

The Australian Institute of Welfare and Community Workers

The association for community service professionals



28 February 2011

Ms Carole Gardner
education@pc.gov.au

Dear Ms Gardner

Re: Submission to the Vocational Education and Training Workforce Draft Research Report

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback in relation to issues identified in the Vocational Education and Training Workforce Draft Research Report issued by the Australian Government Productivity Commission, in November, 2010.

Founded in 1969, AIWCW is the recognised professional body for welfare and community workers in Australia. At a national and state level, we represent the interests of welfare and community workers employed within government departments, non-government social welfare agencies, self help groups, social, commercial and industrial enterprises. The Institute is a means by which welfare and community workers come together through national and branch meetings, enabling them to share and benefit from their combined knowledge and experience.

AIWCW has played a major role in the establishment of formalised training for welfare and community workers and is recognised as the body for recognition of courses designed to meet the training needs of the welfare and community worker profession.

In addition to AIWCW's July 2010 response to the initial Issues Paper, we are pleased to provide a brief response to the Draft Research Report contained in the following pages,

Yours sincerely

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Section	Comment
<p>4. Government involvement in the VET sector</p> <p>4.2 The role of government in VET 'Thin Markets'</p>	<p>As a part of its strategic plan, AIWCW aims to develop better linkages within regional and rural areas. These as addressed in the report are 'Thin Markets'. AIWCW supports the idea of establishment of formal community service Obligation(CSO) payments to fund providers to deliver in thin markets.</p>
<p>4. Government involvement in the VET sector</p> <p>Box 4.2 'Problems' with the international student sector</p>	<p>AIWCW recognises the initiatives undertaken by COAG in protecting the interests of the international student community. It also supports the auditing i.e. Re-registration of international education providers undertaken in 2010 by Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments.</p> <p>As the professional association for workers in Australia's community sector and as a part of its strategic plan, AIWCW aims to work on an ongoing basis with Education Providers that provide Community Services courses to regulate quality educational outcomes. AIWCW will be conducting regular scheduled and random audits to review its approved education providers.</p>
<p>4. Government involvement in the VET sector</p> <p>Compensation for VET providers for non-commercial activities</p>	<p>AIWCW supports on-budget community service obligation payments/ other incentives for all VET providers for provision of non-commercial activities. This will encourage VET providers to engage in projects that will help both its staff and student community.</p>
<p>6. Implications of a changing environment for VET workforce</p> <p>Foundation – Level language , literacy and numeracy skills</p>	<p>As indicated in the report section 6.3 the COAG initiative to increase the proportion of the population that holds a post – school qualification will result in a stronger focus on foundation skills. The VET sector will need to be equipped to handle a more diverse student population with increased LLN issues.</p>

Section	Comment
<p>6. Employment based delivery</p>	<p>There are a large number of workers within the Community Welfare sector holding certificate qualifications who are currently employed.</p> <p>Employment based delivery will help meet the skills shortage, particularly in regional and rural areas, by providing community workers with the opportunity to upgrade their qualifications without leaving their job.</p>
<p>8. Improving workforce Capability</p> <p>8.1 Supporting High Quality Foundation Practice</p> <p>The Cert IV in Training and Education (TAE40110) should maintain its status as a high risk qualification. Auditing by state regulators of RTO's with this qualification on their scope needs to be more frequent and intensive.</p>	<p>AIWCW has additional requirements for trainers and course coordinators teaching community services courses within the VET sector. These requirements take into account the minimum level of qualification required and the number of years of experience post qualification.</p>
<p>8. Improving workforce Capability</p> <p>8.4 Ongoing professional development</p>	<p>Ongoing Professional Development and up skilling are crucial to any sector however they are crucial with the Community Services Sector.</p> <p>Though the Professional Development of training staff rests at RTO level, there still is a need for a national vocational education and training workforce strategy as identified in the draft productivity commission report. Funding should be available under this scheme particularly for non-government RTO's.</p>
<p>8. Improving the workforce Capability</p> <p>8.5 Might Registration Help?</p>	<p>Registration and Professional Standing:</p> <p>AIWCW has a clear stand on the importance of Continued Professional Education and a prescribed code of ethics set out by a registration body within the community services sector.</p> <p>A registration scheme for VET trainers and assessors is the first step towards providing a pathway for up skilling the existing workforce. A registration scheme will also help in better</p>

Section	Comment
	<p>regulation of teaching outcomes and quality control within the community services sector.</p> <p>VET providers will as a result of the registration scheme only be able to hire quality staff. This would include Teachers and Trainers who have had their qualifications and experiences evaluated by a registration body.</p>