

Education and Training Workforce Study
Productivity Commission
LB2 Collins Street East
MELBOURNE VIC 8003

8 July 2010

Dear Sir/Madam

Vocational Education and Training Workforce Issues Paper

The Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the 'Vocational Education and Training Workforce Issues Paper' (the Issues Paper). Given the multiplicity of links between the VET sector and the tourism and hospitality industry, QTIC is well positioned to provide feedback on the issues outlined in this document.

The Queensland Tourism Industry Council

The Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) is a private sector, membership-based tourism industry organisation. QTIC represents the interests of the tourism industry, including business operators, Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs) and sector associations.

All of Queensland's RTOs are members of QTIC, as are 17 of the industry's sector associations and in excess of 3,000 regional members, operating in all sectors of the tourism industry.

QTIC is owned and governed by its members through member based councils, boards and committees and truly reflects the views of the industry at all levels throughout Queensland.

Feedback

QTIC agrees that industries are major stakeholders of the VET system - with which they can interact as consumers, clients, trainers and as a source of potential labour. Many tourism and hospitality businesses in Queensland rely crucially on the VET sector to provide the skilled workers required to deliver services to visitors and, as a result, maintain our State's competitive tourism advantages.

Despite the recent economic downturn, the tourism and hospitality industry in Queensland continues to suffer from severe workforce shortages and QTIC views the VET sector as a crucial in addressing these issues. QTIC supports any review designed to strengthen the integrity of Australia's VET sector and which will contribute to increasing our industry's supply of skilled labour.

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In addition to these comments, QTIC wishes to make the following further points:

- QTIC agrees that the teachers, trainers, and instructors who deliver vocational education and training are a key group of interest in this review of the VET workforce. With this in mind, QTIC contends that the skill sets possessed by VET school teachers is an issue that has arisen due to the increasing overlaps between the various education sectors.
- As a recommendation, QTIC suggests that VET teachers, trainers and instructors regularly adhere to professional development requirements endorsed by an appropriate assessment body. VET practitioners could be assessed on requirements specific to their teaching and training include; an assessment of their education and specific industry knowledge, their information technology skills, their capacity to monitor student's progress, their training delivery and assessment skills and according to their passion for the industry and commitment to quality.
- QTIC agrees with the assessment that the workforce of private VET providers is considerably younger than their TAFE workforce counterparts. QTIC proposes that this disparity in age is due to private VET providers being small businesses – with a need for casual and seasonal staff. In addition, QTIC also contends that there are better opportunities to develop younger staff in the VET system.
- QTIC agrees with the need to define subsets of the VET workforce – given that some issues do not affect all VET workers equally. QTIC proposes that such divisions could include government owned TAFEs, privately owned TAFEs and subsets based on regional and non regional areas.
- QTIC welcomes the Commission's consideration of changes to ongoing data collection and proposes that adequate data is currently not available to undertake effective planning and analysis of the VET Workforce.
- QTIC believes in the need to build a VET Workforce which appropriately recognises the alternative workforce – including indigenous Australians, migrants and people with disabilities. QTIC contends that, due to predicted skills and labour shortages, the demand for VET from people with disadvantaged backgrounds will increase in the next five to 10 years.
- QTIC anticipates implications for the VET sector due to the Federal Government's policy targets for higher education. Of particular concern, QTIC proposes that these targets will result in the skills of the future workforce not matching the job outcomes required by some industries.
- The adoption of new technologies into the VET sector will have a number of implications for the training environment provided by these institutions. Of particular note, QTIC proposes that the introduction of education technology – such as e-learning initiatives and on-line discussion forums - will increase demand for training and, as a result, increase demand for VET workers.
- QTIC strongly agrees that international enrolments in VET courses will be affected by recent changes to Australia's migration program. In consideration of this issue, and given that many of government's migration activities – such as the SOL – will be reviewed annually, QTIC

encourages the need for a policy environment which provides students with confidence when they are making the choice to live and study abroad.

- QTIC agrees that people may be deterred from working in the VET sector if they perceive that it does not effectively recognise and reward their work duties. With this in mind, however, remuneration received in the VET sector – for full time workers - is comparable to that received by workers in the tourism and hospitality industry. Given the irregularity of working hours in tourism and hospitality industry – compared with the often regular hours of VET workers – there is some attraction for workers in our industry to join the VET workforce.
- QTIC disagrees that increasing qualification standards will make entry in the VET workforce more appealing and produce better student outcomes. QTIC contends that the qualifications received in these courses are outweighed by the vital industry experience, industry currency and industry links gained whilst studying in the VET stream.
- QTIC agrees, in principle, with the advantages to a team approach to delivering VET services. QTIC contends that, although this approach has the potential to enhance the performance of the workforce, it is not a cost efficient means of delivering these vital services.
- QTIC agrees that changes to the funding models could act to improve the productivity of the VET workforce. Changes to the funding model could be based on an assessment of the competencies achieved.

QTIC welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the 'Vocational Education and Training Workforce Issues Paper'. As outlined in this submission, QTIC appreciates the multiplicity of links between the VET sector and the tourism and hospitality industry,

As the tourism and hospitality industry continues to suffer from severe skills shortages in a number of areas, QTIC will continue to work with government to ensure that appropriate skills outcomes are delivered for the benefit of the industry. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Robyn Keenan, QTIC Skills Link Manager, on (07) 3236 1445.

Kind Regards

Daniel Gschwind
Chief Executive