

---

Charles Darwin University

**Tasmanian Vocational Education and Training Policy Impacts Review**  
**A report to the Board of TasTAFE**

Zoellner, Donald

Published: 01/03/2017

*Document Version*

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

[Link to publication](#)

*Citation for published version (APA):*

Zoellner, D. (2017). *Tasmanian Vocational Education and Training Policy Impacts Review: A report to the Board of TasTAFE*. Northern Institute.

**General rights**

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal

**Take down policy**

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

# Tasmanian Vocational Education and Training Policy Impacts Review

---

A Report to the Board of TasTAFE

Don Zoellner

3/23/2017

This report provides policy analysis to the Board of TasTAFE for the preparation of submissions to the Tasmanian Government Cabinet in order to ameliorate instances where current funding model and policy settings are creating unintended consequences that inhibit increased participation in vocational learning by Tasmanians and constrains TasTAFE's capacity to best meet the Ministerial Priorities through the delivery of high quality services and training that are aligned with the needs of business and industry.

## Contents

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Contents</b>   | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>Executive Summary</b>  | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>Introduction</b>   | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>General observations</b>                                     | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>University of Tasmania</b>                                   | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>Outsourcing instead of a market</b>                          | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>Competition</b>  | <b>10</b> |
| <b>Use of the national Training System in secondary schools</b> | <b>15</b> |
| <b>Participation</b>  | <b>20</b> |
| <b>References</b>   | <b>23</b> |

## Executive Summary

In addition to a wide-ranging review of relevant documents and policies, the discussions with a TasTAFE, Tasmanian Government and other personnel repeatedly returned to five major themes that serve to limit TasTAFE's ability to meet its legislated functions:

- the University of Tasmania
- outsourcing instead of a market
- competition
- the use of the National Training System in secondary schools and
- participation.

Each of these large topics is summarised and analysed in this report based upon publically available data and, in some cases, further evaluation by TasTAFE. As an organisation, TasTAFE presents multiple faces and how any one person interprets their experiences of the institution depends very much upon the policy imperatives inherent on their own operating environment. In not wishing to join the long line of those who 'know best' about the things TasTAFE should do, this report offers the Senior Executive and Board several considerations that could productively address the (mostly) unintended consequences that are evident in the five large themes:

- how to develop a formal and positive relationship with the relevant Ministers and their agencies in the setting of vocational education and training policy in Tasmania
- where and how to reframe the pathways discussion to remove the qualifications hierarchy and re-assert the value of a TAFE qualification in its own right
- how to better understand the relationship with the University of Tasmania and delineate how both organisation's offerings can complement each other and best serve the total education and training requirements of the state
- how and when to build crucial relationships with influential industry and business groups (including non-government organisations) to promote the importance of highly skilled graduates from the vocational education and training sector; the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Council of Social Services are examples
- which programs are still being offered on the basis of being a legacy from earlier national funding and how to work with Skills Tasmania in order to better target funding arrangements that will either reaffirm or remove such legacies in an effort to redress falling participation rates
- how to better align the policies and programs of Skills Tasmania, the Department of Education and TasTAFE by replacing the deficit view of VET in Schools programs as a retention strategy and harnessing the good will that is evident in the colleges with a built-for-purpose blend of National Training System products and Australian Curriculum Framework subjects that can produce more highly skilled graduates.

# Tasmanian Vocational Education and Training Policy Impacts Review

## Introduction

### Purpose:

to provide policy analysis to the Board of TasTAFE for the preparation of submissions to the Tasmanian Government Cabinet consistent with the Board's legislated function "to advise the Minister on significant VET developments" (Government of Tasmania 2013, section 57).

### Intent:

to identify instances where current funding model and policy settings are creating unintended consequences that inhibit increased participation in vocational learning by Tasmanians and constrain TasTAFE's capacity to deliver quality services and training in line with Ministerial Priorities (Groom 2016).

### Process:

an extensive literature review of relevant policy documents and processes was carried out as well as discussions with a range of key TasTAFE personnel, Tasmanian Government officials and other relevant persons between December 2016 and March 2017.

### Report structure:

five large themes emerged from this process and each will be addressed with citations of policies and/or literature and a full set of references is provided. Because there are so many 'unintended consequences' the term is not used repeatedly, however, if a topic is mentioned it will, almost certainly, be an example.

## General observations

Tasmanians, as do Western Australians, Queenslanders and Northern Territorians, frequently compare various statistical features of their state with other jurisdictions to demonstrate some sort of 'exceptionalism', nevertheless most of the trends observed in this paper are national in scope. This suggests better policy responses might result by moving beyond the long-standing practice of focusing upon the 'but-we-are-different' style of analysis to more fully exploring how the national trends are impacting upon the state and then tailoring responses. For example, the impact of national competition policy and the work of the Productivity Commission on the vocational education and training sector are generally poorly understood, but are nevertheless highly influential.

The Productivity Commission (2016, p. 34) does not accept that the inappropriate application of competition principles was at the heart of the VET FEE-HELP debacle; rather flawed market design and poor regulation gets the blame. This is an indicator that competition policy is going to continue to impact upon the operations of the training sector. It might be a better option to make productive use of the Productivity Commission's numerous reports and base future planning on the basis of the economic and social trends they identify. For example, the national future growth of the vocational education and training sector is likely to be small when compared to health, aged care, hospitals and disability services which will

## Tasmanian Vocational Education and Training Policy Impacts Review

expand substantially due to population aging, a significant matter for Tasmania (Productivity Commission 2016, p. 53).

Also in common with the rest of the states and territories, it appears that many contemporary Tasmanian policies and activities are so-called legacies that originated with federal funding but have become the recurrent operational responsibilities of the local jurisdiction; Trade Training Centres, secondary school Registered Training Organisations, workplace literacy and school-based apprenticeships/ traineeships are examples.

Compared to most other jurisdictions, TasTAFE's role of public provider remains strong. For example, in the first year (2014) of reporting total vocational education and training activity in Australia, "Tasmania was the only state where more students attended TAFE than private providers" (National Centre for Vocational Education Research 2016g, p. 22). TasTAFE produces some very good outcomes that are detailed in numerical terms throughout this report. In addition TasTAFE graduates are happy with their time and effort spent in the organisation:

- 87.6 per cent were employed or in further study
- 89.3 per cent were satisfied with their teaching
- 90.4 per cent were satisfied with their overall training
- 82.8 per cent fully or partly achieved their main reason for doing training
- 80.3 per cent found their training was related to their current job
- 43.2 per cent were not employed before training, but employed after training
- 55.8 per cent had improved employment status after training (National Centre for Vocational Education Research 2016e).

However, TasTAFE seems to be unnecessarily constrained in achieving its full potential by a range of conflicting policies, legacy programs and over-regulation which also serve to reduce the return on investment to the people of Tasmania. These constraints are the focus of this report.

### **University of Tasmania**

As with Australia's other 'public' universities, the University of Tasmania was established by local legislation, but is predominantly funded by the Australian Government. The university increasingly operates as a sovereign corporation facilitated by changes to its legislation that have implemented "contemporary governance practices" that comply with national protocols for higher education institutions (University of Tasmania 2016a, p. 8). The independence of the university from the state government is exemplified by the now long-standing tradition of developing a partnership agreement between the two that specifies fixed targets for increased student access and attainment, economic impact, internationalisation, regional revitalisation and modernising the economy (Tasmanian Government & University of Tasmania 2015, p. 2). When compared to TasTAFE and its status as both a state government agency and a statutory authority, the University effectively determines its own future by employing its own staff (University of Tasmania 2013, pp. 3-4) and having substantial ownership of its land and buildings (University of Tasmania 2016a, p. 63).

## Tasmanian Vocational Education and Training Policy Impacts Review

Under current policy settings the University can be viewed as a net importer of funds into Tasmania as each domestic student attracts a federal government subsidy and students pay for a portion of tuition costs, research activity is funded from a variety of outside sources and the national success of the international student market for higher education is reflected in Tasmania with plans double the number by enrolling an extra 5,000 overseas students in the next five years, estimated to be worth \$400 million per year to the state (Tasmanian Government & University of Tasmania 2015, p. 2). In addition, the use of income-contingent loans by many domestic higher education students also serves to shift some of the costs of education away from public sources and onto private individuals (Keating 2004, p. 149).

On the other hand, with the exception of a much smaller 1,641 international student enrolled at TasTAFE (2016a, p. 28), the state's public provider of vocational education and training can be viewed as a net expense to the state's public purse as the Tasmanian Government funds the bulk of the costs. In purely financial terms, it is beneficial to the state's finances to support increases in higher education enrolments (and decrease diploma-level vocational education and training enrolments) as a cost-shifting exercise from the state budget to the Australian Government. One potential impact is to redirect students away from higher level vocational qualifications that are in demand by industry, but are not replicated at university level, thereby creating a labour market shortage of skilled employees.

In response to the national policy of increasing higher education participation and attainment through the 'un-capping' of undergraduate enrolments (Bradley et al. 2008), Tasmania achieved the largest expansion of undergraduate domestic student enrolments from 12,108 in 2008 to 22,640 in 2015 which represented an 85.5 per cent increase compared to a national increase of 34.7 per cent (Koshy 2016, p. 4). This massive increase in enrolments has maintained the low socioeconomic status participation rate at about 31 per cent, slightly increased the proportion of students with disability, increased Indigenous enrolments by about one-third and has demonstrated a slight downward trend in enrolling regional students (Koshy 2016, pp. 8-13). However, this rapid expansion has also resulted in the University of Tasmania producing a 42 per cent drop out rate, the highest in the nation (Aird 2016). Four year undergraduate completion rates have dropped from 50.1 per cent for the 2005-08 cohort to 42.4 per cent of the 2011-14 cohort, while six year completion rates dropped slightly from 64.5 per cent of the 2005-10 group to 62.7 per cent of the 2009-14 cohort (Department of Education and Training 2017). It is not known what happens to those who fail to complete their undergraduate studies, but this might be a group of potential students for TasTAFE as are the students from regional areas of the state that are not sharing proportionately in the increased enrolments with the University of Tasmania.

The concept of vocational education and training as a pathway has assumed a central position in policy deliberations (Council of Australian Governments 2012, p. 2) and envisages linkages with schools, employment, adult education, universities and community providers. The University has enthusiastically embraced the notion as expressed in its partnership with the state government in order to "maximise links between the University and the vocational education and training sector through physical collocation and pathway articulation" (Tasmanian Government & University of Tasmania 2015, p. 2). The provision of pathways into undergraduate programs has been used as the rationale for the introduction of Commonwealth Supported Places in the form of nine new Associate Degrees that are being offered in 2017 by the University of Tasmania. These are in addition to the eight existing

## Tasmanian Vocational Education and Training Policy Impacts Review

Bachelor of General Studies pathway disciplines that are also federally subsidised and the University College Program for year 11 and 12 college students that is offered at minimal cost to those who enrol (University of Tasmania 2016b).

As noted previously, the University of Tasmania has already grown domestic undergraduate enrolments by more than 10,000 students per year since 2005. The absolute number of students enrolled in year 12 in all schools reached a high point of 4,908 in 2010 then steadily declining to 4,594 in 2015 (Australian Council for Educational Research 2016, p. 3). Out of a potential year 12 population that reached its highest number of 6832 in 2011, reducing to 6719 in 2005, the number of students actually achieving a university admissions ranking has fallen to its lowest level (2202 students) over the five years from 2011 to 2015 (Office of Tasmanian Assessment 2016, p. 21). The University's intention to use the pathway of associate degrees to graduate another 10,000 students in the next ten years seems highly ambitious given the massive growth in undergraduate domestic enrolments over the past decade and the shrinking year 12 cohort. It seems quite plausible that the introduction of the associate degrees is more likely to reduce undergraduate enrolments if strong efforts are made to reduce the massive drop-out rate through "more flexible modes of learning" (Aird 2016).

One consequence of the uncritical acceptance of the current pathways discussion is the devaluing of the importance and value of a VET qualification as worthwhile outcome in its own right. For example, the current *Ministerial Priorities for Training and Workforce Development 2016* (Groom 2016, p. 11) lists a series of expectations of a "new approach" to assist jobseekers facing barriers – none of which include successfully obtaining a formally recognised vocational education and training qualification. This type of omission is evident at the national level where total funding for VET is going backwards compared to higher education and schooling; dropping to levels below those experienced in 2005 (O'Connell & Torii 2016, p. 3).

Further devaluation is facilitated by a lack of policy clarity on how the vocational education and training system can contribute to the development of a "highly innovative and adaptive economy and society" (Noonan 2016, p. viii). Positioning the sector's qualifications as a pathway (a track that someone can walk along) rather than as a personal and public good, devalues its outcomes and serves to diminish TasTAFE's attractiveness as a true alternative to higher education and as a valued preparation for employment in many fields. TasTAFE could mobilise its strong linkages with industry to make a joint approach to decision-makers in order to achieve policy outcomes that clarify the inherent value of gaining nationally recognised certificates and diplomas.

The University of Tasmania has received extensive media exposure over proposals to relocate some operations in Burnie, Launceston and Hobart (for example, Lohberger 2017). This duplication of existing facilities generally relies upon a combination of local council, state and federal government funding and/or the transfer of property into the University's name. Because of the increasingly corporatised operations of the University, the transfer of significant amounts of state government resources, particularly land and buildings, effectively results in the privatisation of public assets on the basis of no financial return and the loss of future options for use of these properties by the state government. These are locations where TasTAFE already has a presence and a strategic allocation of significantly



fewer state government resources to TasTAFE could produce equally significant growth in student numbers using the amenities of the city centres as those proposed by the University. A recent analysis of the public benefit from tertiary education and training infrastructure investment in New Zealand stressed the need for consideration of the entire sector's operations (i.e., vocational education and training as well as university use of their respective assets) and concluded that:

if a group of tertiary education institutions increases its market share, this can decrease the overall (average) investment effectiveness of all tertiary education institutions (Matthews 2017, p. 4).

### **Outsourcing instead of a market**

While the phrase 'training market' has been accepted and widely used, Tasmania does not have one. "Market organisations derive their principal revenues from prices charged for output sold in markets where buyers can choose what to buy as well as whether to buy" (Wolf 1993, pp. 28-29). With the Skills Development output group spending more than \$110 million annually in 2015 and 2016 (Department of State Growth 2016, p. 93), the Tasmanian Government is the largest direct buyer of training services. However it does so on a set price basis; in other words, most registered training organisations are price-takers even though the VET FEE-HELP experience demonstrated that there are few price signals available to individual students and that there are theoretically no limits on fees and charges in a truly open training market (Ross 2015).

Additionally, government regulatory activity has directly created much of the so-called demand for fee-for-service training in order to meet registration and licensing requirements. Examples of this impact on training activity include the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (the entry level qualification for trainers and assessors) which suggests that vocational education teachers comprise the second most popular occupation in training in the state on the basis of program enrolments (National Centre for Vocational Education Research 2016b). TasTAFE's internal analysis of training patterns in the fee-for-service area demonstrate the dominance of short courses that generate low revenue per student and most of which are offered in response to government regulating entry into employment. Examples include Responsible Service of Alcohol, Food Hygiene, White Card, First Aid and Cardio-pulmonary Resuscitation (Woodward, personal communication). The policy determinations of the Tasmanian Government frame the scale and scope of vocational education and training in the state either through direct purchasing or through licensing and registration requirements.

Instead of a conventionally understood market for training, the Tasmanian Government has progressively decided to replace its more than 95 per cent monopoly of the provision of vocational education and training (TAFE and Adult Education Review Committee 1997, p. iv) with a process of 'contracting out'; which requires state officials to strike a difficult balance between specification, oversight and the destructive risk of micro-managing (Keating 2004pp. 83-84). This style of 'contractualisation' used by Skills Tasmania is a rather classical form of new public management where implementation is contracted away and, with it, the responsibility for possible failure (Hill & Hupe 2002, p. 110). The move to spread the government's training spend across a greater number of providers was driven by a belief that monopolies are inherently flawed and the anticipation of \$39.1 million in payments to the

## Tasmanian Vocational Education and Training Policy Impacts Review

state from the Australian Government provided for in the National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform (Council of Australian Governments 2012, p. 27).

A key design feature of contracting out the delivery of human services is that "government should be careful not to intervene in the way in which the service is actually delivered, unless clearly necessary" (Keating 2004, p. 103). Nevertheless, this style of managing the allocation of public resources for the delivery of services remains "very much managed by the state" because "the government is able to use its power of the purse to control the market, including who has access to the service and what is required of the service provider" (Keating 2004, p. 178). In addition, the Tasmanian Government has decided to directly intervene in vocational training by having its own delivery capacity through TasTAFE, LINC and the secondary colleges' registered training organisation.

TasTAFE is the best positioned of all the state and territory public providers with 43 per cent of Tasmania's raw number students, compared to 26 per cent in the ACT or 12 per cent in Victoria (National Centre for Vocational Education Research 2016b), and with about 41 per cent, the largest 'contracted out' proportion of total vocational education and training enrolments (Woodward, personal communication). Certainly, Skills Tasmania (2016) states that the Tasmanian Government is "supporting TasTAFE to ensure a strong public provider in Tasmania's VET sector", even to the point of 'protecting' TasTAFE from severe funding cuts and a hostile policy environment that was evident in Victoria, South Australia and Queensland. This outcome gives effect to the part of the National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform (Council of Australian Governments 2012, p. 4) that enables "public providers to operate effectively in an environment of greater competition" while recognising that these providers have a number of important public good functions and responsibilities. As noted previously, balancing these competing demands is a difficult task and even slight miscalculations can produce significant unintended consequences.

Skills Tasmania and the Department of Education use various sources of funding to support the operations of two separate public training providers. The two registered training organisations respond to separate policy imperatives and answer to different ministers. Skills Tasmania (2016) does not fund vocational education and training for secondary school students (except for User Choice categories in the case of apprentices and trainees) in order to prevent 'cost-shifting' on the grounds that the Department of Education has already received federal and state funds for a full program for these students. By prioritising the prevention of inter-agency cost-shifting, it also means that students cannot be dual-enrolled with both their school and TasTAFE in state-funded programs. This forces student and parents into making 'either-or' decisions (which then also introduces the possibility dropping out of the purposely disconnected education and training programs altogether). This bureaucratic boundary riding also removes the potential for 'both-and' programs to be offered to students. It also directly contravenes the state's commitment to facilitate "more interconnected tertiary and training sectors that cross boundaries between school, adult, vocational and higher education" in the National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform (Council of Australian Governments 2012, p. 4).

TasTAFE is both a body corporate and an instrumentality of the Crown, i.e., a state government agency (Government of Tasmania 2013, section 56). The mechanism used by the state government to contract out the delivery of some vocational education and training

## Tasmanian Vocational Education and Training Policy Impacts Review

services has produced a situation where the minister with responsibility for TasTAFE has no direct control over the allocation of state funding to the organisation; this is in the hands of a second minister. Such separation creates the environment where protection against 'cost-shifting' can become a department priority impacting upon the capacity of Tasmanian residents to experience smooth transitions between school, vocational education and university studies. Another consequence of these purchasing arrangements is that resources are being directed towards having one government agency, the Department of State Growth, oversee the operations of another agency, TasTAFE. In times of budgetary stringency, this seems to be an unproductive use of public funds. As a general economic rule, "In the case of public sector contracting out, the analogous problem is that of regulatory risk. If it is necessary to subject the contractor to close regulation, it is likely that the resulting arrangement will be more costly than if the activity were directly undertaken by the relevant government agency" (Quiggin 1996, p. 177).

In addition, the steps that have been taken to implement the new public management style of 'contractualisation' by creating separation of the state's funder-purchaser-provider roles has created an excessive compliance and reporting burden on TasTAFE. As a state government agency, it is subject to the 133 separate Treasurer's Instructions (Department of Treasury and Finance 2017). In addition, TasTAFE must apply for and maintain Skills Tasmania's 'Endorsed RTO' status as well as being registered with and submit to the compliance activities of the national vocational education and training regulator, the Australian Skills Quality Authority. Furthermore, the directors on the Board of TasTAFE are expected to comply with directors' behaviours as set out in the Corporations Act (Government of Tasmania 2013, section 64). Each of these separate compliance and regulatory responsibilities comes at a cost and appear to be excessive in relation to the risks posed by TasTAFE. This heavy compliance burden serves to divert resources into non-productive activity and limits TasTAFE's capacity to meet its legislated commercial responsibilities and potential generation of additional income as a statutory authority (Department of Treasury and Finance 2016a; Government of Tasmania 2013, section 58, 1c).

Quiggin (1996, pp. 68-69) notes that adjustment costs associated with contracting out must consider both the costs of exiting as well as entry costs into service provision; these exit costs are often to do with 'sunk costs' in production technologies; in the case of TasTAFE this include staff employment conditions, land and buildings. There is no indication that the Tasmanian Government has an understanding of the costs to the provider and, consequently to government, of ceasing to deliver a particular qualification in a specific geographic region as the current funding model focuses upon the upfront costs of delivery. In a national context where the cost of entry into the market was low, resulting in too many providers, the Australian Skills Quality Authority has actively reduced the number of registered training organisations by nearly 1,000 (or 20 per cent) since 2011 and increased the cost of entry into the national training system (Robinson 2016). Careful attention needs to be paid to the costs incurred when ceasing delivery, particularly when there is an expectation that TasTAFE will act as the 'provider of last resort' and resume delivery in cases where other providers have operated for only a short period causing TasTAFE to reduce its capacity to train in specific qualifications or in regional areas. This is particularly

the case where new providers appear and it might seem 'fair' to change training organisations as a symbol of increased competition.

In spite of the intended national partnership agreement goals of "improving training participation" and "improving training accessibility" (Council of Australian Governments 2012, p. 3), the contracting out of government-funded training provision corresponded with a 12 per cent reduction of the number of Tasmanian vocational education and training students from 49,557 in 2010 to 43,756 in 2014 (National Centre for Vocational Education Research 2016g, p. 20). By the end of 2015, the number of government-funded student had declined a further 16.4 per cent to 36,600 (National Centre for Vocational Education Research 2016d, table one) while participation rates in government-funded training by Tasmanians aged over 15 had fallen from 14 per cent in 2011 to 11 per cent in 2015 (National Centre for Vocational Education Research 2016d, table two).

The purposeful introduction of an increased number of registered training organisations funded by the outsourcing of government programs has been accompanied by a net reduction in participation rates and fewer skills acquired; the exact opposite of the intentions set out in the Ministerial Priorities document (Groom 2016). The invitation to more providers to participate in a declining operating environment only serves to weaken all of the organisations and force cost-cutting and a potential reduction in standards and quality. The long-standing problems of maintaining the highest levels of outcome, i.e., the most highly skilled completers, have been amply demonstrated by the ongoing problems with the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (and its various incarnations). This certificate is the mandated entry level qualification for vocational education and training teachers, lecturers and assessors, but has been the subject of numerous examples of a 'race to the bottom' to offer it cheaply and quickly in response to procurement practices and regulatory reforms implemented by governments (Clayton 2010; Halliday Wynes & Misko 2012; Simons, Harris & Smith 2006).

The national vocational education and training regulator has responded to these declines in training standards in many of the high volume qualifications that are required by potential employees seeking to gain entry into specific labour markets. In particular, contributing factors to not renewing, cancelling or refusing a provider's registration include short course durations (e.g., security and childcare), inadequately trained staff and poor marketing practices (e.g., VET FEE-HELP) (Robinson 2016, pp. 12-14). Late last year, the English Government accepted a review's recommendation to stop using public funds to purchase training from for-profit training organisations in response to similar concerns and in an effort to increase the re-investment of tax-payer funds that have previously been allocated in order to further develop the vocational training sector (The Independent Panel on Technical Education 2016, p. 68). TasTAFE is seeking to undertake this type of re-investment in order to get a better return on public funding allocated to the sector rather than have monies siphoned out of training and into private profits.

### **Competition**

Even though a conventional market for vocational education and training services does not exist, the Tasmanian Government's procurement process has resulted in a significant reduction in TasTAFE's share of public funded training delivery over the past two decades.

## Tasmanian Vocational Education and Training Policy Impacts Review

In 1997 Tasmania, "in excess of 95 per cent of accredited training is currently provided by the institutes of TAFE and Adult Education" (TAFE and Adult Education Review Committee 1997, p. iv). By 2015, the three Tasmanian public providers (TasTAFE, LINC and schools enrolled 53 per cent of the students and 60 per cent of subject enrolments (National Centre for Vocational Education Research 2016f, pp. 12 and 19). Given the Tasmanian Government's publically stated support for TasTAFE (Groom 2016, p. 8) and the forward budget estimates (Department of Treasury and Finance 2016a), it suggests that the government may have reached a condition of policy equilibrium in balancing its obligations for increased competition (in order to gain national policy funding) against the necessity of having a contemporary public provider that understands and responds to the local training parameters.

Competition policy has been guided by the findings of the Hilmer Report (Hilmer, Rayner & Taperell 1993, p. xxi). Even though this influential report did not deal with the delivery of human services directly it did set out a number of principles, such as the structural reform of public monopolies, reducing restrictions on competition and competitive neutrality, that are still relevant a quarter of a century later. TAFE found itself caught up in these reforms as a result of a decision taken at a series of Heads of Governments and Special Premiers' Conferences (Perron 1991, 1992) that were taking steps to reform the national economy. TAFE was (and still is) considered to be an essential component when aligning industrial agreements with skills levels in the workforce and found itself subjected to the same national competition policies (NCP) as would apply to more traditional business and manufacturing areas. Tasmania has been a supporter of national competition policy:

The principal objective of NCP is to promote competition within the economy where it is considered to be in the public benefit. The underlying premise is that increased competition in a market leads to greater efficiency and productivity throughout the economy.

All jurisdictions were eligible for competition payments from the Australian Government, allowing for the sharing of anticipated benefits arising from the implementation of NCP reforms. Tasmania was highly successful in meeting its commitments under the NCP agreements. This resulted in approximately \$90.8 million in payments from the Australian Government to the State between 2001-02 and 2005-06 (Department of Treasury and Finance 2016b).

It is important to note that the policy of increased in competition faced by TasTAFE comes from the economists situated in the central agencies of Treasury and Finance and in the Department of Premier and Cabinet. Even though the Department of State Growth is the face of these policies, the decisions are being made in these other two agencies. If TasTAFE wishes to mount a strategic argument to ameliorate the resulting competitive pressure, the major mechanism is to argue public benefit with those who are making the decisions.

The public benefit aspect of NCP ensures that government, when reviewing particular reform options, take into account all government and community objectives and weigh up all the advantages and disadvantages of any measures before determining the policy to be adopted.

## Tasmanian Vocational Education and Training Policy Impacts Review

The public benefit test is satisfied where the benefit provided to society of a proposed policy outweighs the costs. Public benefit is to be distinguished from a private benefit, which is a benefit to a specific industry or sub-group of society, often at a significant cost to other sectors of society.

The factors used to determine what is in the public interest are outlined in clause 1(3) of the CPA. These considerations include:

1. laws and policies relating to ecologically sustainable development;
2. social welfare and equity, including community service obligations;
3. laws and policies relating to matters such as occupational health and safety, industrial relations, access and equity;
4. economic and regional development, including employment and investment growth;
5. the interests of consumers generally or a class of consumers;
6. the competitiveness of Australian business; and
7. the efficient allocation of resources (Department of Treasury and Finance 2016b).

Aligned with these national and principled decisions to break the monopoly of state provision, a multitude of steps were taken by creating a new term, vocational education and training, in order to differentiate and isolate the traditional TAFE colleges in the early 1990s. The Deveson Review (1990) specifically outlined the policies and mechanisms that would support an open and competitive training environment using the services of both public and private providers to assist in award re-structuring and the opening up of the Australian economy. The federal, state and territory governments created the Australian National Training Authority (1994, p. 4) to oversee the introduction of these changes into the sector with a key component being an “open and competitive training market”. The use of competitive behaviours to improve training quality and responsiveness while reducing costs has received bipartisan support ever since, although Keating (2004) believes that the national training authority failed to implement fully contestable markets due to a lack of cooperation by the large state TAFE bureaucracies. That inability only served to stimulate policy-makers to increase efforts to mandate the growth of competition in vocational education and training.

On the local scene, the Tasmanian Government explored these national priorities when the Minister, Sue Napier, MHA, established the ‘Best Review’ with its single term of reference to determine:

whether commercialisation or corporatisation of part or whole of the TAFE and Adult Education system would provide greater efficiencies and flexibility in providing quality training both to Tasmanians and to new, emerging opportunities in the national and international marketplace (TAFE and Adult Education Review Committee 1997, p. iii).

After an extensive review and consultation process the final report argued against full commercialisation as being unsuitable to Tasmania’s requirements, recommended the separation of funder/purchaser and provider roles and envisaged a future TAFE Tasmania

## Tasmanian Vocational Education and Training Policy Impacts Review

statutory authority consisting of five institutes, including one for Adult Education. The new public entities would be positioned to operate in a developing training market that would see more competition eventually emerge from private training providers that were not yet in a strong enough position to meet the state's needs through a fully contestable market (TAFE and Adult Education Review Committee 1997, pp. 127 and 136).

One further pertinent example of the interaction of competition policy and the national training system is found in the National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform (Council of Australian Governments 2012, p. 27) which stipulates that the Tasmanian Government would receive \$39.1 million for undertaking a number of reforms in the period 2012-2017, including encouraging "responsiveness in training arrangements by facilitating the operation of a more open and competitive training market" (p. 3). The outsourcing policies and procedures of Skills Tasmania have been very carefully crafted to give the appearance of, at best, a quasi-market to ensure that a TasTAFE monopoly does not re-emerge and that there is a semblance of competition for some public vocational education and training funding in the form of outsourcing of specific types of state training services.

More recently, the principles of national competition policy have been revisited in the Harper Review (Harper et al. 2015) in which the economic benefits of competition have been re-affirmed and suggestions have been made for its extension into other areas, including the delivery of human services on the basis of user choice; most of the recommendations have been accepted by the Australian Government, including the potential for making further cash payments to the states and territories that implement the proposed reforms (The Australian Government the Treasury 2015, p. 18). The competitive reforms in the vocational education sector are being held up as an example of "models of consumer choice which can lead to better outcomes for individuals and the community" (The Australian Government the Treasury 2015, p. 4). Despite the enthusiasm of Treasury economists, others are less confident that the opening of the vocational education and training market has been an unqualified success, while offering some salutary lessons:

However, due to failure of regulation, there have been some unintended consequences, primarily in the form of a number of providers exploiting the system. This has shaken the public's confidence in the viability and quality of vocational education, and in the benefits of contestable markets. Tensions also exist between public and private providers, and between the administrative and funding arrangements for the more traditional public providers (Committee for Economic Development of Australia 2016, p. 8).

From a purely economic point of view the national partnership's goal of increased efficiency through increased competition (Council of Australian Governments 2012, p. 7) has been achieved as the vocational education and training sector's real recurrent expenditure per annual hour has declined by 31.5 per cent over the past ten years from \$16.64 per hour in 2005 to \$11.40 in 2014 (Noonan 2016, p. 16). In times of severe constraints upon state government budgets, this outcome could be expected to be welcomed by the Department of Treasury and Finance. On the other hand, a number of the other intended outcomes from the *National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform* (Council of Australian Governments 2012, pp. 3-4) have not been realised as a result of increased competition, these include:

## Tasmanian Vocational Education and Training Policy Impacts Review

- a more interconnected tertiary and training sector
- assuring the quality of training outcomes and delivery
- improving participation and qualification completions and
- strengthening the capacity of all providers to deliver training and support students.

Skills Tasmania (2016) endorses about 155 registered training organisations in order to give them access to State Training Authority funding. Competitive tendering has steadily introduced more providers into an operating environment where the absolute numbers of students has steadily declined by the end of 2015 to 36,600 from nearly 50,000 in 2010 (National Centre for Vocational Education Research 2016d, table one); while participation rates in government-funded training by Tasmanians aged over 15 had decreased by 20 per cent between 2011 and 2015 (National Centre for Vocational Education Research 2016d, table two). At the national level, in spite of a 10 per cent reduction over the past several years, the Australian Skills Quality Authority believes there are still too many providers in the national training system (Robinson 2016).

Even though the nominal hourly expenditure rate for training has fallen is one indication of increased training system efficiency, it defies logic that having 155 different student management systems, nationally compliant reporting systems, quality systems, etc., contributes to greater productivity in the relatively small Tasmanian population. Such needless duplication increases the overall costs to the system and significantly reduces the advantages of economies of scale which come from large providers. In general, Simmons (2012, p. 48) found that the Tasmanian Government had a policy preference for more efficient use of centralised services and less stand-alone systems and this was a major factor in the creation of TasTAFE in order to eliminate the duplication of administrative effort enshrined in Tasmania Tomorrow. The lack of concern at the massive duplication of non-teaching services that accompanies giving such a large number of providers access to the contestable public funding is a notable policy variation. There are numerous instances, such as the introduction of reforms to increase competition in the telecommunications sector, for example, that wasted billions of dollars in needless duplication of infrastructure (Quiggin 1996, p. 123), illustrating "the point that a naïve enthusiasm for competition can produce outcomes as inefficient as those of the most ill-conceived systems of government interventions".

TasTAFE is placed at a considerable pricing disadvantage when there are cross-subsidies on the part of other interstate-based public providers, such as Wodonga TAFE, or in the case of the secondary colleges' registered training organisation which does not understand the 'true' cost of delivery (Masters et al. 2016, p. 153). In addition, there is significant inefficiency built into the current machinery of government mechanisms that has two ministers and three different government agencies operating in the vocational education and training space. Although the Simmons Review (2012, p. 11) recommended a closer alignment between funding provision and the true costs of delivery, it is clear that the Department of Education does not understand the full cost of vocational education and training delivery (Masters et al. 2016, pp. 152-154) and, likewise, it is not immediately clear what factors contribute to the criteria used by Skills Tasmania to determine how much it will pay for the delivery of particular qualifications. The lack of congruence between the three Tasmanian Government agencies in understanding and costing training delivery results in



## Tasmanian Vocational Education and Training Policy Impacts Review

continual 'tweaking' of the existing policy and process settings in order to protect against 'cost-shifting' and the dangers of reduced training quality. The continual adjustments are a root contributor to unintended consequences.

The public sector has no general bias towards low quality, e.g., the problem of 'gold-plating' with technically excellent services that are, economically, of excessively high quality while numerous studies support the view that contracting out will, on average, be associated with quality reductions (Quiggin 1996, p. 180). In competitive and privatised markets "if there is room for interpretation regarding the quality of service required, it is reasonable to assume that the minimum quality will be provided" (Quiggin 1996, p. 179). This general predisposition towards excellence and being the guardian of high training standards comes at an opportunity cost for TasTAFE as a number of potential users believe that the full cost recovery model being implemented by the largest public provider results in exorbitant fees and charges (Southern Tasmanian Catholic College Trade Training Centre 2016; Tasmanian Secondary Colleges RTO 2016).

### **Use of the National Training System in Secondary Schools**

Tasmania has demonstrated a strong commitment to school-based vocational education and training that dates back to the early 1990s and Australian Government initiatives to redesign secondary schools through the use of key elements of the National Training System in bold plans for the Australian Vocational Training Certificate System (Carmichael 1992). While the new system died a fairly rapid death, the potential to extend industry and federal influence into secondary education remained alive and well, morphing into two successive ministerial companies. The Australian Student Traineeship Foundation under Labor was replaced with the Enterprise and Career Education Foundation by the Coalition. The latter company was terminated at the same time as was the Australian National Training Authority and both of their functions were transferred to the relevant Commonwealth Department of the time.

The core programs of these various organisations that funded secondary school students to undertake nationally accredited vocational education and training qualifications in conjunction with on-the-job learning continued into the *National Partnership Agreement on Youth Attainment and Transitions* (Council of Australian Governments 2009, p. 11) as the School, Business, Community Partnership Brokers stream. In addition, Tasmania committed to maximising engagement, attainment, transitions, youth connections and national career development activities in return for payments of about \$13.3 million over the period 2009-2014 (Department of Education 2009, p. 2). Over time the generic title of VET in Schools has been the most commonly used term to describe the delivery of nationally recognised training in secondary schools.

Tasmania's first enrolment of 63 VET in Schools students in 1993 grew to 3517 in July 2002, predominantly studying at certificate I and II levels in 85 accredited courses in 20 different industry areas; in addition several school-based traineeship pilots were trialled (Bacon 2002, p. 3). VET in Schools was heavily concentrated in government schools and colleges with less than 350 Independent and Catholic school enrolments in 2002 (Bacon 2002, p. 4). The Australian National Training Authority provided the State Government with \$712,608 to encourage the uptake of nationally recognised training which was divided amongst the three school sectors; even then the matter of cost shifting was noted as "an issue for

## Tasmanian Vocational Education and Training Policy Impacts Review

consideration” (Bacon 2002, p. 7). The early Tasmanian VET in Schools programs for students in years 11 and 12 were based on several principles:

- use national industry skills/competency standards
- provide nationally recognised vocational education and training certificates
- be responsive to industry needs
- increase the number of apprentices and trainees
- each school and college was a registered training provider and
- increase participation in VET in Schools as a strategy to increase retention and secondary school completion (Bacon 2002, pp. 5-6).

In 2017, with the exception of each school being a registered training organisation, the other principles still remain the intended outcomes from VET in Schools offerings. In their submissions to the *Review of Years 9-12 in Tasmania* the two registered training organisation consortia of schools and colleges described corresponding goals and outcomes that would be expected to result from their provision of VET in Schools programs. The Tasmanian Secondary Colleges Registered Training Organisation (2016) intends to:

- have as their “core business” (p. 1) successful transition into further education, training and employment
- provide a highly sought after and regarded pathway for a large cohort of students
- retain students to years 11 and 12 to study higher level qualifications
- lead to a post-school apprenticeship or traineeship and
- to achieve the Tasmanian Certificate of Education.

Similarly, the Southern Tasmanian Catholic College Trade Training Centre (2016) expects to:

- increase retention to year 12 by engaging through VET in Schools
- increase post-school apprenticeship numbers
- increase school-aged enrolments
- increase completions
- increase post-school employment of their students.

The *Review of Years 9-12 in Tasmania* found that the VET in Schools programs delivered by government schools met national requirements, but lacked strategic direction from the Department of Education due to a lack of dedicated resourcing and recommends “the development of a future vision [for VET in Schools] and associated implementation status” (Masters et al. 2016, p. 180). The recommendations from the Simmons Review (2012, p. 8) for a single public sector provider of post-compulsory vocational education and training that would work much more closely with schools and colleges, including consideration of relinquishing registered training status and much greater use of auspicing (p. 11) has failed to materialise as noted by the most recent review which also finds that “it is noteworthy for the purposes of this Review that these ministerial priorities include no use of the word ‘school’ “ (Masters et al. 2016, p. 142). These priorities do, however, describe TasTAFE as “Tasmania’s sole public provider” (Groom 2016, p. 8). The creation of a second public provider under the control of the Department of Education has the potential to reduce the intended benefits of having a single entity because the national regulator would not have the

## Tasmanian Vocational Education and Training Policy Impacts Review

power to stop the secondary colleges' provider from adding a much wider range of qualifications to its scope of training.

The reviewers were also concerned about the ability to draw firm conclusions on the VET in Schools data describing the outcomes for secondary school students, but they did note that "it is also possible that supporters and advocates for VET for secondary students may also inadvertently diminish its weaknesses" (Masters et al. 2016, p. 159). However, if one looks at longer term trends and compares them to the stated goals and intended outcomes from offering VET in Schools programs, it appears that the reviewers' concerns were well-founded. Each of the proposed benefits from offering VET in Schools will be dealt with in turn:

### Increased retention to Year 12:

- enrolments in year 12 for all schools rose from 4324 in 2006 to a peak of 4908 in 2010 and steadily declined to 4594 in 2015 achieved by a slight gain in Catholic Schools, a small loss in Independent Schools and a loss of over 300 Year 12 enrolments in Government Schools (Australian Council for Educational Research 2016, p. 3)
- Confirmation of the drop in year 12 student numbers comes from the Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification (2016, p. 24) which reports that the total number of Australian residents enrolled in the final year of secondary school fell from 4,734 in 2011 to 4,684 in 2015
- The Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification (2016, p. 23) reports that the total number of 15-19 years old learners who undertook some VET from any provider fell from 5,591 in 2011 to 5,120 in 2015
- The Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification (2016, p. 24) also reports that the total number of Year 12 students who achieved their Tasmanian Certificate of Education rose from 2,688 in 2011 to 3,475 in 2015, but it is not clear as to how much VET in Schools contributed to that increase and given that VET in Schools student numbers are declining, by definition, it is less of a contributor.

### School participation:

- 15-19 year old school participation rates have remained relatively steady from a low of 61.2 per cent in 2010 to a high of 65 per cent in 2012 and at 62.4 per cent in 2015 (Australian Council for Educational Research 2016, p. 6)
- The total number of 15-19 year old school students decreased from 22,000 to 20,800 in the period 2011-2015 (National Centre for Vocational Education Research 2016h, table two)
- 15-19 year old VET in Schools students went from 5,400 in 2011 to 4,800 in 2015 with a 20 per cent drop between 2014 and 2015 (National Centre for Vocational Education Research 2016h, table three)
- Between the two college-based registered training organisations, they delivered vocational competencies to just over 2,400 students in 2015 (Southern Tasmanian Catholic College Trade Training Centre 2016, p. 1; Tasmanian Secondary Colleges RTO 2016, p. 1) which is about two-thirds of the number of students doing VET in Schools in 2002 (Bacon 2002, p. 3).

## Tasmanian Vocational Education and Training Policy Impacts Review

### Increased further study:

- 15-19 year olds in higher education increased from 5,100 in 2011 to 6,000 in 2015 with 95.4 per cent in Bachelor degrees in 2015 and virtually no students in associate degrees (National Centre for Vocational Education Research 2016h, tables five and six)
- Higher education enrolments of all ages in Bachelor degrees increased from 4,000 in 2011 to 5,700 in 2015, indicating about half the growth is coming from non-school leavers (National Centre for Vocational Education Research 2016h)
- 15-19 year olds in Government-funded vocational education and training dropped from 10,200 in 2011 to 6,100 following a similar trend in all age groups (National Centre for Vocational Education Research 2016h, table ten)
- The participation rate in government-funded vocational education and training courses dropped from 30.2 per cent in 2011 to 18.1 per cent in 2015 for 15-19 year olds (National Centre for Vocational Education Research 2016c, table two).

### Increased numbers of apprentices and trainees:

- 15-19 year old apprentice/trainee commencements for those not at school fell from 2,700 in 2011 to 2,000 in 2015 while school-based apprentice and trainee commencements for 15-19 year olds remained steady at about 500 annually from 2011 to 2015 (National Centre for Vocational Education Research 2016h, table seven)
- The apprentice and trainee training rate for 15-19 year olds has fallen from 5.5 per cent of employed persons in 2005 to 3.2 per cent in 2015 (National Centre for Vocational Education Research 2016c, table nine).

### Increased employment:

- Tasmanian 15-24 youth unemployment in 2009-10 stood at 9 per cent and had grown to 16.1 per cent in October 2016 (Eslake 2016, p. 29)
- The proportion of 15-19 year old apprentices and trainees of all employees in that age group has fallen from 20.4 per cent in 2005 to 13.7 per cent in 2015 (National Centre for Vocational Education Research 2016c, table ten).

VET in Schools is not increasing employment outcomes, improving the take up of apprenticeships and traineeships, leading to increased year 12 retention or to further study; in spite of the good intentions and long-standing hopes expressed by the school and college registered training organisations as their rationale using the national training system products. There are high profile examples of secondary colleges successfully using national training system products, for example, the Southern Cross Catholic Vocational College in New South Wales (O'Reilly 2016). However, the reality is that such institutions receive a lot of attention exactly because they are exceptionally rare. The reality is that such colleges seldom seem to survive a change to the founding, highly motivated leadership group.

The national training system was designed with a singular purpose - to prepare workers for a highly specified job. The job is the foundational building block for vocational education and training qualifications. The units of competency that are built into these qualifications are

## Tasmanian Vocational Education and Training Policy Impacts Review

developed by industry and include a presumption of workplace learning that is more than 'work experience'. There are national standards that are regulated at provider level and many occupations also have their own licensing and regulation which impacts upon teaching and learning. The job-specific qualifications are frequently embedded in industrial relations legislation and awards. For example, in a number of occupations VET in Schools students are actually disadvantaged by completing a full Certificate II as an employer will have to pay them a higher second year rate when it is clear that they do not have the same skills and experiences that an apprentice in the workplace would have gained (Southern Tasmanian Catholic College Trade Training Centre, personal communication).

As described in the *Review of Years 9-12 in Tasmania* (Masters et al. 2016, p. 150) the national training system values participation and successful completion rates, whereas the Tasmanian teachers and trainers in the colleges' registered training organisations "were interested in improvements in a student's self-esteem and self-awareness". While these are important considerations, the national training system was not designed to do this. It may well be that VET in Schools advocates have been forced to use job-specific vocational education and training qualifications in response to the limited range of school-based offerings sanctioned and valued by the Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification.

While the general expectations of and rationale for offering VET in Schools has changed little from its introduction into Tasmania in 1993, there is a large and widening gap between aspirations and the actual outcomes. Unlike the schools-based perspective used by the recently released Years 9-12 Review which felt the data on VET in Schools was too limited to allow firm conclusions to be drawn, the use of the national vocational education and training longitudinal reports is unequivocal - VET in Schools is not producing the intended outcomes and the situation is deteriorating. Year 12 retention is not increasing, apprenticeship and traineeship numbers are in rapid decline, young people are not moving into jobs, participation rates in schooling and training are both falling. School-based apprentice and trainee commencements have remained steady and university first year numbers have increased, although VET in Schools studies do not contribute to the calculation of a tertiary admission ranking.

The secondary college's VET in Schools offerings overlap with those of TasTAFE in 35 major qualifications (Woodward, personal communication). This duplication is not only wasteful but calls into question the policy of a single public provider and the recurring matter of school students not having the same types of experiences and demonstrated skills as those who come through TasTAFE's industry-linked provision. In addition, many of the most popular non-duplicated VET in Schools qualifications are in areas that seem to have little relevance to the Ministerial Priorities. These include the performing arts, sport, recreation, coaching and community activities and suggest that considerations other than the needs of industry and business are motivating the offerings. The Tasmanian Secondary College's Registered Training Organisation (2016, p. 2) refers to itself as a 'low cost' training provider. The *Years 9-12 Review* (Masters et al. 2016, pp. 153-155) noted that there is no clear way of understanding the Department of Education cost structure for VET in Schools and that it is certainly different from the full-cost recovery methodology used by TasTAFE. Again, the two public providers seem to have differing operational parameters that only serve to confuse

## Tasmanian Vocational Education and Training Policy Impacts Review

potential students and result in fragmented policies and programs. After a wide-ranging consultation and data gathering activity, the *Years 9-12 Review* (Masters et al. 2016, p. 152) observed that “the positioning of TasTAFE in relation to vocational learning in secondary schools requires clarification”.

The *Years 9-12 Review* (Masters et al. 2016, pp. 156-157) suggests that vocational education and training has been used by schools and colleges as an alternative to a rather limited range of courses endorsed by the Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification. As noted above, the elements of the National Training System were never designed for this purpose. In spite of the best intentions of clearly enthusiastic and well-meaning staff in the schools and colleges, it does appear that they have been forced to use a product that is not fit for purpose on the basis that it is the ‘least-worst’ alternative to a system geared towards university entry.

Finally, returning to the national research findings, the results from a three year-long study that involved hundreds of thousands of VET in Schools students found that school-issued nationally accredited certificates had “limited value in the labour market” and that VET in Schools pathways contributed to socio-economic class segregation of students (Clarke 2015, p. 8). Furthermore, this large research project confirmed similar outcomes as observed in the Tasmanian examples shown above. VET in Schools often fails to deliver further study in vocational education and training and little in the way of full-time employment (Clarke 2015, p. 9).

Clarke (2015, p. 11) also describes that school-delivered Certificates I and II have “been shown to be ineffective in providing successful pathways into full-time, sustainable employment”. The report reiterated the importance of workplace learning in achieving an appropriate level of skills and knowledge and that it was often lacking in many VET in Schools school programs (Clarke 2015, p. 11). Polidano and Ryan (2016, p. 9) have found some long-term, i.e., many years after leaving school, positive benefits in school completion and employment for students who participated in VET in Schools courses, but these are “only found for courses that contain a workplace learning component”. The *Years 9-12 Review* (Masters et al. 2016, p. 144) found that “it is not a requirement that students undertake work experience”.

Clarke’s (2015, p. 11) national study also reiterated a long-standing issue for the vocational education and training sector; there is a commonly held deficit view of VET in Schools and the students who study its programs. This theme is also addressed in the *Years 9-12 Review’s* (Masters et al. 2016, p. 180) recommendation six: “improve the status of VET and VEL in Schools through community involvement in the development of a future vision and associated implementation strategy”.

### **Participation**

The final theme of participation has already been referred to multiple times. While a direct statistical analysis has not been completed, the raw numbers suggest that the greater the amount of outsourcing undertaken by the Tasmanian Government, the lower the participation rates resulting in significantly reduced numbers of students in the vocational education and training sector. This is in spite of two major national partnership agreements

## Tasmanian Vocational Education and Training Policy Impacts Review

that were specifically intended to have the opposite effect. It seems possible that the state has been subjected a case of 'goal displacement' where the pursuit of more open and competitive markets has been achieved, but the system has lost sight of the ultimate purposes expressed in the Ministerial Priorities and the national partnership agreements – increasing the numbers of Tasmanians who display higher levels of skills.

This case of having 'won the battle, but lost the war' may well have contributed to the massive oversight of the crucial role played by vocational education and training in the economic prosperity of the state that can be observed for two years in a row with the publication of the *Tasmania Report* by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Eslake 2015, 2016). From an outsider's perspective the absence of any reference to vocational education and training in terms of skills, participation or economic development renders the document useless and alienates TasTAFE from utilising potentially useful advocates in business and industry as partners when it comes to influencing government policies. This also suggests that the Department of State Growth's focus on contracting out has diverted its attention from ensuring that vocational education and training is a serious consideration in their policy development and advice to the ministry.

As noted previously, since the dismantling of the Tasmania Tomorrow project over the past five years, Tasmania has lost 13,000 students from the vocational education and training sector and the overall participation rate has declined from 14 to 11 per cent for those over 15 years old. School-based apprentice and trainee completions are the single category that appears to have remained stable, albeit at a low number. Tasmanian vocational education and training student numbers fell from 47,400 in 2011 to 36,600 in 2015 and instructional hours fell from 10.5 million to 8.2 million in the same time period (National Centre for Vocational Education Research 2016c, table 17). Student numbers enrolled in government-funded vocational education and training courses in 2015 (36,600) were less than in 2004 (38,500) and peaked in 2010 at 49,600 (National Centre for Vocational Education Research 2016c, table one). Apprentice and trainee commencements of 7,700 in 2005 fell to 4,700 in 2015 for all age groups and completions mirror these numbers by falling from 5,100 to 3,600 in the same time period. The numbers of apprentices and trainees in training have also trended down from 12,400 in 2005 to 7,600 in 2015 (National Centre for Vocational Education Research 2016a, table one).

At the start of this policy impacts report, reference was made to those states and territories that have perfected the art of making the case of 'exceptionalism'. This 'we-are-different' approach is not some sort of idle chatter, but is built upon very significant financial and economic considerations that take place at the highest level of state government, i. e., the Departments of Premier and Cabinet and Treasury and Finance. The vast difference in the ability to raise financial resources available to the states, when compared to the Commonwealth of Australia, is huge and every jurisdiction, rationally, wishes to maximise the amount of money that is available from intergovernmental financial relationships. Historically, this has been done by each state arguing that it has higher levels of disadvantage when compared to other states and territories; these problems can be best addressed through greater financial remediation. For example, the manner in which the Goods and Services Tax receipts are allocated to the jurisdictions relies upon a series of complex calculations that produce a 'relativity'. In 2014-15 Tasmania had a relativity of

## Tasmanian Vocational Education and Training Policy Impacts Review

1.63485 resulting in it receiving 3.6 per cent of the total national pool compared to a per capita entitlement of 2.2 per cent (Dale & Hall 2014). This increased allocation is intended to overcome Tasmania's deficits. The 'exceptional-deficit' style of reasoning is also used in allocating the funding in the national partnership agreements. Put simply, having lots of problems can have a significant positive financial impact upon the state government's finances.

However, one result that flows from allowing deficit thinking to dominate policy discussions is that another type of goal-displacement occurs. The focus becomes on how to deal with the 'problematic population' that has been identified rather than matching the programs available to government with their intended outcomes. Using VET in Schools to fix the problem population of early school leavers is a classic example. The indiscriminate use of industry designed training products to assist those who face 'barriers' to employment is another (Groom 2016, p. 11). This type of deficit reasoning, while understandable and economically rational, has the effect of associating vocational education and training with problem populations and expecting the national training system to improve people's lives in ways in which it was not designed to do. An unintended result is the labelling of vocational education and training as dealing with deficient people and not producing qualifications with their own currency and value in economic society.

It is not unreasonable to assume that associating vocational education and training with deficit-driven programs diminishes the sector's appeal to a wide proportion of the population who do not view themselves as a problem and choose not to participate in a sector that produces qualifications that are not highly valued. In addition, the attractiveness of seeking federal government funds on the basis of having a disadvantaged population can create a self-fulfilling feedback loop where it becomes easier for bureaucracies to keep finding more and more deficits with the population that require increasing amounts of national funding than it does to support innovation and creative activities that emerge from the workplace and in business that would reduce the reliance upon taxpayers' dollars, albeit imported from the mainland. Rather perversely, deficit thinking stifles TasTAFE's ability to meet its legislated and statutory functions as the sole public provider.

In order to increase participation, TasTAFE also requires a responsive and flexible workforce. Volumes have been written on the inability of public service style organisations to operate in an open market and it is not intended to re-hash those discussions here. However, there are ways to maintain the state government's intention of having a public provider that simultaneously operates as an agency and to be "commercially autonomous" (TasTAFE 2016a, p. 70). The Canberra Institute of Technology (2016, p. 22) provides one way of increasing staffing flexibility through its wholly owned subsidiary, CIT Solutions, which undertakes both onshore and offshore training delivery that produced an operating surplus of \$1.54 million in 2015 from an total revenue of \$20.18 million. The consolidated income in 2015 for the Canberra Institute of Technology was \$118 million which means that the arm's-length company produced about 17 per cent of revenue and returned a cash dividend as well as paying for all of the institutional services it used. It appears that the TasTAFE legislation allows for a similar arrangement with the approval of the Minister (Government of Tasmania 2013, sections 58 (1) (c) and 58 (2)). Again, the potential benefits to TasTAFE and Tasmanians in general that could result in increased participation through such a



## Tasmanian Vocational Education and Training Policy Impacts Review

venture will come from creative and innovative planning rather than relying upon deficit thinking. Crucially, in a policy environment that supports 'open and competitive training markets', TasTAFE has the capacity to be a 'both-and' organisation, rather than being limited by 'either-or' considerations.

In terms of increasing participation, TasTAFE might wish to consider its own method of understanding some of the factors that influence a person or organisation's decision-making. At a basic level it would be useful to understand what has happened to the 13,000 Tasmanians that used to study in the sector, but no longer do so. Besides the increase in university enrolments, ameliorated by the high dropout rate, does anyone know where these potential participants are and what they are doing? It appears that the national data indicates what they are NOT doing only, for example not completing year 12, not taking up apprenticeships and not being employed. There is evidence that some organisations, such as the secondary colleges, actively choose not to enrol students with TasTAFE for reasons to do with costs. Is the Tasmanian vocational education and training sector participation rate in near free-fall because individuals are choosing not to engage with the system? Certainly, the study by the Brotherhood of Saint Laurence (Myconos & Yung 2016) suggests that the complexity of the system and arcane rules and regulations (developed to prevent cost-shifting) contribute to lowering the participation rate of secondary school-aged Tasmanians.

On the other hand, potential students may not be participating because they do not know of the benefits of a nationally recognised qualification in a society that is frequently defined by its deficits; they may not know of TasTAFE or how to enrol. In other words, the lack of knowledge and awareness might be contributing to the declining participation rates as are the reductions in public subsidies for employers. Finding out the reasons for non-participation will help inform TasTAFE on how best to implement the activities and meet its ambitious goals that are laid out in the *TasTAFE corporate plan 2016-2019* (2016b).

### References

Aird, H 2016, *Attrition from 'social mission' courses gives UTAS highest drop-out rate in Australia*, ABC News, viewed 5 March 2017, <<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-09-08/utas-has-highest-drop-out-rate-in-australia/7826114>>.

Australian Council for Educational Research 2016, *Retention, progression and participation rates in Tasmanian schools 2006-2015*, viewed 16 February 2017, <[https://www.acer.edu.au/files/Progression\\_retention\\_and\\_participation.pdf](https://www.acer.edu.au/files/Progression_retention_and_participation.pdf)>.

Australian National Training Authority 1994, *Towards a skilled Australia: a national strategy for vocational education and training*, Australian National Training Authority, Brisbane, <<http://hdl.voced.edu.au/10707/29930>>.

Bacon, J 2002, *Tasmanian Government submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training inquiry into vocational education in schools*, Tasmanian Government, Hobart, <[http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/House\\_of\\_representatives\\_Committees?url=edt/ves/subs/sub092.pdf](http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House_of_representatives_Committees?url=edt/ves/subs/sub092.pdf)>.

Bradley, D, Noonan, P, Nugent, H & Scales, B 2008, *Review of Australian higher education final report*, Department of Employment Education and Workplace Relations, Canberra,

## Tasmanian Vocational Education and Training Policy Impacts Review

<<http://www.innovation.gov.au/HigherEducation/ResourcesAndPublications/ReviewOfAustralianHigherEducation/Pages/ReviewOfAustralianHigherEducationReport.aspx>>.

Canberra Institute of Technology 2016, *Annual Report 2015*, Canberra Institute of Technology, Canberra, <[https://cit.edu.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0010/61111/2015\\_CIT\\_Annual\\_Report.pdf](https://cit.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/61111/2015_CIT_Annual_Report.pdf)>.

Carmichael, L 1992, *The Australian Vocational Certificate Training System*, National Board of Employment, Education and Training Employment and Skills Formation Council, Canberra, <<http://www.voced.edu.au/content/ngv38355>>.

Clarke, K 2015, 'Tinkering around the edges, but ignoring the huge cracks: a discussion of VET in Schools for young Australians', in *23rd national vocational education and training research conference, no frills: refereed papers*, National Centre for Vocational Education Research, Adelaide, <<http://hdl.voced.edu.au/10707/367597>>.

Clayton, B 2010, *Practitioner experiences and expectations with the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAA40104): a discussion of the issues*, National Centre for Vocational Education Research, Adelaide, <<http://hdl.voced.edu.au/10707/86101>>.

Committee for Economic Development of Australia 2016, *VET: securing skills for growth*, Committee for Economic Development of Australia, Melbourne, <[http://adminpanel.ceda.com.au/FOLDERS/Service/Files/Documents/31760-CEDAVETReportAugust2016Final\\_flattened.pdf](http://adminpanel.ceda.com.au/FOLDERS/Service/Files/Documents/31760-CEDAVETReportAugust2016Final_flattened.pdf)>.

Council of Australian Governments 2009, *National partnership agreement on youth attainment and transitions*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, <[http://www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/content/npa/skills/national-partnership/past/youth\\_attainment\\_transitions\\_NP.pdf](http://www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/content/npa/skills/national-partnership/past/youth_attainment_transitions_NP.pdf)>.

— 2012, *National partnership agreement on skills reform*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, <[http://www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/content/npa/skills/national-partnership/skills-reform\\_NP.pdf](http://www.federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/content/npa/skills/national-partnership/skills-reform_NP.pdf)>.

Dale, T & Hall, A 2014, *Distributing GST revenue to the states: where is the revenue raised and what is a 'relativity'?*, Parliament of Australia, viewed 6 March 2017, <[http://www.aph.gov.au/About\\_Parliament/Parliamentary\\_Departments/Parliamentary\\_Library/FlagPost/2014/July/GST-Relativities-Where-Is-Revenue-Raised](http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/FlagPost/2014/July/GST-Relativities-Where-Is-Revenue-Raised)>.

Department of Education 2009, *National partnership agreement on youth attainment and transitions: Tasmania*, Tasmanian Government, Hobart, <<https://www.education.tas.gov.au/documentcentre/Documents/National-Partnership-on-Youth-Attainment-and-Transitions.pdf>>.

Department of Education and Training 2017, *Completion rates of higher education students: cohort analysis 2005-2014*, Australian Government, Canberra, <[https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/cohort\\_analysis\\_2005-2014\\_0.pdf](https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/cohort_analysis_2005-2014_0.pdf)>.

Department of State Growth 2016, *Annual report 2015-16*, Tasmanian Government, Hobart, <[http://stategrowth.tas.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0019/140671/Department\\_of\\_State\\_Growth\\_Annual\\_Report\\_2015-16\\_for\\_web.pdf](http://stategrowth.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0019/140671/Department_of_State_Growth_Annual_Report_2015-16_for_web.pdf)>.

## Tasmanian Vocational Education and Training Policy Impacts Review

Department of Treasury and Finance 2016a, *2016-2017 budget paper number two, volume two, chapter 26: TasTAFE*, Tasmanian Government, Hobart, <<https://www.treasury.tas.gov.au/Budget2016/BP2/2016-17-BP2-26-TasTAFE.htm>>.

— 2016b, *National Competition Policy*, Tasmanian Government, viewed 7 March 2017, <<https://www.treasury.tas.gov.au/domino/DTF/DTF.nsf/v-ecopol/04F4BE1BBA2E052DCA2570FB0013D6E0>>.

— 2017, *Full Treasurer's instructions list*, Tasmanian Government, viewed 11 March 2017, <<https://www.treasury.tas.gov.au/domino/DTF/DTF.nsf/v-ti/65A0C37F47C84CF4CA25720A0016396C>>.

Deveson, I 1990, *Training costs of award restructuring: report of the Training Costs Review Committee: volume one*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, <<http://www.voced.edu.au/content/ngv35846>>.

Eslake, S 2015, *Tasmania Report 2015*, Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Hobart, <[http://www.tcci.com.au/getattachment/Events/Past-Events-\(1\)/Tasmania-Report/TCCI-Tasmania-Report-2015-FINAL.pdf.aspx](http://www.tcci.com.au/getattachment/Events/Past-Events-(1)/Tasmania-Report/TCCI-Tasmania-Report-2015-FINAL.pdf.aspx)>.

— 2016, *Tasmania Report 2016*, Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Hobart, <<http://www.tcci.com.au/getattachment/3ea5a2a7-e8db-4a45-8ea0-37055caa8900/Tasmania-Report-2016-FINAL.pdf.aspx>>.

Government of Tasmania 2013, *Training and Workforce Development Act 2013*, Tasmanian Government, Hobart, <[http://www.thelaw.tas.gov.au/tocview/index.w3p;cond=;doc\\_id=9%2B%2B2013%2BAT%40EN%2B20170103130000;histon=;pdfauthverid=;prompt=;rec=;rtfauthverid=;term=;webauthverid=>](http://www.thelaw.tas.gov.au/tocview/index.w3p;cond=;doc_id=9%2B%2B2013%2BAT%40EN%2B20170103130000;histon=;pdfauthverid=;prompt=;rec=;rtfauthverid=;term=;webauthverid=>)>.

Groom, M 2016, *Ministerial priorities for training and workforce development 2016*, Tasmanian Government, Hobart, <[http://www.skills.tas.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/136177/Ministerial\\_Priorities\\_2016.pdf](http://www.skills.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/136177/Ministerial_Priorities_2016.pdf)>.

Halliday Wynes, S & Misko, J 2012, *Assessment issues in VET: minimising the level of risk*, National Centre for Vocational Education Research, Adelaide, <<http://hdl.voced.edu.au/10707/257945>>.

Harper, I, Anderson, P, McCluskey, S & O'Bryan, M 2015, *Competition policy review: final report*, Commonwealth of Australia Treasury, Canberra, <[http://apo.org.au/files/Resource/competition-policy-review-report\\_online.pdf](http://apo.org.au/files/Resource/competition-policy-review-report_online.pdf)>.

Hill, M & Hupe, P 2002, *Implementing public policy: governance in theory and practice*, Sage Politics Texts, Sage Publications, London.

Hilmer, F, Rayner, M & Taperell, G 1993, *National Competition Policy*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, <<http://ncp.ncc.gov.au/docs/National%20Competition%20Policy%20Review%20report,%20The%20Hilmer%20Report,%20August%201993.pdf>>.

Keating, M 2004, *Who rules?: How government retains control of a privatised economy*, The Federation Press, Sydney.

## Tasmanian Vocational Education and Training Policy Impacts Review

Koshy, P 2016, *Student equity performance in Australian higher education: 2008 to 2015*, National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education Curtin University, Perth, <[https://www.ncsehe.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Student-Equity-Performance-in-Australian-Higher-Education-2008-to-2015\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.ncsehe.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Student-Equity-Performance-in-Australian-Higher-Education-2008-to-2015_FINAL.pdf)>.

Lohberger, L 2017, 'Hats off to Uni's big plans', *Hobart Mercury*, 9 January 2017, p. 6.

Masters, G, Moyle, K, Rothman, S, Hollingsworth, H, Perret, B, Weldon, P, Perkins, K, Brown, J, Radloff, A, Freeman, P & Damianidis, S 2016, *Review of years 9 to 12 Tasmania: final report*, Australian Council for Educational Research, Melbourne, <<https://www.education.tas.gov.au/documentcentre/Documents/Final%20Report%20Years%209-12%20Tasmania.pdf>>.

Matthews, M 2017, *Investing in tertiary education assets*, New Zealand Controller and Auditor-General, viewed 9 March 2017, <<http://www.oag.govt.nz/2017/tei-assets/docs/tei-assets.pdf>>.

Myconos, G & Yung, S 2016, 'Factors enabling engagement with VET for early school leavers: preliminary findings', paper presented to Australian Vocational Education and Training Research Association International Research Conference, North Sydney, 20-22 April 2016.

National Centre for Vocational Education Research 2016a, *Apprentices and trainees 2015 annual: state and territory data tables*, National Centre for Vocational Education Research, Adelaide, <<https://www.ncver.edu.au/data/data/all-data/apprentices-and-trainees-2015-annual-state-and-territory-data-tables>>.

— 2016b, *Atlas of total VET 2015*, National Centre for Vocational Education Research, viewed 9 January 2017, <[https://va.ncver.edu.au/SASVisualAnalyticsViewer/VisualAnalyticsViewer\\_guest.jsp?reportName=Atlas%20of%20total%20VET&reportPath=/Visual%20Analytics/NCVER/vpc-total-vet-activity/Reports/3.Published&appSwitcherDisabled=true&commentsEnabled=false&reportViewOnly=true](https://va.ncver.edu.au/SASVisualAnalyticsViewer/VisualAnalyticsViewer_guest.jsp?reportName=Atlas%20of%20total%20VET&reportPath=/Visual%20Analytics/NCVER/vpc-total-vet-activity/Reports/3.Published&appSwitcherDisabled=true&commentsEnabled=false&reportViewOnly=true)>.

— 2016c, *Government-funded students and courses 2015: Australia*, National Centre for Vocational Education Research, Adelaide, <<https://www.ncver.edu.au/data/data/all-data/government-funded-students-and-courses-2015-australia>>.

— 2016d, *Government-funded students and courses 2015: Tasmania*, National Centre for Vocational Education Research, Adelaide, <<https://www.ncver.edu.au/data/data/all-data/government-funded-students-and-courses-2015-tasmania>>.

— 2016e, *Total VET graduate outcomes 2016: table 4 key findings for total VET graduates by state/territory of student residence and provider type 2016*, National Centre for Vocational Education Research, Adelaide, <<https://www.ncver.edu.au/data/data/all-data/total-vet-graduate-outcomes-2016-summary-findings>>.

— 2016f, *Total VET students and courses 2015*, National Centre for Vocational Education Research, Adelaide, <<https://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/publications/all-publications/2874>>.

— 2016g, *Trends in public and private VET provision: participation, finances and outcomes*, TAFE Directors Australia, Sydney, <<http://hdl.voced.edu.au/10707/400204>>.

## Tasmanian Vocational Education and Training Policy Impacts Review

— 2016h, *Young people in education and training 2015: Tasmania*, National Centre for Vocational Education Research, Adelaide, <<https://www.ncver.edu.au/data/data/all-data/young-people-in-education-and-training-tasmania>>.

Noonan, P 2016, *VET funding in Australia: background, trends and future directions*, Mitchell Institute, Melbourne, <<http://www.mitchellinstitute.org.au/reports/vet-funding-in-australia-background-trends-and-future-options/>>.

O'Connell, M & Torii, K 2016, *Expenditure on education and training in Australia 2016*, Mitchell Institute Victoria University, Melbourne, <<http://www.mitchellinstitute.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Mitchell-Institute-Expenditure-on-education-and-training-in-Australia-2016-FINAL.pdf>>.

O'Reilly, P 2016, 'Practical, professional, participative', *Professional Educator*, vol. 15, no. 3, pp. 8-11.

Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification, 2016, *2015-16 Annual Report*, Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification, Hobart, <[http://www.tasc.tas.gov.au/4DCGI/\\_WWW\\_doc/1099571/RND01/TASC\\_2015-16\\_Annual\\_Report.pdf](http://www.tasc.tas.gov.au/4DCGI/_WWW_doc/1099571/RND01/TASC_2015-16_Annual_Report.pdf)>.

Perron, M 1991, *Outcomes of the Special Premier's Conference 30 July 1991*, Northern Territory Legislative Assembly, Darwin.

— 1992, *Address by Chief Minister Marshall Perron re the outcomes of the meeting of the Heads of Government Canberra 11 May 1992*, Northern Territory Legislative Assembly, Darwin.

Polidano, C & Ryan, C 2016, *Long-term outcomes from Australian vocational education*, Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, Melbourne, <[http://www.melbourneinstitute.com/downloads/working\\_paper\\_series/wp2016n35.pdf](http://www.melbourneinstitute.com/downloads/working_paper_series/wp2016n35.pdf)>.

Productivity Commission 2016, *Introducing competition and informed user choice into human services: identifying sectors for reform, preliminary findings report*, Australian Government, Canberra, <<http://apo.org.au/node/67725>>.

Quiggin, J 1996, *Great expectations: microeconomic reform and Australia*, Allen and Unwin, St Leonards.

Robinson, C 2016, 'Improving the quality of vocational education and training and the role of the regulator', paper presented to Australian Vocational Education and Training Research Association Conference, North Sydney, <<http://avetra.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Chris-Robinson.pdf>>.

Ross, J 2015, 'Fee hikes becoming VET reality', *The Australian*, 11 February 2015, Higher Education, p. 33.

Simmons, V 2012, *The review of the role and function of Tasmania's public sector vocational education and training (VET) providers: consultant's report*, Virsis Consulting, Melbourne, <<https://www.education.tas.gov.au/documentcentre/Documents/VET-System-Reform-Consultant-Report.pdf>>.

Simons, M, Harris, R & Smith, E 2006, *The Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training: understanding learners and learning*, National Centre for Vocational Education

## Tasmanian Vocational Education and Training Policy Impacts Review

Research, Adelaide, <<https://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/publications/all-publications/the-certificate-iv-in-assessment-and-workplace-learning-understanding-learners-and-learning>>.

Skills Tasmania 2016, *About Skills Tasmania*, Tasmanian Government Department of State Growth, viewed 27 December 2016, <<http://www.skills.tas.gov.au/skillstas/about>>.

Southern Tasmanian Catholic College Trade Training Centre 2016, *STCCTTC Year 9-12 Review Submission*, Australian Council for Educational Research, Melbourne, <<https://www.acer.edu.au/files/Southern-Tasmanian-Catholic-Colleges-Trade-Training-Centre.pdf>>.

TAFE and Adult Education Review Committee 1997, *Review of TAFE and Adult Education in Tasmania: final report*, Department of Vocational Education and Training, Hobart, <<http://hdl.voced.edu.au/10707/116450>>.

Tasmanian Government & University of Tasmania 2015, *State of Tasmania and University of Tasmania: making the future partnership*, Tasmanian Government, Hobart, <[http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/267765/FINAL\\_State\\_and\\_UTAS\\_Partnership\\_2015.pdf](http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/267765/FINAL_State_and_UTAS_Partnership_2015.pdf)>.

Tasmanian Secondary Colleges RTO 2016, *Submission to the Review of Years 9-12 in Tasmania*, Tasmanian Government, Launceston, <<https://www.acer.edu.au/files/Tasmanian-Secondary-Colleges-RTO-Submission.pdf>>.

TasTAFE 2016a, *Annual report 2015-2016*, Tasmanian Government, Hobart, <<https://doccentre.tastafe.tas.edu.au/Documents/TasTAFE%20Annual%20Report%202016.PDF>>.

— 2016b, *TasTAFE corporate plan 2016-2019*, Tasmanian Government, Hobart, <<https://doccentre.tastafe.tas.edu.au/Documents/TasTAFE%20Corporate%20Plan%202016-2019.pdf>>.

The Australian Government the Treasury 2015, *Australian Government response to the Competition Policy Review*, Australian Government, Canberra, <[https://www.treasury.gov.au/~media/Treasury/Publications%20and%20Media/Publications/2015/Government%20response%20to%20the%20Competition%20Policy%20Review/Downloads/PDF/Govt\\_response\\_CPR.ashx](https://www.treasury.gov.au/~media/Treasury/Publications%20and%20Media/Publications/2015/Government%20response%20to%20the%20Competition%20Policy%20Review/Downloads/PDF/Govt_response_CPR.ashx)>.

The Independent Panel on Technical Education 2016, *Report of the Independent Panel on Technical Education (the Sainsbury Review)*, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, London, <[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/536046/Report\\_of\\_the\\_Independent\\_Panel\\_on\\_Technical\\_Education.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/536046/Report_of_the_Independent_Panel_on_Technical_Education.pdf)>.

University of Tasmania 2013, *Staff agreement 2013-2016*, University of Tasmania, <<http://www.utas.edu.au/.%20?a=470098>>.

— 2016a, *Annual report 2015*, University of Tasmania, Hobart, <[http://www.utas.edu.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/887278/Annual-Report-2015.pdf](http://www.utas.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/887278/Annual-Report-2015.pdf)>.

— 2016b, *Pathway programs*, University of Tasmania, viewed 29 December 2016, <<http://www.utas.edu.au/courses/study-areas/pathway-programs>>.

## Tasmanian Vocational Education and Training Policy Impacts Review

Wolf, C 1993, *Markets or governments: choosing between imperfect alternatives*, Second edn, MIT Press, Cambridge.