and suggested some changes which might be incorporated in the draft Charter. The participants included elders/representatives from some indigenous communities, AITAC, DEST, the Federation of Independent Aboriginal Education Providers, the Australian Council of Private Education and Training, Group Training Australia, and Adult Learning Australia, as well as TDA.

Work will continue on the project in 2005.

Service Agreement with ANTA

Following the development of new industry advisory arrangements, ANTA raised with TDA the possibility of a contract for the provision of services by TDA, with the objective of facilitating dialogue between training practitioners and the Industry Skills Councils and forging strong links and partnerships between training providers and industry bodies, especially the ISCs. TDA agreed to enter into a Services Agreement with

employment outcomes of Indigenous People;

- the appropriateness of the current framework for the funding and delivery of VET to meet the requirements of Indigenous communities and to prepare Indigenous people for employment;
- the effectiveness of competency-based training models to deliver an appropriate level or mix of skills necessary for employment;
- the effectiveness of government initiatives to engage more Indigenous people in training and to encourage higher level skill acquisition; and
- models for engaging industry and Indigenous communities in partnerships to develop long-term employment opportunities for Indigenous people.

TDA's submission pointed to deficiencies in the CDEP program and ways in which it should be re-focused; the need to review current funding models with a view to establishing agreed benchmarks for adequate resourcing of VET delivery for Indigenous students, actions that should be taken to improve the

relevance of competency-based training for Indigenous students, and made some recommendations for initiatives to be taken by the government to encourage the engagement of more Indigenous people in training including the development of strong partnership approaches.

We also made a submission to the Productivity Commission commenting on its Discussion Draft on the Review of National Competition Policy Arrangements. This submission focused particularly on three sets of issues arising from the Discussion Draft: the capability of the current VET system to meet Australia's skill needs; User Choice; and the interface between universities and the VET sector. We pointed to a number of areas where improvements were needed in the current system including resourcing.

There were also many other areas where we contributed to the development of policy thinking or participated in reviews or evaluations of current programs. For example TDA participated in the following:

- ANTA consultations on the draft Action Plan for the National Strategy for VET;
- ANTA's Review of the Australian Training Awards;
- DEST consultations on the Fee-Help Guidelines;
- consultations on a DEST commissioned project on the Quality of Structured

- Workplace Learning for VET in Schools;
- the evaluation of the ESOS Act;
- consultations in relations to a DEST project on the development of an Employability Skills Framework;
- DEST consultations on the branding and positioning of VET;
- FLAG consultations on the draft Australian Flexible Learning Framework 2005-2007;
- NCVER consultations on research priorities for 2005;
- an ANTA Roundtable on International Education; and
- DEST consultations on Foundation Studies programs.

Communicating TDA Views - Shaping Public Opinion

Although education issues are often at the centre of public debate, the focus has been almost entirely on schools and universities. In view of the relatively low profile of TAFE in the political arena and the lack of informed media commentary in the past, the TDA Strategic Plan for 2004 accorded a high priority to developing a stronger media presence with the objective of highlighting the contribution TAFE

and vocational education and training makes to the economy and to the community and the difficulties and challenges that the TAFE sector faces.

A key message was the need for a much greater national investment in skills development generally if Australia's future skill needs are to be met and the importance of a comprehensive approach to vocational education and training. While we drew attention to the challenges posed by skills shortages and the need to put more emphasis on apprenticeships in the traditional trades, we also underlined the need to provide properly for Australia's longer term skill needs generally and ensure that our national VET system is capable of providing skills rich, high value training for all sectors of the economy.

This was reflected in media releases, articles and opinion pieces that were placed in the media over the year. TDA was approached much more frequently than before by the metropolitan press for comment and TDA representatives, particularly the Chair, participated in a number of interviews and panels both on radio and television over the course of the year.

Funding for VET

The adequacy of public funding for VET continues to be an issue of great concern for TDA.

As noted in last year's Annual Report, it had been our hope that the new ANTA Agreement that was expected to be reached for the triennium 2004-

2006 would provide some augmentation for funding for VET and especially the hard-pressed TAFE sector. In the event, no agreement was reached and funding provided by the Australian Government for 2004 stayed at 2003 levels. This meant that funding actually declined in real terms because of a decision by the Australian Government not to index the 2003 growth funds.

Early in the year TDA conveyed its deep disappointment and concern at the failure by the Australian, State and Territory Governments to reach a new agreement and urged Minister Nelson to reopen the discussions with the States and Territories with a view to resolving differences and allowing much needed funding to flow to the TAFE sector. We pointed out that additional funding is urgently needed for increased places to cope with growing demand, as well as for improving the quality of delivery, modernising equipment and better student support services.

Unfortunately no further progress was made during the year towards a new funding agreement.

A position paper on *Funding for TAFE* was developed and released in August 2004 as part of the set of papers supporting the policy statement *Investing in Australia's*

Future: Essential Strategies to Meet the Skills Challenge. This presented a strong case for better funding for TAFE. It drew attention to the importance of investing in TAFE and the urgency of the situation. It pointed out that the publicly funded VET system receives much less funding than either the school sector or universities and that TAFE's share of the education dollar has fallen in recent years. It pointed out that total government funding had failed to keep pace with the growth in demand for VET and that as a result funding per annual curriculum hour is now very much less than it was in 1997 and that in real terms there had been an average fall of 4% per annum.

The paper documented trends in both Australian Government and State Government expenditure, noting the decline in real terms and fall in share of the Australian Government expenditure. It also analysed future needs and recommended a plan of action, including a commitment by the Australian Government to provide additional growth funding of at least 5% a year under a new funding agreement.

The recommendations remain relevant, especially given the critical importance of lifting skill levels both in increasing productivity and in increasing labour force participation, and the social as well as the economic benefits of investing in education and training. This will continue to be an important message for TDA to promote,