

**The Association of Retired Principals of Technical Institutions, (ARPTI) Victoria**

October 2022

**Submission in response to the Productivity Commission 2022 Interim 5 Report  
Canberra, September.**

# 5-year Productivity Inquiry: From learning to growth

## Introduction

The **ARPTI** has been active for over forty years. It has brought together the interests, expertise and wisdom of leadership in the former Victorian Technical Schools Division, and in many cases, current members have only recently fully retired; members have remained closely engaged with developments in the Education Department, schools and local education programs.

## Background

The Association has maintained an interest in and concern about the diminishing availability of skilled personnel in the workforce, particularly tradespeople. Our collective member experience, combined with up-to-date knowledge of school staffing shortages in the applied learning areas has led to substantial liaison with relevant personnel, and submissions to 'The National Review of Teacher Registration 2018' which the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) was tasked with progressing.

We understand that our inputs to the National Review contributed to the resultant AITSL publication 'One Teaching Profession: Teacher Registration in Australia', and of particular note for 'applied learning' in the 'technical school' sense were:

### Recommendation 16:

'Teacher employers, teacher regulatory authorities and initial teacher education providers collaborate to develop pathway programs to teaching qualifications that recognise the VET qualifications, prior learning and the experience of the VET trainer/ assessor and make these available to VET trainer/ assessors employed in schools under alternative authorisation to teach arrangements.'

### Recommendation 17:

Include consideration of the workforce challenges and complexities under the current arrangements for VET delivered to senior secondary students in the review into the senior secondary curriculum recommended in 'Through Growth to Achievement: Report of the Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools.'

Progressing these recommendations and the subsequent consultation 'Building a high quality and sustainable dual qualified VET workforce' led to The Final Report, AITSL, May 2021.

Broadly, the recommendations place the quality of teaching at the centre of implementing reform in the area of 'supply, development, and retention of dual qualified (secondary and postsecondary) Vocational Education and Training teachers.

The need for Initial Teacher Education (ITE) providers to work with the regulation providers is noted.

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While all 9 recommendations in the report are vital, our Association highlights recommendation 4 as pertinent to our special focus:

Recommendation 4 [Final Report Page 6]

*Systems, sectors, and schools provide supports for industry professionals and VET trainers/assessors to enter and complete ITE for example:*

- *Establish mentoring arrangements for qualified teachers to mentor VET trainers/assessors seeking teaching qualifications.*
- *Create and support communities of practice embedding external supports for VET trainers/assessors seeking teaching qualifications.*
- *Provide varied induction and onboarding that meets the respective context and experience of the industry professionals and VET trainers/assessors.*
- *Establish scholarships to provide financial support to industry professionals and VET trainers/assessors undertaking ITE programs.*

### Association Focus

From a productivity point of view, it is absolutely apparent that there is a current extreme shortage of skilled workers in the trades, technologies and allied applied learning areas. One obvious reason for this is that many of our willing and capable youth are not receiving the encouragement and support to learn the foundation skills and competencies from an early stage of their secondary education. A skilled and productive workforce comes from young people being trained, and that requires suitably qualified teachers in every school - teachers who can motivate and support student development in these areas.

The relatively recent development of the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning [VCAL] has provided an avenue for students to move to a course that has a greater focus on 'applied learning'. However our visits to schools indicate that too often there is a shortage of teachers experienced in the practical nature of much of the applied learning focus. Indeed, due to the shortage of vocationally trained teachers, some school staff members have been given teaching loads in areas they would prefer not to be. This has been detrimental for both staff and students. The former Technical Schools Division apprentice approach to teacher training was hugely successful in providing concurrent 'in school' and 'at teacher's college' training and mentor support.

The move toward integration of the VCAL initiative under the VCE umbrella is to be applauded. A highly likely outcome will be to have more students (and parents) happy for participation in the VCE Vocational Major, and at lower levels the Victorian Pathways Certificate. For ultimate success, more appropriately trained / qualified staff will be needed.

Association consultations in schools have led to concerns regarding the temporary certification of TAFE trained trade instructors under the 'permission to Teach' certification process - a temporary passport to teaching in a secondary environment. This is excellent in some circumstances but not long term.

### Next Steps

A bottom line requirement is for there to be National and State funding to support the attraction of young and mature people prepared to undertake study and experience in their chosen field with a view to ultimately qualifying as a teacher - and preferably 'dual qualified' for TAFE and secondary environments. Early identification of teaching candidates was the Studentship initiative undertaken in Victoria whereby suitable young people were attracted into teaching with financial support through their studies, and their industrial experience knowing they had a certain pathway leading to a teaching career.

Association representatives have met with senior Deakin University personnel from Warrnambool and Waurn Ponds. Deakin is in our opinion to be congratulated on their current delivery of the Graduate Certificate of Adult, Vocational Education and Training [GCAVET]. A key motivation of this course is for a 'tradie' with Cert 4 and relevant trade experience to break through to secondary teaching in Applied Learning. The GCAVET takes the candidate to entry level (Cert 8) for the Master of Applied Learning and Teaching (Secondary) [MALT], recognised by the Victorian Institute of Teaching. Graduates then have the qualifications to teach in secondary schools and other youth settings. The course includes professional experience in schools; Deakin supports school based training mentors in over 100 schools. It is apparent that increased funding entitlements and timeliness would likely increase intake numbers.

### **In Summary**

Any substantive improvement in productivity within the school sector will only be achieved through significant government policy and funding.

**We have appreciated the opportunity to contribute to this matter of vital importance.  
We would welcome further participation.**

**Graeme Seamer  
President  
ARPTI**

Please see the following attachments that have been uploaded in support of this submission. Each provides further insight regarding our previous recommendations, and the research undertaken by our Association, including inputs from current school leaders.

### Attachment 1

The Association of Retired Principals of Technical Institutions, (ARPTI) Victoria

**Position Paper: The National Review of Teacher Registration 2018**

May 26, 2018

Of special significance is Appendix A :

**Notes re Teacher Training for Technical/Practical subjects.**

**Prepared by ARPTI member: Ron Ritchie – Former Director of Technical Education, Victoria**

### Attachment 2

The Association of Retired Principals of Technical Institutions, (ARPTI) Victoria

**Position Paper March 2021:**

**BUILDING A HIGH QUALITY SUSTAINABLE 'VET IN SCHOOLS' WORKFORCE**

**Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership Nov 2020**

**A consultation arising from the recommendations that followed the**

**National Review of Teacher Registration 2018**