

ANNUAL REPORT 2009

TAFE DIRECTORS AUSTRALIA



TAFE Directors Australia Inc.

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ABOUT US

TAFE Directors Australia (TDA) is the peak national body representing Australia's 59 public TAFE institutes, university TAFE divisions, and the Australia-Pacific Technical College (APTC), providing a national voice for the public vocational education and training (VET) sector.

Australia's TAFE institute network is the largest and most diverse tertiary education sector in Australia with more than 1300 campuses located across Central Business Districts (CBD), suburban, regional and remote locations, with many institutes offering further services through the Asia-Pacific and other offshore regions.

The core business of TDA is supporting our member institutes and leading the advocacy for quality skills in Australia.

Our Purpose is to:

- advance vocational education policy in Australia
- support policy development for improved outcomes for students – domestic and international
- lead the advocacy on funding
- provide member services for Tuition Assurance to facilitate institutes' Vocational Education and Training (VET) FEE-HELP registration

- position TAFE institutes as the major training brand delivering skills in Australia.

VISION

To drive quality in TAFE vocational education and training, and show leadership in sector policy and value-added member services.

MISSION

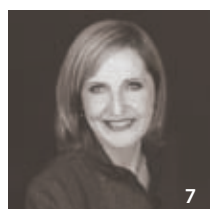
TDA will support TAFE institutes in the development, recognition and resourcing of those institutes as the recognised leaders in quality vocational education and training.

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NATIONAL BOARD



- 1 D Daly
- 2 B Mackenzie
- 3 W Collyer
- 4 A Devine
- 5 Dr C Adrian
- 6 S Conway
- 7 P Christie
- 8 S Ghost
- 9 K Harris
- 10 B McLennan
- 11 V Simmons
- 12 C Sherrin
- 13 D Zoellner

Executive

Deb Daly, Chair, Chief Executive Officer, Gold Coast Institute of TAFE (QLD)

Bruce Mackenzie, Deputy Chair, Chief Executive, Holmesglen Institute of TAFE (VIC)

Wayne Collyer, Deputy Chair, Managing Director, Polytechnic West (WA) (Formerly Swan TAFE)

Members

Colin Adrian, CEO, Canberra Institute of Technology (ACT)

Stephen Conway, Managing Director, TAFE SA – Adelaide South (SA)

Pam Christie, Institute Director, TAFE NSW – Sydney Institute (NSW)

Aaron Devine, Director of Vocational Education and Training, Charles Darwin University, TAFE Division (NT) (until May 2009)

Steve Ghost, Managing Director, SkillsTech Australia (until October 2009)

Kevin Harris, Director, TAFE NSW – Northern Sydney Institute (NSW)

Belinda McLennan, CEO, Tasmanian Polytechnic (TAS)

Virginia Simmons, Director and CEO, Chisholm Institute of TAFE (VIC)

Craig Sherrin, Institute Director and CEO, Southbank Institute of Technology (QLD)*

Don Zoellner, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Community and Access, Charles Darwin University (NT)**

Note

* Craig Sherrin replaced Steve Ghost, Managing Director, SkillsTech Australia

** Don Zoellner replaced Aaron Devine, Director of Vocational Education and Training, Charles Darwin University, TAFE Division

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

TAFE as a national system responded to a series of structural crises which emerged in the Australian education system during 2009. While these were domestic in nature, their origin stemmed from the crisis for many international students in Australia, and TAFE Directors Australia (TDA) played a significant role in the aftermath.

The Global Financial Crisis from late 2008 caused a series of repercussions into 2009. At a domestic level, the impact was most severe with Australian businesses cutting apprenticeship training. This prompted several Federal, State and Territory government responses, however apprenticeship commencement numbers in some states were cut by 25%, and this highlighted the inflexible structure applying to apprenticeships, unlike in parts of Europe and North America.

Equally alarming was the impact to international students studying in Australia. The financial crisis impacted private Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), with many suffering complete financial collapse. The impact was enormous: thousands of international students, especially those inbound students from India and China which have maintained interest in studying courses

for skilled migration, were badly affected. Many students' families were threatened with extensive financial losses, and for students, their courses were disrupted or completely discontinued.

Many of our TAFE institutes rallied to accept transfer enrolment requests – often without clarity on fees. TDA made a special appearance before the Senate Inquiry into the Welfare of International Students, to advocate that not only were de-registrations needed in the aftermath for such RTOs, but that restructuring of the tertiary system was essential.

I was delighted that under the leadership of the incoming Chair of Universities Australia (UA), Professor Peter Coaldrake, Vice-Chancellor of Queensland University of Technology, TDA reached agreement to work with UA on the domestic future and regulatory arrangements of tertiary education. Professor Coaldrake committed to a Keynote Address at the TDA 2009 Annual Conference in Queensland, and new work will continue into 2010.

Throughout this high focus on policy, TDA pushed ahead with our mission to strategically support TAFE institutes with improved member services. With members'

support at the 2008 Annual General Meeting, hosted by Victoria University, TDA continued its Tuition Assurance services for institutes with competitively priced Australian-based insurance, and looks to add a restricted non-TAFE membership category for quality higher education registered institutions in future years.

The Global Financial Crisis adversely influenced TDA in 2009. The impact was limited to revenues flowing to TDA from projects, required to be pushed back to 2010. This caused an overall loss for the financial year. However, these contracted projects have been confirmed for 2010, and a substantial return to surplus is budgeted for 2010 and into the immediate years ahead.

The TDA National Secretariat relocated to Sydney in August, and the Board is currently reviewing accommodation requirements and investment opportunities which may support the asset base of TDA as a peak national body.

I wish to thank our deputy chairs, Bruce Mackenzie (Holmesglen, VIC), and Wayne Collyer (Polytechnic West, WA). I also pay tribute to my TDA Board colleagues, including those who retired or stepped down during

the year: Aaron Devine (Charles Darwin University TAFE, NT), Steve Ghost (SkillsTech Australia, QLD), and Dr Colin Adrian (Canberra Institute of Technology, ACT). Without their untiring support and input to strategy, the development of TDA would not have been possible.

Thank you to the Secretariat staff, to Martin Riordan as CEO and Pam Caven as Director Policy and Strategic Engagement. We farewell, with gratitude, Rebecca Biazos, the Director International Engagement, and welcome Peter Holden, formerly a senior executive with DET International NSW. We much appreciate your dedicated work and success in taking forward operations through a challenging year.



DEB DALY

Chair – TAFE Directors Australia

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT



The policy highlight of TAFE Directors Australia (TDA) in 2009 was the initiation of a vision about tertiary policy in the post-Bradley

environment. This policy was developed as part of a new collaboration between TDA and Universities Australia (UA). Already the results have been promising with successful contacts established in universities and TAFE institutes to create better outcomes for students through courses and articulation.

TDA's advocacy at a high level delivered much-needed funding measures for TAFE institutes after the Global Financial Crisis including continued access to the Educational Investment Fund and a special sustainability funding round. TDA members were further rewarded: the Federal Budget 2009 provided a dedicated \$400M capital funding for TAFE institutes from the Rudd Government's Stimulus Package.

A dividend was received as a result of our establishing in 2007-08 the TAFE Tuition Assurance Scheme. This revenue boost came from increased membership continuing through 2009 and earlier successful negotiations for a special initiation premium

cover to December. TDA members voted at our 2008 Annual General Meeting to further widen allowance for the TDA Tuition Assurance Scheme for selected non-TAFE Higher Education Providers. The success of TDA operating tuition assurance has added to member services and to traditional core revenues of the Association which have contributed to satisfactory responses from members and financial reserves now established.

Despite these measures, TDA recorded a financial loss of \$16,001 in 2009. This deficit resulted from non-budgeted issues: timing of two contract projects signed in 2009 but accrued for operations to begin in 2010, accrual treatment of Export Market Development Grants (EMDG) reimbursements into 2010, and delays in regulatory authorities' reimbursements on tuition assurance stamp duty. This result masked the underlying financial strength of TDA and its reserves. The National Secretariat, now relocated to Sydney, has wider capability to better service members across domestic and international VET policy. The accrual issues however will add to the budgeted surplus for 2010 and contribute significantly to TDA's member reserves.

The appointment of Walter Turnbull as TDA auditors provided a timely assessment of risk management across operations.

Recommendations relating to the outsourced payroll and leave protocols were noted and into 2010 will be adopted, following referral to the Finance and Audit Committee.

The 2009 TDA National Conference, held in September on the Gold Coast, was hosted by our Chair, Deb Daly. The event drew a near record number of delegates who nominated the event as one of our most successful. Sponsorship support contributed to a strong result for the Conference making this annual event, especially its professional development workshops, a premier executive drawcard across Australia and the region for TAFE directors and VET executives.

TAFE and university educators, senior representatives who attended from the Federal and Queensland governments, and councillors from the Gold Coast Council appreciated the welcome message by video link from the Deputy Prime Minister. Representatives from the Indian High Commission congratulated TAFE institutes on their reputation amid the serious turmoil caused to international students by private colleges closing courses.

Two policy areas require special mention:

DEEWR commissioned TDA and the Australian College of Educators (ACE) to conduct research on successful models of alternative school

pathways and their relationship with skills development. This followed a special initiative by TDA in 2008 to host a National Forum on Youth Engagement and Skills, in Hobart. The commissioned research is expected to be completed by Q2 2010, and results published at that time.

Australian Education International commissioned TDA to conduct special research into the international student experience with enrolments in TAFE institutes. Additional research was also commissioned with private colleges. Our research was conducted across more than 20 TAFE institutes and preliminary results show that international students enrolled in TAFE recorded some of the highest levels of student satisfaction – a wonderful testament to TAFE institute teachers and support personnel and their college environments.

TDA was proud to be invited to attend the National Green Skills Summit in November 2009. The summit, held in Melbourne, was called by the Deputy Prime Minister and was designed to map Green Skills pathways and their link with future green issues related to Australian training.

OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

LEADERSHIP AND POLICY

As the leading voice of Australia's public training providers, this section relates to TDA's strategic directions and identifies our priority activities in 2009. TDA represents 58 TAFE institutes nationally that deliver 1.6 million student contact hours, the major delivery of accredited national training. TAFE institutes deliver training and education across the spectrum of the Australian Qualifications Framework including senior secondary school certificates, vocational certificates, diplomas, advanced diplomas, associate degrees, bachelor degrees and post graduate qualifications. These qualifications are delivered in a range of contexts – institutional, workplace and online. They are delivered in partnership with a variety of national and international organisations, including schools, colleges, universities, enterprises and community organisations. TDA members have a strong interest in the health of the national qualifications framework.

The Review of Higher Education – The Bradley Review

As mentioned in the 2008 Annual Report, TDA welcomed the *Review of Australian Higher Education*, led by Emeritus Professor Denise Bradley AC. It was seen as a timely acknowledgment of the need for reform in tertiary education, a sector that is of vital



*Emeritus Professor
Denise Bradley AC*

importance to the productivity of the Australian economy, the community and to the success of Australia's third largest export industry. The long anticipated publication of the Review

in December 2008 provided TDA with opportunities to respond (www.tda.edu.au/cb_pages/submissions.php).

TDA incorporated the views of its members in its response to the Review, 'Three Pillars – the Key to the Quality of an Expanded Australian Tertiary Sector' in March 2009. TDA argued that TAFE Institutes, as public providers of VET, are well positioned to make a significant contribution to the achievement of national participation targets identified in the Review. The Review, however, in its examination of the 'broad based tertiary education system' did not adequately consider or describe the special role of the TAFE public provider in increasing workforce participation or the breadth and complexity of the training sector.

The TDA response was organised around the six key characteristics of an effective tertiary education and training system identified by Bradley. These characteristics and brief excerpts from TDA's submission were:

Bradley Tertiary Characteristic 1: the equal value given to both VET and higher education, reflecting the importance of their different roles in the development of skills and knowledge and their contributions to our economy and society.

TDA supports the idea of a tertiary sector with universities and TAFE institutes having "equal value" and yet distinct missions. However, this contention may not be so straightforward if the ambiguity between 'tertiary' and 'VET' is not resolved...

Bradley Tertiary Characteristic 2: the recognition that institutions may have a primary mission in one sector, but should still be able to offer qualifications in the other sector as under current arrangements.

The Bradley Review uses the term 'entitlement' to refer to a student's right of choice of provider as the primary means of allocating government supported higher education places. This proposal would appear to create a more competitive, high quality and flexible system.

Bradley Tertiary Characteristic 3: a shared and coordinated information base and approach to anticipating future labour market needs, industry needs and demographic needs.

TDA is concerned that the role of industry in matters of identification of skill needs, curriculum, assessment and quality assurance is not acknowledged. TDA is of the view that there should be a separate agency for the provision of advice to the Government and that it would be inappropriate for the proposed national regulatory body to 'play a coordinating role' (Bradley 2009, p. 190).

Bradley Tertiary Characteristic 4: a capacity for the whole system to provide integrated responses to workforce needs for industries and enterprises, including those in specific localities and communities...

TDA is of the view that TAFE institutes are well placed, especially in rural and regional areas to contribute to raising participation of disadvantaged students. TDA argues that what is required for higher education and training provision in remote and regional areas is flexibility rather than a 'one size fits all' such as a national regional university.

OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Bradley Tertiary Characteristic 5: an efficient regulatory and accountability framework.

TDA supports continuous improvement of the arrangements for the accreditation and quality assurance of the tertiary sector with the recognition that universities and TAFE institutes do have distinct and complementary missions...TDA's major concern in this regard would be that quality of VET programs is not diluted via a federal system – a risk that is critical given the number of VET providers operating in Australia and the great disparity between the size and scope of operations of those providers.

Bradley Tertiary Characteristic 6: clearer and stronger pathways between the sectors in both directions.

TDA is of the view that greater social mobility is achieved through education programs having multiple entry points and transfer arrangements... VET has a set of national qualifications, in contrast to universities with their individual qualifications... TAFE, operating at a lower cost than universities, may well offer a more realistic range of appropriate courses for disadvantaged students than universities...A sensible approach could be to streamline. That is, groups of universities could establish equivalence across similar industry courses to facilitate TAFE institutes making credit transfer arrangements with a group of universities rather

than individual arrangements. This streamlining would need to be facilitated by financial incentives/levers.

While the focus of the Bradley Review was on structural relationships between the sectors, TDA argued for the removal of the ambiguity in the report about the meaning of the terms 'tertiary education' and 'VET' and recommended far more consistent use of these terms in conjunction with 'higher education'. In addition, TDA argued for a common understanding of the elements required to ensure quality and how this relates to contestability and social inclusion.

For the Bradley Review to be successful there would need to be a set of outcomes, particularly for TAFE institutes as public providers of VET, that are consistent with the TDA three pillars model of contestability, quality and social inclusion.

Towards a tertiary education sector – a joint project by TAFE Directors Australia (TDA) and Universities Australia (UA)

The Bradley Review's vision for Australia (*Review of Australian Higher Education*, www.deewr.gov.au/highereducation/review) was to invest and restructure to achieve a world class competitive tertiary education sector.



The Hon. Julia Gillard MP, Deputy Prime Minister addressing the Big Skills Conference

The Australian Government's 'Education Revolution' policy included commitment towards higher educational attainment levels for Australians – across post-secondary higher education (HE) and VET qualifications – while maintaining education as a major export earner and attractive educational destination internationally. While the concept of a tertiary sector has been widely used, there has been a lack of clarity about its composition. In September 2009, TDA and Universities Australia (UA) commissioned a project to define a more cohesive national tertiary education system that

Quotes from the Deputy Prime Minister's speech at The Big Skills Conference, 2009

'A universities conference one day and a vocational education and training conference the next. Two great opportunities with the leaders of two great systems of education, equal in value, driven by separate missions but with a common purpose of preparing Australia for a new age of human capital development... Two systems, one shared vision: a stronger and fairer Australia'
(Deputy Prime Minister Gillard, 5 March 2009).

'In a globalised, knowledge economy, skills are no longer state-specific...The type, quality and availability of skills are all now a national concern'
(Deputy Prime Minister Gillard, 5 March 2009).

'My message today is: how we can turn VET from a system that has served Australia so well in the past – to a pathway that can serve us even better in the future. VET is the vital ingredient that can spark a whole new tertiary landscape for Australia'
(Deputy Prime Minister Gillard, 5 March 2009).

OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

augmented the connections between the VET and HE sectors. The joint TDA/UA project was informed by expectations of a tertiary focus which the Hon. Julia Gillard MP, Deputy Prime Minister, articulated in a speech to The Big Skills Conference early in 2009:

This is not about bolting on new policies to an already complex system. It is about fundamentally rethinking separate systems and institutions to create better connected learning for millions of individual students (5 March 2009).

A primary aim of the joint project was to develop 'a robust conceptualisation of tertiary education that reflects factors such as institutional history and profile, and qualifications offered'. In addition, the joint project was designed to identify how our two organisations could support the attainment of the participation targets proposed in the Bradley Review and endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG).

TDA and UA worked collaboratively during 2009 to consider various positions in order to provide advice to the Deputy Prime Minister in early 2010.

Strategic engagement

Strategic engagement in the national training system was a key priority in TDA's 2008-09 strategic plan. Internally, over its twelve-year

history, the Association has developed strong links with individual TAFE institute directors and staff. Externally, TDA has established good working relationships with the eleven Industry Skills Councils (ISCs), key national employer associations, government bodies and a range of other provider/VET professional bodies at a domestic level. Aligned with our strategic plan, and with quality as our priority, we have extended this engagement with international benchmarking to mentor TAFE institutes and the wider VET marketplace. Additionally, TDA was active in 2009 in its involvement in the policy arena, as evidenced for example, in its participation on key national policy bodies and its response to government enquiries (see matrix of TDA representatives on ISCs and Government bodies in 2009).

Other important initiatives included working in partnership with a range of industry associations, for example, Group Training Australia, the Australian Industry Group, the Minerals Council of Australia, insurance and IT industries, to gain employer perspectives on the extent to which training policy and practices met their needs, and with the Australian Education Union (AEU) which invited TDA to participate in its 'National TAFE Day', to highlight the need for increased investment in Australia's public vocational education network.

TDA responded to invitations from ISCs to nominate members to represent the Association on a number of Industry Reference Groups across a wide range of industry areas including childcare; education; security care attendants, oral health and medical imaging.

TDA members continued to contribute to new developments in Training Packages and to the development of Environmental Scans by ISCs. As well, TDA took up an invitation to become a shareholder in Innovation & Business Skills Australia (IBSA) as part of their new governance model, and in that capacity, attended the IBSA 2009 Annual General Meeting.

TDA provided 'a voice' for its 59 members by inviting their responses to government enquiries and consultations. Their input was a valuable part of TDA's responses and submissions. These included responses to the Bradley Review of Australian Higher Education; the Australian Qualifications Framework Council's (AQFC) 'Strengthening the AQF: an architecture for Australia's qualifications'; the National Quality Council (NQC) project, 'Training Products for the 21st century'; and the DEEWR Review of the National Training Awards. TDA's input to these and other submissions is available at www.tda.edu.au.

TDA organised formal and informal briefings with the Chair, House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training, and supported the Committee's report on student work issues with educational and general media.

QUALITY AND INNOVATION

Green Skills

Senior representatives of key stakeholder organisations, including TDA, were called together as a Working Group in September 2009 to discuss the high level principles needed to progress a National Green Skills Agreement. The Agreement is part of the Prime Minister's Clean Sustainable Skills Package announced at the end of July 2009, which commits to 50,000 green jobs and

Sarah Jones, Clean Energy Council; Dr Garry McDonald, Centre for Sustainability, Swinburne University of Technology (TAFE Division); Deputy Prime Minister; Linda Brown, Swinburne University of Technology (TAFE Division)



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training opportunities over the next four years. The proposed Agreement will result in:

- national standards of sustainability practice and teaching in vocational training
- the re-writing of Training Packages to include sustainability principles and competencies
- the up-skilling of VET instructors and teachers to deliver sustainability skills.

TDA was also well represented at the Green Skills Forum in October, hosted by the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Climate Change and Water, the Hon. Penny Wong MP. The work on the Implementation Agreement is ongoing.

National Quality Council (NQC)

The National Quality Council (NQC) consists of representatives from several areas of education and training. The TDA representative is one of the two provider representatives, the other is a nominee of the Australian Council of Private Education and Training (ACPET). Others members include four industry representatives, an Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) representative, three National Senior Officials Committee (NSOC) members, a representative from the Commonwealth Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) and two equity representatives.

During 2009, the NQC changed its operations from using Standing Committees to support the work of the Council to establishing Action Groups of limited duration and with very specific terms of reference. TDA continued its strong involvement in these new arrangements, using a network of endorsed representatives to maximise attendance and participation. This representation is shown in Figure 1 below.

Because all meetings take place in Victoria, there is a predominance of Victorian representatives on the NQC and its committees. This is agreed to be the most cost-effective and efficient approach.

The terms of reference to each of the Action Groups were as follows:

- National Consistency – facilitate full implementation of the Quality Indicators for registered training organisations (RTOs) by the end of 2010; identify and implement Quality Indicators for registering bodies; address findings of the formative evaluation of the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) (undertaken by KPMG in 2008); consider reports from registering bodies on continuous improvement of the AQTF.
- Quality of Assessment – conduct a strategic industry audit of the Training and Assessment Training Package; review what constitutes and contributes to quality assessment and identifies key issues impacting on quality assessment; analyse

assessment resources, identifying gaps and develop a strategy for addressing the gaps; report on alternative forms of workplace recognition including viability, key features and infrastructure required to support a national system for recognition of workplace training; report on good practice models/strategies for moderation of assessment.

- Framework Implementation (Joint NQC and Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Steering Committee) – carry out a national consultation to determine any changes necessary to the definition and design of units of competency, Training Packages, VET qualifications, accredited courses, credit systems and the recognition arrangements within and between systems, and develop a policy framework to improve the flexibility and responsiveness of the VET system.
- International VET – research the nature and extent of off-shore delivery of VET by RTOs; report on the effectiveness of the AQTF in managing quality issues associated with delivery to international students in Australia; and report on the feasibility of allowing international providers to register as Australian RTOs and deliver Australian qualifications.

Figure 1: National Quality Council – TDA representation

| | |
|---|---|
| National Quality Council, Chair: | Virginia Simmons, Director and CEO, Chisholm Institute of TAFE (VIC) |
| National Quality Council Action Groups | |
| National Consistency | Deb Daly, CEO, Gold Coast Institute of TAFE (QLD) |
| Quality of Assessment | Allan Ballagh, Director, TAFE RMIT University (VIC) |
| Framework Implementation | Allan Ballagh, Director, TAFE RMIT University (VIC) |
| International VET | Virginia Simmons, CEO, Chisholm Institute of TAFE (VIC) Bruce Mackenzie, CEO, Holmesglen Institute of TAFE (VIC) |
| Skills for Sustainability | Virginia Simmons, Director and CEO, Chisholm Institute of TAFE (VIC) |

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- Skills for Sustainability – conduct a ‘stocktake’ of units and qualifications incorporating sustainability skills, include the identification of gaps and recommendations for development; identification of standards for voluntary certification of RTOs relating to sustainability or ‘green’ skills; and provide a progress report to the 12 June 2009 meeting of Ministers.

The announcement by the Deputy Prime Minister of the establishment of the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) and the National VET Regulator is likely to affect the NQC. TDA is monitoring developments in this regard.

TDA Issues Papers

During 2009, the TDA Board developed policy papers on a range of issues which were used to inform TDA submissions, correspondence and media comment. (See images of Issues Papers to the right.)

Submissions made and publications released are available on TDA's website, www.tda.edu.au

TDA 2009 Conference

‘Skills for Australia’s emergence from the Global Financial Crisis’ was the title of TAFE Directors Australia’s 2009 National Conference, held on the Gold Coast in September 2009.



Deb Daly, Chair TDA

The Conference was designed around two key themes: positioning TAFE to meet the challenges of the global marketplace and one tertiary sector – implications for domestic and international markets. Over one hundred and fifty delegates attended, including directors and senior management from the member institutes, and representatives from other government and industry stakeholders. Delegates heard keynote presentations from three international experts in vocational education and training and from Australian industry and government experts.

The Conference, covering both domestic and international perspectives, provided a stimulating blend of activities for delegates – presentations, facilitated sessions, networking



Don Zoellner, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Community and Access, Charles Darwin University and Adrian McComb, Executive Officer, Council of Private Higher Education

events, even a graffiti wall for on-the-fly comments and questions.

TDA published an Occasional Paper which brought together the presentations of the keynote speakers and the panellists. This Occasional Paper was the fifth in a series of Papers published to ensure that discussion of strategic issues for the TAFE sector reached a wider audience.

INTERNATIONALISATION

Throughout 2009, the focus on international education was dominated by private college closures, the safety of international students and the effectiveness of existing regulations



OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

and their enforcement. This resulted in a significant number of enquiries and reviews at both a state and national level, including the Baird Review into the ESOS Act and a Senate Inquiry into the Welfare of International Students.

TDA made several representations and submissions to these reviews and enquiries, emphasising the quality of our provision and the strong emphasis on the welfare and integration of international students into the TAFE and local communities.

This key role in consultations specifically related to the international education sector included formal responses to the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act amendments; the Baird Review of the ESOS Act; the Review of Migration occupations in Demand List (MODL); the Government Industry Stakeholder Consultations; the COAG working group on the National International Student Strategy. On several occasions, consultations about international education issues were held with senior DEEWR personnel.

China Education Association for International Exchange (CEAIE)

Following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between TDA and the China Education Association for International Exchange (CEAIE) in 2008, TDA was invited to

submit a proposal for the management and delivery of a VET program for up to 48 college directors from the top 100 vocational colleges in China. The proposed four-week program was approved by the CEAIE and originally scheduled for delivery in November 2009. After discussion, the commencement of the program was re-scheduled for March 2010.

China Bicentennial Scholarship (BECAS Chile) program

In 2009, TDA and its partner institutes from across Australia developed a comprehensive marketing and promotions strategy including details of 78 confirmed and validated courses to be offered through the Chile Bicentennial Scholarship (BECAS Chile) program. Additional work was completed on preparing the formal agreement and the program's official launch was re-scheduled for early 2010, with a first intake of students due in the second half of 2010.

Australian TAFE International Network (ATIN)

The Australian TAFE International Network (ATIN) is a subcommittee of the TDA Board. The network comprises representatives from each State and Territory, nominated by their respective TDA Board members.

In 2009, ATIN met five times including a special closed session at the International Education

Association of Australia (IEAA) conference in October. Members provided detailed accounts of the impact of private college closures on their institutes and also provided input for the various national and state enquiries, reviews and taskforces into international education.

TDA delegation to the United Kingdom

A seven-member delegation led by Wayne Collyer, Deputy Chair of TDA and Managing Director of Polytechnic West (WA), travelled to the United Kingdom (UK) in November 2009 for a two-week mission. The purpose of the mission was to review best practice and current issues facing UK colleges in strategic locations and regions. The colleges and organisations were selected as examples of institutions delivering entrepreneurial apprenticeship training, as secondary academies and as real skills champions for vocational education and training in England and Scotland. The delegates also attended the UK's Association of Colleges 14th Annual Conference in Birmingham.

TDA recognises that missions such as these allow Australian TAFE institutes to benchmark against overseas colleges to develop sustainable and long term partnerships and to profile the Australian TAFE system as world class. A collection of papers from the delegates



Delegates visit Barnfield College

will be published as a TDA Occasional Paper in 2010 to ensure that their observations, insights and learning can be shared by a wider audience.

Two degrees Fahrenheit in the morning; about to travel from Durham to Edinburgh



OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

International education under review

Unprecedented numbers of reviews were held and taskforces established at both state and national levels in 2009 as a result of concerns about international student safety and the collapse of a number of private colleges.

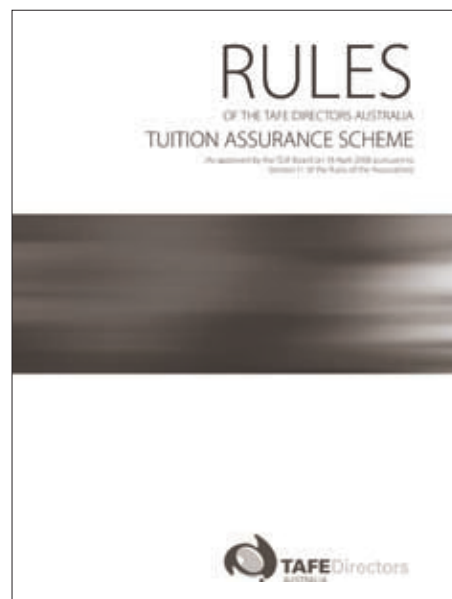
MEMBER SERVICES

The National Secretariat provides a range of services for its members in addition to its advocacy role. These services include the management of a Tuition Assurance Scheme (TAS) which enables TAFE institutes to offer fee help for students enrolled in a range of VET and higher education courses.

The Secretariat also produces a weekly email newsletter and maintains a comprehensive website which includes an archive of all newsletters, submissions, policy documents and press releases (www.tda.edu.au).

Tuition Assurance Scheme (TAS)

The TDA Tuition Assurance Scheme (TAS), established in July 2008, continued to grow during 2009. Established to provide tuition assurance cover for TAFE institutes wishing to obtain access for their students to the Federal Government's FEE-HELP student load scheme, the TDA TAS had 22 members as at December 2009.



The TAS provides cover for nominated higher education courses and VET programs delivered on a fee-for-service basis by the TAS members. The cover is to provide for a student relocation service and/or repayment of tuition fees paid in advance to students affected by provider closure or failure of the provider to deliver courses. For the cover to be provided, the TAS requires activation on instruction by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). There was no activation in 2008 or 2009. The membership fees received are used to pay the associated

insurance premium and TDA administration costs, with the balance placed in the Accumulation Fund, a contingency reserve for TDA use in the unlikely event of a DEEWR activation of the TAS.

In 2009, the Annual General Meeting approved a special resolution to alter the Association's rules to enable the TDA TAS to admit certain select non-TAFE institutes to membership, should this be desired. The TDA Board approved consequential amendments to the TAS rules and these were submitted to DEEWR for approval. DEEWR stayed consideration pending TDA confirmation of insurance cover for an expanded TAS membership.

The major problem in 2009 was the difficulty in securing renewal of insurance cover for the current scheme, given the turmoil in the insurance industry resulting from the worldwide financial crisis. Renewal of insurance cover for 2010 was finally obtained in December 2009, applicable to all current TAFE institute members. Cover in the event of non-TAFE institutes being admitted to the TDA TAS remained under negotiation.

The TAS is administered by a sub-committee of the TDA Board.

Rural and regional TDA members

In August 2009, TDA made a submission to a Senate Committee enquiry into *Rural and regional access to secondary and tertiary education opportunities*. The submission was based on information provided by TDA members from across all states and the Northern Territory and expressed strong support for a greater federal government focus on the needs of students in regional, rural and remote communities.

TDA's submission included a number of recommendations, for example, the need for additional funding for basic skills and 'second chance' education in TAFE, further reform of the youth allowance provisions, improved training opportunities with more realistic funding levels for young job seekers in rural and remote communities, and more definitive funding guidelines linking TAFE and university provision within each regional catchment area. A copy of TDA's submission can be accessed at www.tda.edu.au/cb_pages/submissions.php.

In September, a group of TDA regional members, led by TDA Chair, Deb Daly, provided further information on TAFE's roles in regional and rural education when they appeared before the Senate Committee during a public hearing at Tweed Heads, NSW.

OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS

Newsletter

TDA continues to engage actively with a wide range of stakeholders through its various communications channels. The weekly newsletter is the main vehicle for bringing VET stakeholders up to date with relevant and timely industry information. In the past year, the number of subscribers has grown to a record 900 across the breadth of the VET sector.

Regular media releases, briefings and interviews with key journalists have ensured that TDA's views on relevant industry, public policy and social issues pertaining to VET are reflected in both industry-specific and mainstream media. Over the past year, the volume and quality of this coverage has underlined the role and influence of TDA in helping to shape this agenda.

DEVELOPMENT AND WELFARE OF TAFE STAFF, STUDENTS AND GRADUATES

Recognising that improving career guidance will be vital in the era of student demand driven education places, TDA will continue to work collaboratively with a range of players, including representatives from states and territories, TAFE institutes, universities and the schools sector to identify good practice in



career services and gaps. This focus by TAFE Directors on careers has been one of three key outcomes of the 2008 National Forum on the Engagement of Youth and Skills (Hobart, April 2008), which was a joint initiative of TDA and the Australian College of Educators (ACE).

Enhancing the retention of young people to Year 12, especially though vocational skills

TDA and the ACE were successful in gaining support from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations to conduct a project, *Enhancing the retention of young people to Year 12, especially though vocational skills*.



Pam Caven
Director, Policy and Stakeholder
Engagement

TDA and ACE determined that the COAG decision and achievement of the objectives of the Youth Attainment and Transitions National Partnership required even greater understanding

of those models of schooling and training that succeeded in retaining young people in education and training to improve their transition from school directly to work or to further study and then work.

The focus of the TDA/ACE research project was a range of models in secondary schools Trade Training Centres in Schools in collaboration with TAFE institutes, and in vocational colleges in TAFE institutes. An important consideration was that these institutions have demonstrated flexibility in their approach, and success in retaining young people in education and training with the provision of clear and recognised pathways into employment and further education and training. The project is due for completion in 2010.

Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA) Roundtable – Supporting student choice through careers guidance

In Melbourne, on 10 August 2009, TDA along with the Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA) convened a joint roundtable on supporting student choice through careers guidance. Facilitated by Peter Noonan, the roundtable was attended by 21 participants, representing DEEWR, Skills Australia, the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), TAFE institutes, school principals, industry, the indigenous community, CICA and TDA.

Participants identified strategies to build on the success of the day and included:

- a brief background paper developed by Peter Noonan and commissioned by TDA & CICA
- linking the outcomes of the roundtable to the COAG participation and productivity agenda
- a wider invitational forum which would include other service providers such as employment service providers.

OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

NCVER researchers

TDA has been an enthusiastic supporter of the NCVER Communities of Practice Scholarship program in 2009. The program is designed to boost the skills of emerging research scholars in vocational education and training providers. TDA is a member of the steering committee for the program and in addition, participates on the selection panel to assess the successful scholarship applicants. TDA promotes the program through its media outlets.

Mick Young Oration

TDA continued its support of the Mick Young Scholarship Trust and in November 2009, organised the Mick Young Oration and Parliamentary Dinner in Parliament House, Canberra. The Federal Treasurer, the Hon. Wayne Swan MP delivered the 2009 Mick Young Oration, with the Oration and Dinner well supported by Members and Senators of Parliament, TDA members, ISCs, industry, the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET), Group Training Australia (GTA) and UA.



The Federal Treasurer, the Hon. Wayne Swan MP delivers the 2009 Mick Young Oration, Parliament House, Canberra November 2009



Staff from Meadowbank College (NSI TAFE) Mark Howe, Claire Buckley and Mike Horan with the Treasurer and Martin Riordan



The Treasurer congratulates two Mick Young Scholarship Trust recipients, Deirdre Thorne (left) from Brisbane North Institute of TAFE and Bettye Ford (right) from Kempsey TAFE. Both gave a moving insight into how the scholarships had transformed their lives.



TAFE NSW – Sydney Institute CEO, Pam Christie, Chair of Skills Australia, Philip Bullock, and Associate Director, Education & Training, Australian Industry Group, Megan Lilly

OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

WA Minister for Training – Address to the Board during visit to Western Australia



Left to Right: Robert Player, Deputy Director General, DETWA; Michelle Hoad, General Manager, Polytechnic West; the Hon. Peter Collier MLC, Minister for Training; Deb Daly, Chair TDA; Wayne Collyer, Managing Director, Polytechnic West; Sue Slavin, Managing Director, West Coast TAFE and Martin Riordan, CEO TDA



Left to Right: Cherrie Robson, Lecturer Hospitality, Polytechnic West; Wayne Collyer, Managing Director, Polytechnic West; Yan Hai Lee, Lecturer Hospitality, Polytechnic West and the Hon. Peter Collier MLC, Minister for Training



Polytechnic West Hospitality Staff



Left to Right: Bill Swetman, General Manager, Polytechnic West and John Scott, Managing Director, C.Y. O'Connor TAFE



Left to Right: Alison Russell, Director Educational Programs, TAFESA and Maria Amesz, Westone



Left to Right: Colin Adrian, CEO, Canberra Institute of Technology; Virginia Simmons, Director and CEO, Chisholm Institute of TAFE and Sue Slavin, Managing Director, West Coast TAFE



Left to Right: Blair Marsh, Divisional Director, Polytechnic West; Belinda MacLennan, Managing Director, Tasmanian Polytechnic and Richard Symonds, COAG Consultant



Left to Right: Jamie Mackaway, Central TAFE; Kevin Doig, Divisional Director, Polytechnic West and Michelle Hoad, General Manager, Polytechnic West

BOARD & COMMITTEES

National Board of TAFE Directors Australia Inc.

Chair

Deb Daly, Chief Executive Officer, Gold Coast
Institute of TAFE (QLD)

Deputy Chairs

Bruce Mackenzie, Chief Executive, Holmesglen
Institute of TAFE (VIC)

Wayne Collyer, Managing Director, Polytechnic
West (Formerly Swan TAFE (WA))

Members

Colin Adrian, CEO, Canberra Institute of
Technology (ACT)

Pam Christie, Institute Director, TAFE NSW –
Sydney Institute (NSW)

Stephen Conway, Managing Director, TAFE SA
– Adelaide South (SA)

Aaron Devine, Director of Vocational Education
and Training, Charles Darwin University, TAFE
Division (NT) (until May 2009)

Steve Ghost, Managing Director, SkillsTech
Australia (until October 2009)

Kevin Harris, Director, TAFE NSW – Northern
Sydney Institute (NSW)

Belinda McLennan, CEO, Tasmanian
Polytechnic (TAS)

Virginia Simmons, Director and CEO, Chisholm
Institute of TAFE (VIC)

Craig Sherrin, Institute Director and CEO,
Southbank Institute of Technology (QLD)*

Don Zoellner, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Community
and Access, Charles Darwin University (NT)**

Note

* Craig Sherrin replaced Steve Ghost,
Managing Director, SkillsTech Australia

** Don Zoellner replaced Aaron Devine,
Director of Vocational Education and Training,
Charles Darwin University, TAFE Division

Finance and Audit Committee

Bruce Mackenzie (Chair) – Deputy Chair, Chief
Executive, Holmesglen Institute (VIC)

Stephen Conway, Managing Director, TAFE SA
– Adelaide South (SA)

Kevin Harris, Director, TAFE NSW – Northern
Sydney Institute (NSW)

TDA National Secretariat Staff

Martin Riordan – Chief Executive Officer

Pam Caven – Director, Policy and Stakeholder
Engagement

Rebecca Biazos – Director, International (Until
May 2009)

Peter Holden – Director, International and
Business Development (commenced October
2009)

Penny Lawrance – Manager, Member Services
(until August 2009)

Justine Davies – Member Services (from
September 2009)

Susan Sarkis – National Secretariat Executive
Assistant (commenced October 2009)

INSTITUTE EXECUTIVES REPRESENTING TDA ON POLICY COMMITTEES

| Name | Position | Committee |
|-----------------|--|--|
| Andrew Adamson | Principal, Holmesglen Vocational College | DEEWR Consultation on VET in Schools |
| Allan Ballagh | Director, RMIT University | Framework Implementation Action Group National Quality Council (NQC) Quality of Assessments Action Group |
| Foonghar Chong | A/Director of Education, Community Services, TAFE NSW – Western Sydney Institute | National Early Childhood Roundtable |
| Angela Hutson | Chief Executive Officer, East Gippsland Institute of TAFE | L H Martin Institute |
| Bruce Mackenzie | Chief Executive, Holmesglen Institute of TAFE | International VET Action Group |
| Kaye O'Hara | Deputy Chief Executive Academic, Canberra Institute of Technology | House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training Enquiries |
| Jennifer Oliver | Senior Director, Education and Training, Box Hill Institute | Australian Qualifications Framework Council (AQFC) Credit Transfer Policy Framework Committee |
| Louise Palmer | Swinburne University of Technology (TAFE Division) | Innovation & Business Skills Australia (IBSA) National Project Reference Group – Review of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment |
| Win Scott | Chief Executive, Sunraysia Institute of TAFE | NCVER National VET Research and Evaluation Program Selection Panel |
| Craig Sherrin | Institute Director, Southbank Institute of Technology | Australian TAFE International Network (ATIN) |
| Jackie Wenner | Director, CIT Vocational College, Canberra Institute of Technology | Centrelink National Student Services Partnership Group |
| Rhys Williams | Manager, International Box Hill Institute of TAFE | Council on Australia Latin American Relations |
| Julie Zappa | Executive Director, Creative Industries, Central TAFE | Education Sector Advisory Committee, Innovation Business Skills Association |

