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Abstract

This chapter looks at the development and current rendition of TAFE across Australia. The development is divided into four historical periods. The first period is one where aspects of European Technical Education are introduced and established across the country. The second period is associated with a federal government inquiry into Technical and Further Education (TAFE) that culminates with the two volume report being tabled in the federal Parliament in 1974, (ACOTAFE 1974). This is often referred to as the Kangan Review after the Chairman of the committee. This review laid the foundation and in using the acronym saw the formal appearance of TAFE as a label for a sector of Australian education. This review defined the sector then allocated federal funding. The third period is associated with the National Training Reform Agenda which saw a national umbrella placed over the sector and the emphasis shift to that of

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providing vocational education and training aimed at achieving labour market and productivity outcomes. The fourth and current period in TAFE's development is one of adherence to neoliberal agendas and earmarked in this chapter as an age of mutual responsibility. In this period the focus of TAFE has further sharpened around the use of taxpayers funds to provide vocational education and training that is designed to satisfy the needs of employers and current labour market requirements.

Keywords

Kangan Review · National Training Reform Agenda · Private providers · Technical and Further Education (TAFE) · Vocational education and Training (VET)

Introduction

This chapter draws on a selection of historical and contemporary literature to provide an introduction and overview of TAFE in Australia (Bowman and McKenna 2016; Department of Employment 2016; National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) 2016a, b, c, d; Zoellner 2016; Rushbrook 1995, 2001, 2004; Goozee 2001). TAFE is an acronym that stands for Technical and Further Education. Australian TAFE Institutes are similar in form, function, and mission to Community Colleges in other countries around the world. TAFE offers access, equity, and lifelong learning through the provision of post-compulsory education and training programs such as access to 2-year diploma courses that provide an exit point from study, and/or articulate into an undergraduate degree with credit (Harbour 2015; Wheelahan 2004). Programs are offered to learners of all ages giving access to continuing post-school education and training through a gamut of offerings and pathways including short cycle higher education (Wheelahan 2004). This chapter reviews the emergence and development of TAFE Institutes across Australia. These developments are presented as four distinct historical stages.

The first stage reviews the rise of technical education across Australia. Technical education in Australia was influenced and adapted from innovations and practices occurring in other parts of the world, particularly the United Kingdom. These early Technical Colleges offered classes and programs in Applied Science, Engineering, Arts, and in the trades. These programs spanned from preparation and entry level through to education as para-professions. The requirement to complete a university degree is considered mandatory and stands as a defining criterion for a profession. Technical education stands alongside and in contrast to universities and covers the rest.

The second stage in the advent of TAFE occurs through the Review into Technical and Further Education chaired and lead by Myer Kangan in 1974. This federal Review marks the beginning of TAFE and the appearance of the acronym. The Kangan Review provided TAFE with a vision, and its mission. The Kangan Review saw TAFE as addressing the technical and further education needs of the individual

learner, the community, and employers (Rushbrook 2004; Goozee 2001). Working under the direction of the Whitlam labor government, the Kangan Review saw a willingness to address the issue of providing federal funding into this sector for what was essentially working class education. Federal funding was provided to complement that of the individual states and territories despite the Australian constitution designating jurisdiction for education to be the responsibility of the individual states and territories.

The third stage in the Australian story of TAFE is the implementation of the National Training Reform Agenda (NTRA). This began in the late 1980s and early 1990s and as the name implies saw a raft of national reforms. Among these were the introduction of competency-based training and the opening up of training as a demand driven training market (Anderson 2014; Brown and Rushbrook 1995; Brown 1994). Up until this time TAFE was the public and major provider of technical, vocational, and further education across Australia. During this stage the Further Education component of TAFE lost much of its public funding and if it was offered, it was done so under short time funding, or as fee for service. TAFE was left to focus on vocational education and training and was the provider that offered open access to the public. It received its funding from the commonwealth and the various states or territory and it began to provide, nationally accredited, vocational education and training. This public provision stood alongside enterprise-specific workplace-based training that was used to upskill internal labor markets.

The fourth stage in the development of TAFE in Australia is as the main public provider of highly systematized Vocational Education and Training (VET) within the National Training System (NTS). A major reform of the NTS is an entitlement to training. This entitlement is offered to all Australian citizens for training up to and including Certificate 3 level (equivalent to trade level). Under the influence of a neoliberal policy agenda, (Avis 2016; Toner 2016; Harvey 2007), and the expanding training market (Anderson 2014; Wheelahan 2013), TAFE remains the major public provider of technical and vocational education and training, but recently it has lost market share to relatively new Private Providers, and even, to a small group of other community providers.

There are numerous complexities and tensions within the historical development of TAFE. One of the complexities to emerge is around the dynamic and fluid mixture of funding that comes from the states and territories as per the Australian constitution on the one hand, but with substantial complementary federal funding on the other. This tension continues to play out as a jurisdictional issue with questions around who leads and directs the priorities of TAFE across Australia, and who pays. There is also a tension around the use of standards as a means of ensuring quality. This feeds into the juggling of how providers, and the system, retain the flexibility and differences to be responsive to local needs in different regions and states across the country while simultaneously balancing the need for providing nationally consistent training with comparable outcomes. A final and somewhat different tension is that the system is predicated on a belief in a basic human capital theory (Becker 1993), yet where is the voice of the students as one of the major stakeholders and an end user of this system (Zoellner 2016).

The Four Historical Periods That Have Formed TAFE in Australia

Pre-TAFE and the Rise of State-Based Technical Education

Initial provision of technical education in Australia began in the nineteenth century with the introduction of Mechanics Institutes, Working Men's Colleges, along with some regionally located Schools of Mines (Goozee 2001). Offering classes and courses in art, mechanics and trade training from apprenticeships to diplomas demonstrated the breadth and depth of provision that is still apparent in many TAFEs today. As adult-orientated technical education developed and spread across the country, it remained under the jurisdiction of eight different states and territories. Some Technical education institutions such as those located in the state of New South Wales originally had a Board of Technical Education which provided some unity across the state (Goozee 2001). While in other states development was very different with provision in states such as Victoria and South Australia occurring mostly through individual standalone colleges with some central supports.

Technical education in Australia emerged as an institution-based model of mostly vocational learning that offered an alternative to learning on the job. It arose in parallel with manufacturing, factories, and changing technologies prominent in the Industrial Exhibitions across Europe like those seen at the Great Exhibition held at Crystal Palace in 1851 and later in Melbourne, in 1880. But Technical education was also a more inclusive form of education, giving access to a new cohort of learners who until this time had limited experience of education. Following the same pattern, Working Men's colleges were established in Sheffield and London and with just a few years' lag time were then taken up in Sydney in 1878 and Melbourne in 1887 (Goozee 2001).

The first goldfields opened in outback New South Wales and inland Victoria in 1851 some 3 years after the Californian gold rush. This brought large populations of immigrants to Australia seeking to make their fortunes. This had the effect of transforming the Australia economy from its beginnings as a British penal colony to one that offered opportunity to many. Initially the gold rush caused skill shortages across the country as whole families moved to the goldfields but gradually this gave way as the influx of new comers caused increased demand for goods and services, and industries began to grow (Blainey 2014). Immigration emerged as the main response to the shortage of skills, with training and technical education as the secondary strategy (Scofield 1994).

In 1869, the state of Victoria established a Technological Commission which had Technical education among its responsibilities. Some 16 Technical Institutes were established in Victoria between 1870 and 1890. These earliest forms of Technical education emerged with a number of School of Mines opening in the areas adjacent to the goldfields, though at this stage it was sometime after the initial rushes and more to support the skill needs of the local population and emerging industries. The Ballarat School of Mines opened in 1870 (Perry 1984), Bendigo in 1873 (Cusack 1973), and Geelong in 1887 (Long 1987). In some cases, the original and early

buildings of these Institutes are part of today's TAFE institutes that still occupy these sites. Significantly, these institutes in Victoria stood alone as autonomous institutions with their own independent Boards and governance while the forerunners of TAFE in the adjacent state of New South Wales formed more of a network of colleges as a state-based system.

Technical Colleges at Hobart and Launceston in Tasmania were established in 1888 some 5 years after a Royal Commission into Technical Education. In Queensland, the Brisbane Technical College along with the School of Arts started in 1882 and in South Australia the Schools of Mines and Industry was established in 1889. The courses that these institutes offered were aligned to the needs of the local communities and included: trades such as, Plumbing, Printing, Carpentry, and Shoemaking; to Diploma programs offered in fields of Engineering, Mining, and Chemistry. Significantly, Drawing held a specific place in technical education with its significance as a language of technology.

Awareness of changing technology was at the forefront for governments as they sought to keep pace with changing work practices and an increasing scale of production. Industry was expanding and the two decades of the 1880s and 1890s were a time where factories and mass production became prominent. In 1897 an international conference was held that focused on technical education. European systems of technical education in France, Germany, and Russia were considered far superior to those of England and Australia. For example, Victor Della Vos, a Russian engineer located in Moscow had been developing his systematic approach to training which utilized a mixture of authentic, simulated workshop and classroom-based training (Bennett 1937).

The first years of the new twentieth century saw Victoria hold a number of Royal Commissions and reforms were instigated in an effort to lift the effectiveness of technical education. In Queensland and Tasmania, the institutes changed from independent technical schools to government institutions. Sydney Technical College was also subject to reforms offering programs in Engineering, non-trade science, Applied Art, and Women's industries (Goozee 2001). Some oscillation occurred in the debate around the depth and breadth of learning within apprenticeships. Some employers wanted only training that directly aligned to the work at the workplace where the apprentice was employed, while others such as unions argued for a broader conceptualization, of learning the whole trade. This is a debate that still continues into the present (Brown 2015). Some employers took advantage of off the job technical education and released their apprentices on full pay to attend trade school for one day each week (Scofield 1994).

As soldiers returned from World War I, there was an influx of Commonwealth funds to support these returned servicemen gain technical and trade skills. Additional federal funding ensured that many technical education facilities were upgraded. Once again in the 1940s, technical education was variously used as a means of, aiding the war effort, recovering from the war, training return servicemen, minimizing the effects of recession, and assisting structural change. Around this time, Technical education colleges reviewed and upgraded their programs and these remained virtually unchanged up until the 1970s.

The postwar years saw the population rise sharply due to migration. This era was a time of high and continuous economic growth. Industry and commerce expanded, as did standards of livings and achievement of education qualifications. In 1954, the Wright Report concluded that technical education and apprenticeship training were underfunded, yet still the Menzies government refused to provide any recurrent federal funding (Rushbrook 2001; Wright 1954). Menzies argued that his government was unable to fund technical education because the Australian constitution gave responsibility for education to the states. However, this claim was considered hollow by many as his government was already providing significant federal funding to the universities. This tension around who pays for technical education was further sharpened as the commonwealth had the ability to raise taxes, but no inclination to fund Technical education. Meanwhile the states and territories had the expenditure responsibilities for education – but less ability to raise the taxes to pay for it.

Complexities arose around governance of the technical education colleges. Some were autonomous and others networked across the state. No one approach or model prevailed. Likewise, jurisdictional tensions appeared around issues of federal or state governance and sources of recurrent funding. Innovation tended to come from England and be adapted, while skill shortages were first addressed by increasing immigration and only secondly through providing training.

TAFE Begins with Kangan

In 1972, Whitlam was elected as Prime Minister, bringing the conservative years of postwar government to an end. The Whitlam government was active in social reform and set its sights on improving educational outcomes across Australia, particularly through the inclusion of the socially disadvantaged. In January 1973, the TAFE Teachers Association of Australia (TAFETAA) urged the Federal government to hold a national inquiry into technical education. Subsequently, a delegation met with the then new Minister for Education, Kim Beasley. He took the idea to Clyde Cameron, the Minister for the allied portfolio of Labour and Immigration. In April 1973, Beasley announced the inquiry into Technical education in Australia and Cameron who saw political possibilities in the idea suggested that the Deputy Secretary of his portfolio, Myer Kangan, chair the inquiry (Rushbrook 2004). By necessity, the terms of reference were wide ranging as the task involved blanketing a diverse array of provisions loosely labeled as technical education. ACOTAFE (the Australian Committee of Technical and Further Education) was established to support this process (Goozee 2001).

Beasley argued that Technical education and the people that it aimed to serve were having their post-school education and training needs ignored by governments. Beasley addressed ACOTAFE and argued that technical education was the Cinderella of the education sectors that had been left behind and it needed to be funded so the princess could emerge and take her rightful place. Accordingly, the terms of reference for the inquiry included identifying priorities, and ascertaining much needed funding. The findings of the review were to have a balanced development

of TAFE across Australia, giving consideration of overall manpower policies and requirements, the current and future needs of industry, community attitudes, and optimum use of resources (Rushbrook 2004).

In April, 1974 the two-volume report was given to the minister, a week later it was tabled in the federal parliament. This report was the first to use the TAFE acronym and to offer a definition and vision for TAFE which it described as “all organised and sustained programs designed to communicate vocationally orientated knowledge and to develop the individual’s understandings and skills and it includes what is usually known as adult education” (ACOTAFE 1974, v). As Goozee (2001) explains, more than defining the sector, this report offered TAFE an identity, a philosophy, and it presented TAFE as a national sector of education.

This landmark report was able to build upon the government’s social justice agenda and make this the platform for the provision of Technical and Further Education in Australia. TAFE was to be used to redress social imbalances (Hawke and Sweet 1983). TAFE reflected the needs of the individual with an aim to develop their abilities to their best advantage (ACOTAFE 1974). The major recommendations were that more people needed to have access to Technical and Further education, and in the 3-year period of the labor government, participation in this sector increased by nearly 60%. Interestingly, some 20 years later, in 2004, 12%, or one in eight of the population between 15 and 65, were participating in this sector of education. In the 7-year period of 1975–1982, TAFE became the largest sector of education, female participation significantly increased, and it was drawing its students from all social groups in proportions consistent with their representation in total society.

The facilities where TAFE education took place were often found to be outdated and recommendations were made for their upgrade. Many received considerable federal funding and instigated major overhauls. Unfortunately, the progressive momentum that were occurring in this sector was not to last as the Labor government faced a double dissolution and were re-elected with a decreased majority. As a result, funding was substantially reduced on many of their initiatives in this sector. In 1975, the conservative Fraser government came to power intent on making funding cuts and reduced federal outlay in the area from 9% to 7%. However, Fraser did carry through on some of the report’s recommendations. Prime Minister Fraser had previously served as Minister of Education in the earlier coalition government and saw the connection between Technical education and economic development. He subsequently retained some sympathy for and understanding of the TAFE sector.

In many ways, the 1970s were the golden era for TAFE. The federal budget of 1974 provided \$96.5 million to be spent on TAFE over the coming 2 years, this was in comparison to \$106 spent by the previous conservative governments in the 7 years from 1964 to 1971 (Schofield 1994). TAFE was defined and a national presence was established with Commonwealth funds to compliment that of the states. At the state level, much work was still needed in developing coherent directions and lines of funding. Likewise, the governance of institutions was far from homogeneous. In Victoria: there were two self-governing colleges, a number of self-governing colleges that were part of advanced institutes, technical colleges administered by the

education department, and others that were run in conjunction with technical schools.

Rushbrook (2001) explains that the Kangan review provided TAFE with a coherent philosophy encapsulated by the terms, access, equity, and lifelong learning (p. 60). Recognizing the later transition in the different approaches from Kangan to that of the National Training Reform Agenda (NTRA) has been described by Schofield (1994) as representing *A Clash of the Titans*. The Kangan reforms were derived from a belief in the rights of the individual to have access to a relevant, continuing post-school education. Federal funding was provided for much needed curriculum work and TAFE Colleges were active in designing such courses. However, this also laid the foundations for the criticism to be made of TAFE that it was not strong enough at serving the needs of industry. Instead reforms were instigated and one of the main features was to involve the implementation of a more demand driven system.

Among the tensions and complexities emerging from this second stage was the provision of federal funding for this Cinderella sector of Australian education. Some states saw this increased federal money as an opportunity for them to reduce their funding contribution to this sector. Policy initiatives of the federal government were often implemented in different ways across the different states' and territories' jurisdictions. The original TAFE vision included what had been considered general adult education. This was reflected in the Further education component of TAFE. Access to lifelong learning was being offered to a cohort of learners who in the past had been ignored. Overall participation in this sector increased rapidly as TAFE grew to become the largest of the education sectors. New facilities were built and others refurbished, some commentary appeared on the emergence of the new "Taj Mahals" of TAFE. Interestingly, the original TAFE mission put individual and community needs before those of industry. While the sector had funding reduced, the genie was out of the bottle. A once neglected sector of the Australian population had obtained access to lifelong learning. The emphasis and content of that lifelong learning however was up for debate and contested by different interests and stakeholders.

The National Training Reform Agenda (The NTRA)

A federal Labor government was re-elected after Fraser and it continued to implement numerous loosely connected national initiatives around curriculum, facilities, and funding throughout the 1980s. The National Training Reform Agenda (NTRA) was instigated around 1989. This was a suite of interacting initiatives that represented a more systematic and national approach with a move towards providing demand driven training directly aligned to the needs of industry. Under these arrangements, training was argued to empower the individual by giving them the training designed around what industries identified as useful knowledge and qualifications aligned to the needs of the job market. Industries developed plans for their workforce development and training needs. The imperative for skill formation was

justified through adherence to human capital theory (Becker 1993; Zoellner 2016). A high-profile trade mission toured Europe and released the influential report *Australia Reconstructed* (ACTU/TDC 1987). This provided much of the initial drive for the restructuring of industrial awards in the metals and engineering industries. Through its alignment to the manufacturing base in the Australian economy, this industry sector had been very powerful and formative in its influences and flow on effect to other sections of industry. It was not surprising then when these industries became the site chosen to lead the way with restructuring awards, changing work practices and alignment with accredited national training.

While there was much focus on the National Training Reform Agenda, it is important to note that no explicit agenda was formally declared. Some researchers summarized the NTRA as involving: the introduction of nationally consistent competency-based training, national recognition of competencies however attained, the development of an open training market, fair participation in vocational education and training, and an integrated entry level system (Brown and Rushbrook 1995, 21–24; Curtain 1994; Lundberg 1994).

In April 1989, John Dawkins, the Federal Minister for Employment, Education and Training, released a report, *Improving Australia's Training System*. Dawkins had taken the mantle of Minister in a new “super” portfolio of Employment, Education and Training in the re-elected Hawke government. His report mapped the federal government’s priorities in the area of VET. Among these was a call to increase the national investment in training, to improve quality, flexibility, consistency, and the coordination of training arrangements (Curtain 1994; Dawkins 1989; Employment Skills Formation Council 1992). Two special conferences were convened to try to ensure national coherence and consistency. These were attended by federal, state, and territory ministers who had the relevant responsibilities for Vocational Education, Employment and Training. This group became known as MOVEET. This was a further sign that the federal government was tackling the inconsistencies in VET that occurred from state to state. The federal government was working to develop a national VET system. MOVEET was formed from the collective of Ministers of Vocational Education, Employment and Training across the country in an attempt to gain national support and consistency.

The National Training Board (NTB) was established in 1990. It had a well-publicized charter to assist with the development and endorsement of Competency Standards. These standards became an imperative for the strategies associated with reform. Initially the standards were used to span both the industrial and educational systems. With respect to industrial relations, this occurred through the classifications system, and educationally it occurred in the VET sector as it moved to align education and qualifications in this sector to the requirements of industry. To ensure consistency across industries, the NTB established guidelines for the content, the development process, and the format of the standards. They shifted the outcome of training when they stated that the concept of competency needed to focus on what was expected of an employee in the workplace rather than within the training process. Further, they directed that competency must embody the ability to transfer and apply skills and knowledge to new situations and environments (NTB 1992, 29).

The NTB explained that they had intentionally promoted a broad concept of competency. This was further assisted by the requirements of the Competency standards to encompass task skills, task management skills, contingency management skills, and job/role environment skills. The standards also needed to relate directly to realistic workplace practices, they had to be expressed as outcomes, and made comprehensible to trainers, supervisors, and potential employers. The format for the standards comprised a Unit of Competency. This was further subdivided into Elements of Competency, Performance Criteria, Range and Variable Statements and Evidence Guides. To ensure that Competency standards were comparable across industries, the NTB developed the Australian Standards Framework (ASF).

The ASF consisted of eight levels and served to benchmark and organize occupations and job roles into a hierarchical arrangement. Of the eight levels in the ASF, Levels 1 and 2 was considered entry level. Level 1 covered work roles and programs such as basic enterprise-based induction programs. Level 2 was an all-subsuming category of semi-skilled worker that covered production workers and operators. Level 3 was considered equivalent to base trade. Employees, who had in the past completed an apprenticeship, were considered typical of this level. Level 4 in the ASF was often expressed in terms most familiar to the male dominated fields (such as the metals and engineering industry) and what those within the manufacturing sector might call a technician or an advanced trade classification. Levels 5 and 6 were considered to be the “Para-Professionals.” These typically included graduates of the VET sector in fields like Food Technology, Accountants, and Office Supervisors. ASF Levels 7 and 8 denoted the “Professions”; education for these positions typically involved completion of a university-based undergraduate degree. Educational programs that were aimed at preparing people to be professionals at ASF Levels 7 and 8 were considered to be outside the VET sector. The ASF provided a means by which occupations and industrial classifications were connected and benchmarked against each other. It was a requirement for accreditation that each VET curriculum document designated and aligned to a level of the ASF. This hierarchical skills framework was later superseded by the eight-tiered Australian Qualification Framework in 1995.

The tensions and complexities arose around the swing to serving the needs of industry. This put learners, teachers, and the community into the back seat. Vocational education and training was being systematized and the major decisions that effected the sector were being made by actors and parties outside the sector (Billett 2011). Funding for Further education was discontinued as this component of working class education was considered less important to the needs of the economy and therefore less deserving of public money. Markets were argued to present a means of ensuring efficiency in the provision of vocational education and training. Tripartite arrangements of shared governance between employers, unions, and government representatives were formalized (Employment Skills Formation Council 1992). The provision of VET continued to be open to competition beyond the publicly owned TAFE institutes. TAFE begins a new phase of mutation. It is the public and main provider of vocational education and training around the country. Learners still have access to lifelong learning at TAFE; however, most of the learning offered is

vocational education and training much like the Berufsschulen in Germany and the Further Education (FE) Colleges in Britain (Billett 2011).

Contemporary TAFE within the National Training System

The systematic national training reforms included the shift in the design of curriculum and pedagogy to competency-based training and the formal rise of the national VET system. The National Training System (NTS) focused on the provision of nationally recognized VET qualifications through the publicly funded and very loosely coupled network of TAFE Institutions across the country. This stage saw the development of a training market and the rise of VET provision being shared with for-profit Private Training providers. It was at this time that TAFE lost its umbrella meaning as an educational sector and instead was subsumed and became the public providers within the national VET sector.

All Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), public and private, tender to their state or territory government training authority offering a profile and scope of provision to provide designated programs at various qualification levels for a particular number of students. If the state or territory government views their offers as appropriately aligned to their requirements and as value for money then they will contract them to deliver their programs paying them for these services. Contemporary TAFE has come to be the public, and not for profit, provision/providers of vocational education and training (VET) occurring under the auspices of eight different state and territories systems albeit with a mixture of federal and state funding. In reality, this also means that different mixes of revenue from federal and state or territory governments are in existence. These governments use tax payer funding to purchase training from all the registered training providers of vocational education and training – public and private, across the country.

Technical education has always attempted to be relevant and responsive to the needs of industry and aimed at educating nonprofessionals. This is also the case of contemporary vocational education and training (VET). The Australian VET system is argued to be demand driven, or put another way, it trains people for the jobs that are in demand within the existing labor market. Arms of government analyze what jobs are needed, manage the development of Training Packages, and allocate training contracts accordingly. Training packages are industry and occupational specific clusters of nationally recognized competency standards that are designated at a specific qualification level (Australian Qualifications Framework 2013). They are the standards that need to be achieved by a learner in order for them to qualify for a particular credential in a particular occupation – for example, there are 28 units of competency listed for completion of a Certificate III in Hairdressing, 21 are considered core and 7 are electives.

Different providers submit bids to their various state training authorities making an offer for what they want to provide. This is where quality and consistency are important. Providers must have the staff and the appropriate facilities and equipment to provide the training. To this end, they apply for registration as a provider. This

involves providing assurances around the quality of their prospective service (the training) in order to become registered. Registered Training Organisation (RTO) status is based on the ability to provide quality programs, in appropriate facilities with trained teachers. The minimum teaching qualifications for a VET/TAFE teacher are that they have the qualification that they are teaching, a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, and currency (have worked in the industry in the past few years). RTOs are subject to external audit to ensure they are providing what they say they are providing.

Contemporary models of TAFE provision across Australia has therefore come to mean – the public provision of the national VET system that occurs through the forty or so government owned TAFE Institutes, and the six or so TAFE Divisions which are part of dual-sector universities, that operate across eight different state and territories, throughout the country. TAFE Institutes receive approximately 47% of their money from the Commonwealth, some funding is raised from fee for service activities, and the rest comes through the TAFE Institutes corresponding state or territory government (NCVER 2016a).

In recent years, the state of Victoria has been experimenting with the marketization of VET. Yet, the most recent Victorian state government was elected in part on its commitment to restore public provision and eliminate the gouging that has occurred through the extensive growth of private providers. Subsequently, Victoria has put the ‘TAFE Rescue Fund’ through its parliament as one of its budget papers (Department of Treasury and Finance 2015). As of January, 2017 Victoria’s training is being overhauled through the Skills First program. Under these arrangements, TAFE is being placed back at the center “as the engine room” for training (Department of Education and Training 2016:2). Increased marketization and the private provision of VET that has been driven by profits has also had an effect on the quality of VET. There has been a marked drop in the public confidence of private providers of VET (CEDA 2016; Simon 2016) with the rise of the “dodgy provider” tag gaining widespread recognition (Camm 2016). There are many instances of providers being audited and found to not be conforming to the standards and therefore the provisions of their training contracts. This has spread more broadly across the country. This is a general problem impacting on the quality of the outcomes and the employability of the graduates (Riordan 2016). The industry association for hairdressing, the Australian Hairdressing Council, is calling for the closing down of up to two thirds of the 131 providers of training in this industry, which they describe as turning out graduates that are unemployable at the end of their courses (Mannix 2017). Similarly, an industry review of the training of apprentice chefs found many irregularities which resulted in the cancellation of over 90 training contracts (VRQA 2015). In New South Wales, last year some 11 private providers were de-registered for noncompliance leaving some 3000 students stranded mid-course (McGhee 2016), another 18 private providers were de-registered in Victoria (Newcastle Herald 2017).

Research by Anderson (2005, 2014) into the effects of the training market in VET concluded that while choice was being expanded, there was generally a negative impact of market reforms on efficiency, responsiveness, quality, access, and equity. Subsequently there is conjecture that in some instances competitive market forces

and the profit motive have contributed to a decline in the quality of VET pedagogy and assessment. Some RTO managers suggest that there has even been an unfortunate shift by some providers to provide training programs that produce the minimum amount of evidence as needed to comply with the requirements of an external audit. The outcomes of the training are being driven by the requirements of the audit rather than by effective learning and the achievement of workplace competency. In this way, the story of publicly funded TAFE Institutes is one of quite resistance to the full impact of competitive forces so that the social and public good can continue as a feature of TAFE provision.

In the September 2016, there were 1866 training providers across Australia who received government funding. Of these, 40 or so were standalone TAFE Institutes, 13 were other government providers; 372 were community education providers such as Adult and Community Education centres, and close to 1500 were registered as private training providers (NCVER 2016b). Some universities are dual sector in that they provide both higher education and substantial vocational education and training. Moodie (2008) distinguishes single sector institutions as those which offer 97% of their teaching in one sector, mixed sector institutions which teach between 3% and 20% of their students in their smaller sector, and dual sector institutions which have substantial or more than 20% of their load in each of their vocational and higher education sections. Some of these mixed sector and dual sector institutions appear under the 13 other government providers cited throughout this chapter. Counting the dual sector provision as a TAFE provider, there is generally considered to be around 50 or so TAFE institutes, across Australia.

In 2015 the operating revenues for the government-funded VET system totaled \$9812 million of which 47%, or nearly half, came from the Australian federal government, while 34% or just over a third came from the states and territories, 11% was raised through fee for service activities, 5% from student fees and charges, and 3% from other auxiliary sources. In some instances, as federal funding increases some state governments take this as an opportunity to reduce their expenditure. However, these sources are reversed when considering capital revenue, \$94 million was provided by the states and territory governments and \$16 million (or 14.5%) came from the federal government (NCVER 2016a).

The governments are pushing to increase the levels of attainment in education and training and lift the capacity of the Australian workforce. VET and TAFE, as the public arm of VET, are directly tied to industry and the labor market. Australia has a total population of 24 million people with around 16.6 million considered to be of working age between 15 and 65 years. The current Australian workforce consists of 11.9 million people with two thirds working full time, and 54% are male. About one third are employed in rural or regional areas. Around 39% of the total workforce are aged 45 years and above and 16% are between 15 and 24. Unemployment runs at about 5.8% while the participation rate is now 65.2%. While the proportion of young people participating in full time education stands at 52% (Australian Govt, Department of Employment 2016), the unemployment rate for young people aged 15–24 is running at about 12.2% or one in eight. Of particular concern are the 11% of young people who are not in work, nor are they attending education and training.

Australians are considered to work across 19 broad industries with the four largest being, Healthcare; Retail; Construction; and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services. Collectively these employ about 40% of the total workforce. In the past 5 years, employment has grown in 15 of the 19 industries with falls in employment being experienced in Manufacturing, Agriculture, Wholesale, and Electricity, Gas, Water, and Waste services. Most women work in Healthcare and Social Assistance, Retail, and the Education and Training industry sectors. Over the past 5 years just over one in four of the new jobs have been in Healthcare and Social Assistance (27%); Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (18%); Education and Training (9%); Retail (7%); and Accommodation and Food Services (7%) industry sectors. The three industries that employ the most number of young people are Retail, Accommodation, and Food Services, and Construction.

In terms of occupations, the proportion of professionals has grown from 16% in 1990 to 23% in 2015, of these, 74% have a university qualification. Managers have increased 1% over the same time from 12% in 1990 to 13% in 2015, with 37% of managers having a university qualification. Clerical and Administrative workers have declined 4% to currently be 14% of the share of total employment. Technicians and trades people have declined 2% to 15% and laborers from 14% to 10%. Likewise, machinery operators have declined from 8% to 6%, and Sales people have decreased by 4%, of which some 56% have no post-school qualifications. Meantime Community and Personal workers have increased from 6% to 10% (Australian Govt, Department of Employment 2016).

Future jobs growth is expected to occur in the higher skilled fields and progress is being made in increasing levels of qualifications. Across the Australian workforce, 31% have a Bachelor degree or higher. Significantly this is up from 23% in 2005. Currently 32% have a Certificate 3 or higher VET qualification, this is also up from 26% in 2005. While 32% have no post-school qualification, this too is moving in the desired direction and is down from 42% 10 years ago. The remaining 5% have some other qualification. For female workers, the proportion who hold a Bachelor degree has increased from 25% to 35% and those who have no post-school qualifications fell from 43% to 35%. Employed women with a Certificate 3 or higher VET qualification rose from 20% to 27%.

In 2014, 594,000 females and 432,000 males were enrolled in universities. This trend is reversed in the VET sector with 838,000 women and 915,000 men enrolled in VET courses. Of the cohort of young people, some 727,800 people younger than 25 are enrolled in VET while some 625,700 are enrolled in university. The rate of participation in higher education for young people between 15 and 24 was just over 6% or 1 in 12, the participation rate for this age group in VET was over 11% or 1 in 9. Very importantly, of these VET participants 82% were enrolled part time (Atkinson and Stanwick 2016).

High educational attainment assists people to be successful in achieving labor market outcomes. University reforms have seen a rise in the number of young people who are participating in higher education with an increase over the past decade of 43%. While over the same time, growth in VET enrolments has grown 13%. One of the reforms of the National Training System introduced in 2012 was a training

entitlement. Under this reform every Australian of working age who does not have a Certificate 3 or above qualification is entitled to a government subsidized training place to obtain their first Certificate 3 qualification at any RTO of their choice, should they wish.

The participation rate in the labor market for those with a Bachelor's degree is 87.2% with a corresponding unemployment rate of 3.4%. While the median starting salary for university graduates is currently around \$54,000. The participation rates for Advanced Diploma/Diploma is 83.6% and for Certificate 3 and 4, it is 85.7%. The unemployment rate for those with an Advanced Diploma and Diploma is 4.1% and for Certificate 3 and 4 workers it is 4.9%. Participation in VET is being used as a strategy to fight unemployment. Unemployment for those who have left secondary school differs with the year level. For those who graduated with Year 12 unemployment is 7.7%, while for Year 11 it is 10.4% and for those with Year 10, it is 11.3%. In a similar way, graduate salaries in the VET sector differ by qualification level, those with a Certificate 3 received on average \$51,700, for the Certificate 4 it was \$63,400. Interestingly, for Diploma and Advanced Diploma average graduate salary was \$61,800 or slightly lower than for Certificate 4 graduates.

In 2015 of all VET graduates, 74% were employed within 6 months after graduation and for apprentices and trainees this rate was 84%. For those with a Certificate 3 this rate was 75%, for a Certificate 4 it was 81%, and for Diploma and an Advanced Diploma the rate employed 6 months after graduation was 79% (Department of Employment 2016). Apprenticeship enrolments have fallen in recent years yet those who do complete, experience strong employment outcomes. In terms of employment of apprentices and trainees, 2014 figures show Construction to be the largest industry employing around 77,000. Manufacturing is next employing approximately 43,000 apprentices and trainees. Accommodation and Food services employs 31,000, Administrative and support services 30,000, Healthcare and Social Assistance 26,000, Retail 23,000, and the combined Other category employs around 53,000. Some 60% of all apprentices and trainees are aged 15–24 and around 30% are female (Department of Employment 2016).

Using figures from the first 6 months of 2016, there was a total of 850,000 students enrolled in government-funded VET. This represents about 5% or 1 in 20 of the total population of working age. Of these participants in VET, around 58% of students were enrolled at TAFE institutes and other government providers (493,000), 5% at Community education providers (43,000), with 36% enrolled in Private training providers (305,000). In a state by state breakdown, 270,000 students received government-funded VET in the state of New South Wales, 243,000 in Victoria, 152,000 in Queensland, 84,000 in Western Australia, 53,000 in South Australia, 20,000 in Tasmania, 15,000 in the Northern Territory, and 12,000 in the Australian Capital Territory (NCVER 2016b).

In the period from 2010 to 2014 the percentage of VET students who attend TAFE has declined with market share falling from 73% to 57.3%. In the same period enrolments at Private RTOs has risen from 14.3% to 23.3%. In 2014, NCVER introduced its Total VET Activity (TVA) initiative which allowed them to collect data and report on all training activities regardless of funding source. This analysis

showed that there were just over 2 million TAFE students enrolled with Private RTOs (52%) and around 1 million in TAFEs (27.6%) another 800,000 (20%) were with "Others." The "Others" category consists of community providers, schools, universities, enterprise providers, and other private organizations (NCVER 2016c). In 2015, 83.4% of the 1.5 million young Australians aged 15–19 were enrolled in education and training; 56.8% or 839,300 were at school; 16% or 334,200 were in Higher education; 4.5% were undertaking apprenticeships or traineeships; and 5.9% were enrolled in VET programs (NCVER 2016c).

As a comparison for provision of each qualification level, at Certificate 1 level, the Other category (which consists of community providers, schools, universities, enterprise providers, and any other private organizations) and TAFE both provide just under 40%, with Private RTOs providing just over 20%. At the qualification level of Certificate 2, the Other category of providers holds about 40% with TAFE having 32% and Private RTOs around 25%. For Certificate 3, Private RTOs provide 44% while TAFE has 35% of the market share and the others were around 20%. For Certificate 4, Private RTOs had 50% of the market, TAFE had 35%, and the others had 15%. For Diplomas and Associate Diplomas with TAFE and Private RTOs both with 45% and the Others with 10% (NCVER 2016d).

Recently NCVER conducted a study of the enrolment figures for the three areas of plumbing, electrical, and aged care to compare TAFE enrolments with that of Private RTOs and the Other RTOs category from 2010 to 2014 (NCVER 2016d). The researchers found that program enrolments for plumbers were some 90% in TAFE in 2010 and that this declined slightly to 80% 4 years later in 2014. Private RTOs stayed constant at around 5%, while by 2014 the Private RTOs and the Other category together had about 20% share of the provision. For electrical apprentices the 2010 TAFE share was 85% and this declined to 78% while Private RTOs had 15% which remained stable over the 5 years, meantime the Other category went from 2% to 10% of market share. For the courses for carers of the aged and disabled the TAFE share declined from 60% in 2010 to just under 40% in 2014. Private RTOs in contrast have risen steadily from just over 20% in 2010 to over 40% in 2014, and the Other category has remained steady between 2010 and the 2014 with 20%.

Access and participation of equity groups is a feature of VET and of high significance to TAFE in particular (Simon 2016). Of the six main equity groups, in 2015, Indigenous Australian participation was 5.4%, (Atkinson and Stanwick 2016), of these over 70% were enrolled in TAFE (Yu and Oliver 2015); people with a disability participated at a rate of 7.7%, (Atkinson and Stanwick 2016), of these over 70% were enrolled in TAFE (Yu and Oliver 2015). For women, the rate of participation was 47.1%, while for people from a Non-English-speaking background it was 19.2%; remote and very remote location participation was 3.5%, for each of these, over 70% were enrolled in TAFE (Yu and Oliver 2015). For low socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds participation in VET was 23.1% (Atkinson and Stanwick 2016), and for those with a prior level of education at Year 11 or below, participation was 32.9%, of which around 63% were enrolled in TAFE (Yu and Oliver 2015).

Yu and Oliver (2015) in a report prepared for the Australian Education Union (AEU) conducted an extensive analysis of the effects of competition and the development of private for-profit providers into the Australian VET system. They concluded that the business model used by Private providers of VET in Australia led to an excessive capture of around 30% of public wealth going as profit to these Private providers. They reported that in Victoria just three Private providers extracted around \$18.3 million in profits from tax payers in 2013. Their analysis shows that rather than encourage competition, the entitlement reform and the development of the training market led to a decline in the average government spending per hour of VET delivery across the country from around \$16.25/student hour in 2002, to a 20% reduction down to \$12.80/student hour in 2012. VET is getting more for less. Further from 2008 to 2012, government funding to non-TAFE providers increased nationally from around \$490 million to \$1,400 million, a rise of 285%. Of this, 42% of the increase occurred in just one state – Victoria, where the government paid Private RTOs \$137.6 million in 2008, rising to nearly \$800 million or by 580% in just 4 years later. In 2012, government funding to Private RTOs in the state of Victoria exceeded 50% of the total national expenditure (Yu and Oliver 2015).

TAFE Institutes are a part of the public state infrastructure that produces outcomes for the public good. These Institutes, their teachers, and their support staff have traditionally developed practices that are supportive and effective for a very broad range of students including those within the six designated equity groups. TAFE Institutes provide extensive library and study facilities. Some provide access to subsidized childcare, counselling, and welfare advice. They teach a very broad range of programs including those that use expensive equipment, digital technologies, and consumables, those which require specialized facilities and learning environments, along with those that can be run using just the most basic of classrooms. TAFEs don't pick and choose what is most profitable to provide, but rather they provide the spectrum of what is needed. Finally, the cost of the TAFE courses that is incurred by the students is consistent and transparent according to pre-set fees and charges. This contrasts with some students accruing expensive hidden debts associated with their training through Private RTOs (McGhee 2016; National Audit Office 2016).

Changes and reforms in this fourth stage in the development of TAFE coincide with what Toner (2016) explains as the adoption by all parties in Australian VET to the principles of neoliberalism. He cites the four main principles of neoliberal as, (1) dramatic reduction in the scale and role of the public sector, along with the tendency to outsource training to private providers. Toner explains that rather than reducing government spending what this actually does is redirect government spending to private enterprise. As TAFE institutes, are then providing less training, they require less government employees. In this way, the public sector is downsized. (2) Managing better by employing more managers, likewise generic managerial skills are brought in to replace those of educational managers and professional teachers who get promoted into management roles. (3) Shifting power to employers – the interests of employers are paramount and those of the worker/citizen/learner are subordinate. Tripartite agreements and the compromises of the shared management between unions, employers, and government are replaced with the dominant voices of

employers. Industry Skill Councils which have also been the site and forum for compromise between traditional interest groups are de-funded and competency-based training is instituted as the dominant approach to curriculum and pedagogy. (4) There is a prevailing belief that the market will provide. Further, it is believed that markets will produce competition which will then produce efficiency, creative points of difference and flexibility. Toner concludes that whatever the future holds there is no option to go back.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of Australia's TAFE identifying it as going through problematic changes despite being a unifying concept. TAFE is different from state to state and even from institute to institute. With its roots in technical education TAFE found its place through the Kangan review. This review argued that individuals and community needs were important but opened the ground for the criticism that TAFE failed to adequately address the needs of industry. This was the basis of the backlash that then instigated the National Training Reform Agenda and continues as a foundation stone for the current rendition of TAFE within the National Training System. As various state and federal governments pursue and adopt the principles of neoliberalism in various ways, what remains constant is that TAFE has become the public provider of Australian Vocational Education and Training (VET). TAFEs provide a wide range of courses in a wide range of learning environments and TAFEs continue to do the heavy lifting when it comes to providing training to the equity groups. TAFE stands in contrast to Private providers in that any profits that TAFE generates have the potential to be put back into the sector.

At present TAFE Institutes receive nearly half of their recurrent money through the Commonwealth government and about a third comes from their corresponding state or territory governments. The final section of the chapter refers to the entitlement to training and education and its impact on the corresponding training market reforms. These figures show that TAFE is losing market share as Private for profit and Other providers expand. Some evidence is presented showing some of the trends occurring in the VET sector from within the state of Victoria. This state has been aggressively experimenting with the marketization of VET. However, the most recent Victorian state government was elected in part on its commitment to restore public provision and eliminate the gouging that has occurred by for-profit private providers. Some data suggests that increased marketization and the profit motive are having an effect on the quality of VET. It has been shown that competitive market forces have contributed to a 20% decline in government spending per student hour. This inevitably results in staff cuts. Some industry associations and regulating authorities are suggesting that the quality of pedagogy and assessment is deteriorating across VET with an unfortunate shift occurring to what is the minimum evidence needed to comply with the requirements of the external audit. In this way, the story of publicly funded TAFE Institutes is one of pushing back against the impact of competitive forces and resisting entanglement in a race to the bottom.

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