

Indigenous Australians in vocational **education and training**

NATIONAL RESEARCH STRATEGY for 2003–2006

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Introduction

Aims

This research strategy aims to contribute to achieving the vision and objectives of *Partners in a learning culture* (ANTA 2000), Australia's national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander strategy for vocational education and training (VET) 2000–2005. It has been developed by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) and the Australian Indigenous Training Advisory Council (AITAC), after consultations with various researchers and peak agencies (see appendix A and appendix B for membership and participant details).

The strategy is structured according to the four objectives of *Partners in a learning culture*:

- 1 Increasing the involvement of Indigenous people in decision-making about policy, planning, resources and delivery.
- 2 Achieving participation in VET for Indigenous people equal to those of the rest of the Australian community.
- 3 Achieving increased, culturally appropriate, and flexible delivered training, including use of information technology, for Indigenous people.
- 4 Developing closer links between VET outcomes for Indigenous people and industry and employment. (ANTA 2000)

The strategy builds on what is already known about Indigenous people's engagement with vocational education and training and the extent to which it is helping to achieve the desired outcomes for individuals and communities. It aims to ensure that policy development, decision-making and practice in vocational education and training for Indigenous Australians is informed by sound evidence, high quality data and critical evaluation.

Research undertaken as part of the strategy aims to result in practical outcomes to improve training, employment, social and individual outcomes for Indigenous Australians. Research should drive innovation in the field, and focus on ensuring that research capabilities within the VET sector, especially among Indigenous people, are further developed.

Rationale

Since 1997, NCVER has managed the national program of VET research funded by the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA). Over the period 1997–2002 most of the research projects relating to Indigenous peoples and vocational education and training were funded as a result of researchers suggesting specific topics and as part of NCVER's own research program (see appendix C for list of publications).

From 2003, NCVER has sought to develop a more strategic approach to Indigenous VET research in partnership with the Australian Indigenous Training Advisory Council, Indigenous and other researchers, and various peak agencies. The mid-term review of *Partners in a learning culture* completed in 2003 indicated what progress had been made towards achieving the four objectives of the strategy. This has provided the basis for a strategic national program of Indigenous VET research.

Such a national strategy is timely, given the endorsement of all Australian governments of the new national VET strategy 2004–2010, *Shaping our future* (ANTA 2003), which has four central objectives. One of these is that *Indigenous Australians will have skills for viable jobs and their learning culture will be shared*:

Vocational education and training will help increase employment and business development opportunities for Indigenous people and communities, providing a foundation for greater economic independence. Vocational education and training will be enriched through an exchange of learning culture. Indigenous people will be enabled to create and adapt vocational education and training products and services in order to exercise their rights to positive learning environments for their communities. (ANTA 2003)

Principles of research

NCVER and the Australian Indigenous Training Advisory Council are committed to ensuring that all research undertaken as part of this strategy is carried out with the highest ethical regard for Indigenous participants, communities and organisations. Indigenous researchers and practitioners are to be involved in the development, negotiation, conduct, analysis and dissemination of research where possible. NCVER and the Australian Indigenous Training Advisory Council are also keen to ensure the research is transferred to practice and policy in ways that are important and accessible for Indigenous people and communities. Thus the research will be supported by a dissemination strategy.

All projects undertaken as part of this strategy must follow the principles of ethical research developed by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies in May 2000. These principles are founded on the need to establish a shared understanding of the research with Indigenous people and communities involved, to ensure that communities are able to actively participate in every stage of the research, and be informed of the results in appropriate, useful and meaningful ways. The principles, in summary, are:

A Consultation, negotiation and mutual understanding

- ◆ Consultation, negotiation and free and informed consent are the foundations for research with or about Indigenous people.
- ◆ The responsibility for consultation and negotiation is ongoing.
- ◆ Consultation and negotiation should achieve mutual understanding about the proposed research.

B Respect, recognition and involvement

- ◆ Indigenous knowledge systems and processes must be respected.
- ◆ There must be recognition of the diversity and uniqueness of people as well as of individuals.
- ◆ The intellectual and cultural property rights of Indigenous people must be respected and preserved.
- ◆ Indigenous researchers, individuals and communities should be involved in research as collaborators.

C Benefits, outcomes and agreement

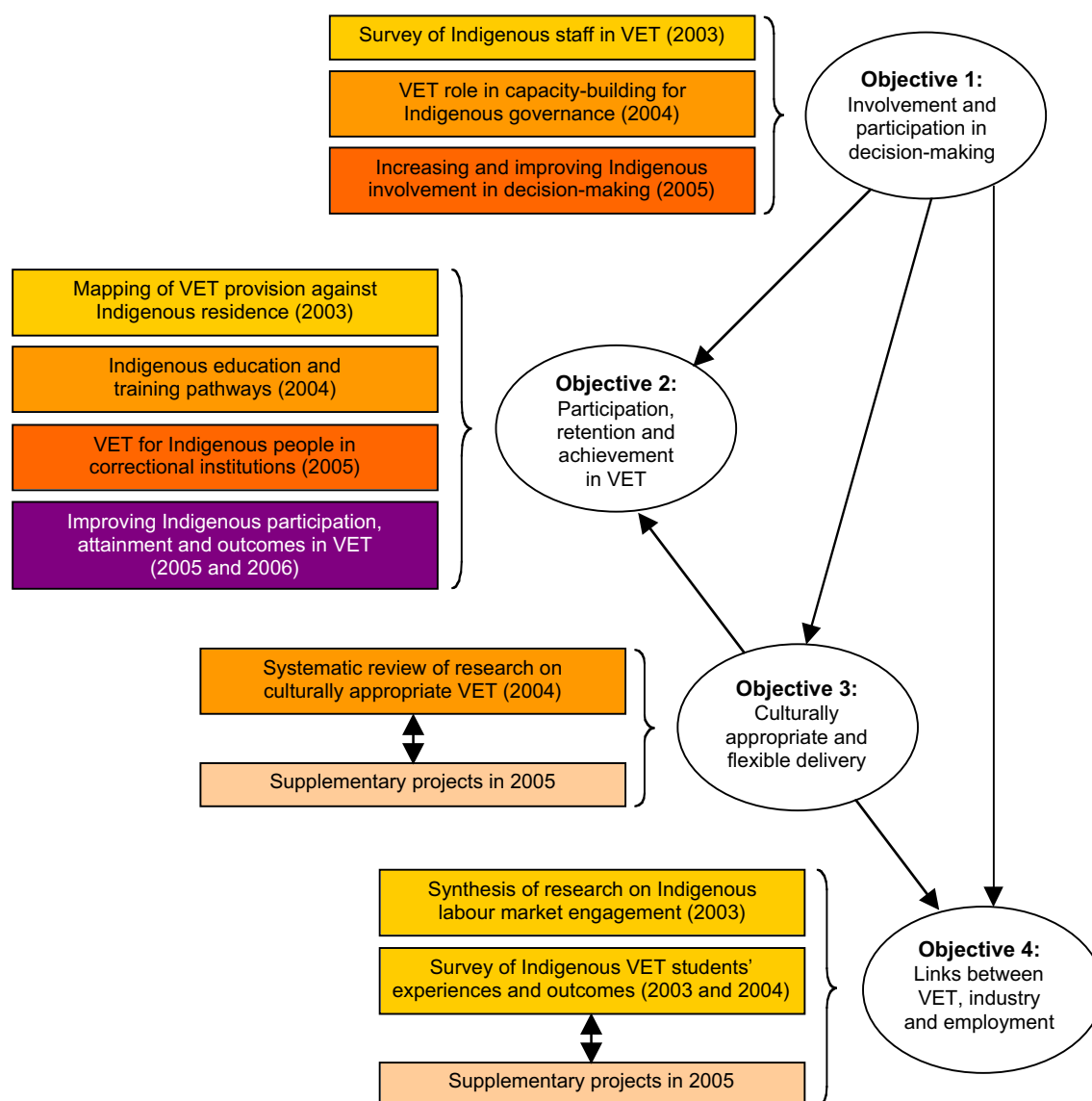
- ◆ The use of, and access to, research results should be agreed.
- ◆ A researched community should benefit from, and not be disadvantaged by, the research project.
- ◆ The negotiation of outcomes should include results specific to the needs of the researched community.
- ◆ Negotiation should result in a formal agreement for the conduct of a research project, based on good faith and free and informed consent.

More detailed guidelines are available from the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies website <<http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/corp/docs/EthicsGuideA4.pdf>>, and must be referred to prior to submitting proposals for research. These guidelines will also feature in the information kit made available to researchers seeking to submit proposals, in particular to identify that they are a crucial part of the selection criteria.

Research priorities

The interrelated nature of the objectives of *Partners in a learning culture* means some research projects will contribute to more than one area. Figure 1 shows all research priorities for 2003 to 2006 grouped according to the objectives, while appendix E provides more detail on the proposed timeline for the research program over this period. This diagram has been adapted from a mid-term review report on the blueprint for implementation of *Partners in a learning culture* (Kemmis et al. 2004).

Figure 1: Research priorities by objectives of *Partners in a learning culture*



Note: The priority years for projects indicate when the research will be undertaken, while reports may be released the following year.

Strategic overview

This research strategy involves projects being undertaken simultaneously and linked directly to each of the four objectives of *Partners in a learning culture*, to ensure that they flow logically. The results of each project will be produced immediately upon completion, as well as fed into subsequent projects. The research projects have been developed from the many questions and issues raised during the consultation process for developing the strategy. A listing of these questions is included in appendix D, and organised according to the objectives of *Partners in a learning culture*. The ultimate aim of the research strategy is to enable the Australian Indigenous Training Advisory Council to provide advice based on rigorous evidence which will help to improve Indigenous peoples' participation, attainment and outcomes in vocational education and training.

The research on increasing the involvement of Indigenous people in decision-making will have a local-level focus. The information gathered through the survey of Indigenous staff in VET organisations will provide a profile of their positions and employment conditions and prospects. It will be used to inform future recruitment and career development activities and reduce barriers to employment in the VET sector of Indigenous people. Another key project looks at how vocational education and training can assist local communities to build their capacity to plan and make decisions at the local level. The aim is to find out how vocational education and training can best work with local communities, including in association with other services.

In 2004, a major survey of Indigenous VET students throughout the country will be undertaken. It will improve understanding of what Indigenous VET students are doing, and the employment and wider benefits they want and achieve from vocational education and training. As a component of the Indigenous staff survey, Indigenous people working in vocational education and training will be asked for their views on the adequacy of VET provision to Indigenous students. This information will be combined with a review of existing research on how VET design and delivery can best achieve successful outcomes.

An investigation of Indigenous people's engagement in all forms of education and training will also commence in 2004 to determine where vocational education and training fits into the overall picture. It will focus on improving pathways between school, vocational education and training, higher education and adult learning activities that lead to both employment and social outcomes.

Contextual information for the key research projects above includes a report on the nature of Indigenous people's engagement with vocational education and training and the labour market as at 2003, and a map of where VET providers are located relative to where Indigenous people live.

The program in 2006 will aim to consolidate all Indigenous research undertaken between 2003 and 2005. The consolidation will assist the Australian Indigenous Training Advisory Council in determining how well *Partners in a learning culture* has been implemented. It will also identify gaps in the research that may include small one-off projects during 2006 and will inform the research strategy from 2007 onwards. This work will be undertaken in partnership with the Australian Indigenous Training Advisory Council, as one of the Council's terms of reference includes the evaluation of *Partners in a learning culture* at its conclusion in 2005. It is anticipated that the work will include a full statistical update on Indigenous people's involvement in vocational education and training and the benefits they have achieved.

There is scope within the research strategy to undertake supplementary projects on important issues as they may arise. For example, there will be work undertaken on how vocational education and training can assist Indigenous people in corrective institutions. There is room for follow-up work on teaching and learning policies and practices, and on defining and monitoring the benefits of vocational education and training.

Research by objectives

Objective 1: Increasing the involvement of Indigenous people in decision-making about policy, planning, research and delivery

According to *Partners in a learning culture*, this objective involves:

- ✧ increasing involvement by Indigenous people at all levels of decision-making
- ✧ increasing the participation of Indigenous people in decision-making at the provider and local community levels
- ✧ implementing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment strategies throughout all levels of the VET system
- ✧ ensuring that vocational education and training (including training packages) is culturally inclusive
- ✧ benchmarking cultural inclusivity
- ✧ unlocking the potential of partnerships
- ✧ creating incentives for the employment and professional development of Indigenous staff (including placements in group training and private training companies)
- ✧ developing mechanisms to ensure that Indigenous VET issues are addressed by key national, state and territory bodies
- ✧ analysing Indigenous community needs and audit skills.

What we know about progress to 2003

- ✧ There has been good progress made in securing Indigenous membership of key decision-making bodies and in providing necessary advice at higher levels of the VET system. However, there has been less progress at other levels, particularly at the local level. The amount of influence Indigenous members exert in these decision-making bodies is also unknown.
- ✧ There is little data available on the number of Indigenous people employed in the VET sector, their patterns of employment, career progression and access to professional development.
- ✧ There is little data available on the educational backgrounds and preparedness of other people in the VET sector who are planning and delivering education and training to Indigenous people.
- ✧ The health sector has evidently made more progress than vocational education and training in securing local-level engagement in services planning and provision.

Research program for 2003–2006

- 1 *Survey of Indigenous staff in VET (2003)*: This project will involve the analysis of existing data, in addition to a survey of staff at all levels and a selection of case studies. It will determine what Indigenous staff do in vocational education and training, and what influence they have. It will also look at their experiences regarding opportunities for permanency and career advancement, and any barriers they face to employment in the VET sector. The survey will seek the views of Indigenous staff on the adequacy of VET provision for Indigenous students to inform objective 2 and objective 3 of *Partners in a learning culture*. The aim is to describe the number and conditions of Indigenous people employed in the VET sector, particularly in terms of access to support,

professional development and career advancement opportunities. It will also aim to investigate successful practices in involving Indigenous staff in planning and decision-making. The project is expected to be completed in July 2004.

- 2 *VET role in capacity building for Indigenous governance (2004)*: This project will investigate the role that vocational education and training has, and could fulfil, in capacity building, particularly skills development for planning and decision-making. The research will examine best practice models for engaging communities in self-governance, and the underlying funding, planning and accountability frameworks that appear successful. This project will commence in July 2004 for completion by mid-2005.
- 3 *Increasing and improving Indigenous peoples' involvement in decision-making in VET (2005)*: This project will be informed by the results of the two research projects above. It will involve investigating what the VET system and individual providers can do to ensure more meaningful participation of Indigenous people and communities in decision-making in VET policy, planning and delivery. Projects will be advertised in late 2004, with work to be undertaken during 2005.

Objective 2: Achieving participation in VET for Indigenous people equal to those of the rest of the Australian community

According to *Partners in a learning culture*, this objective involves:

- ✧ increasing school retention rates through VET in Schools programs
- ✧ forging partnerships between school and the post-secondary sector (including VET and universities)
- ✧ increasing the proportion of Indigenous students doing higher-level and industry-relevant courses
- ✧ marketing higher-level courses, apprenticeships and traineeships to Indigenous people
- ✧ increasing student support services for Indigenous students doing higher-level VET courses, apprenticeships and traineeships
- ✧ creating incentives based on outcomes for providers that train Indigenous people
- ✧ increasing VET opportunities for imprisoned Indigenous Australians
- ✧ encouraging and promoting lifelong learning.

What we know about progress to 2003

- ✧ Indigenous people's participation in vocational education and training is strong. However, participation tends to be at Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) levels I and II. In fact, 17% of Indigenous students studying vocational education and training had completed Year 12. Over 20% of Indigenous students are enrolled in TAFE multifield, which is a field of study that includes general education, preparation for employment and literacy/numeracy courses.
- ✧ There has been no marked increase in the number of Indigenous students in courses at certificate III and above since 1997. Obstacles appear to be forms and duration of funding for programs, competitive and commercial practices of some registered training organisations, types of provision available, amount and quality of student support and 'recycling' of Indigenous clients through a number of lower-level courses.
- ✧ Pass rates in vocational education and training for Indigenous students are relatively low—about 63% pass an assessed subject. Approximately 18% of students fail and 14% withdraw from courses.
- ✧ Indigenous students are more likely to complete their studies when there are support programs in place (including effective literacy support) when non-traditional modes of delivery are used, and when there is a positive attitude to Indigenous cultures and needs in training organisations.

- ✧ The success of VET in Schools initiatives seems to depend on location; in many parts of the country, VET in Schools provides an incentive for some Indigenous students to remain in school for Years 11 and 12. In remote communities, however, the VET in Schools model is irrelevant, given low retention rates to Year 11 and complete unavailability of secondary schooling in some areas. There are some reservations about VET in Schools and whether some programs are streaming Indigenous students into 'second-rate' education.
- ✧ There is a need for more systematic and comprehensive professional development in cross-cultural awareness for non-Indigenous staff.

Research program for 2003–2006

- 1 *Mapping of education and training provision against Indigenous residence (2003)*: This project will build on geocoding work undertaken for the Indigenous student survey (see objective 4). In addition it will map where Indigenous people live in Australia (from Australian Bureau of Statistics Census data) and compare this with where registered training organisations and other education and training services are being delivered. This will provide a picture of where gaps may exist in the provision of VET services, and help in improving the delivery of vocational education and training to Indigenous communities. This project will commence in July 2004.
- 2 *Education and training pathways for Indigenous Australians (2004)*: This will involve a program of research over 2004 and into 2005 investigating the various education and training programs that Indigenous people undertake. A focus of the research will be on differences across the geographical regions of Australia, and will range in scope from young people to mature-aged learners. The effectiveness of the various 'pathways' will be explored, with the aim of determining how best to improve access to, successful progression through, and attainment in, education and training. This program of research will commence in July 2004.
- 3 *VET for Indigenous people in correctional institutions (2005)*: This project will examine VET provision for Indigenous people in correctional institutions across Australia. It will explore various participation and attainment issues, including the differing needs of short- and long-term inmates, and employment and further educational opportunities beyond release. As an area of concern identified in the mid-term review, and remaining as a key issue from the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (1991), this will be a crucial part of NCVET's research program. This project will be advertised in late 2004, with work to be undertaken during 2005.
- 4 *Improving Indigenous participation, attainment and outcomes in VET (2005–2006)*: This major program of research will build on findings from project 2 above, and will focus on key factors that impact on Indigenous participation, attainment and outcomes in vocational education and training. The aim will be to identify successful practices that lead to improvements in Indigenous outcomes in vocational education and training. Projects will be advertised in late 2004, with work to be undertaken during 2005.

This program will be closely informed and complemented by research carried out under all other objectives, particularly objective 3 on culturally appropriate and flexible VET delivery. The overall aim of the research strategy is to work towards determining what is required to improve Indigenous participation, attainment and outcomes in vocational education and training.

Objective 3: Achieving increased culturally appropriate, and flexibly delivered training, including use of information technology, for Indigenous people

According to *Partners in a learning culture*, this objective involves:

- ✧ catering for rural and remote communities
- ✧ developing electronic and online training strategies specifically for Indigenous Australians
- ✧ encouraging community expression of training and assessment needs.

What we know about progress to 2003

- ✧ The blueprint identified training centres and training in information technology as key strategies. However, the broader strategy of ensuring culturally appropriate delivery has not yet been a focus of implementation, even though it is a central aim.
- ✧ There is a need to identify what constitutes ‘culturally appropriate programs, practices and products’ in urban, rural and remote settings and to explore how training providers can be more responsive to the needs of Indigenous people and communities. Cultural appropriateness needs to be considered by developers of training packages, registered training organisations and industry training advisory boards in terms of design, development and delivery of vocational education and training.
- ✧ A number of training centres have already been established and have frequently provided models of good practice in vocational education and training. However, there are concerns raised about funding arrangements to support these centres and organisations.
- ✧ Significant resources are allocated to information technology training and there is a large amount of activity in this area. However, many learners prefer face-to-face teaching and learning.

Research program for 2003–2006

- 1 *Systematic review of research on culturally appropriate VET (2004)*: This project aims to review and analyse research that relates to culturally appropriate VET design and delivery. There is much work existing on this topic, and a consolidation of good practice will form a practical resource for organisations and teachers when developing programs for Indigenous people. Various researchers will be involved in the analysis of studies and synthesis of results, with a report to be produced by the end of 2004.
- 2 *Supplementary projects (2005)*: Once results are known from the systematic review above, 2005 projects will be determined in consultation with the Australian Indigenous Training Advisory Council and other stakeholders. These will aim to fill any gaps that are apparent in the research.

Objective 4: Developing closer links between VET outcomes for Indigenous people and industry and employment

According to *Partners in a learning culture*, this objective involves:

- ✧ establishing one-stop ‘training and employment shops’ for Indigenous communities
- ✧ expanding New Apprenticeship opportunities for Indigenous people
- ✧ customising training packages to allow for training and assessment tailored to specific local Indigenous needs and contexts
- ✧ expanding the qualifications within training packages to ensure that the specific training needs of Indigenous communities are catered for
- ✧ expanding VET opportunities for Indigenous people participating in the Community Development and Employment Program (CDEP)
- ✧ expanding opportunities for Indigenous people in group training schemes
- ✧ expanding opportunities for Indigenous people in training centres
- ✧ expanding opportunities for Indigenous people in small business and enterprise development.

What we know about progress to 2003

- ✧ Employment outcomes for Indigenous VET students have improved but remain considerably poorer than for non-Indigenous students. The Community Development and Employment Program provides some employment and other benefits but this is not captured in student outcomes data separately to other forms of employment.

- ✧ There are significant differences among Indigenous students in terms of participation, achievements and outcomes of vocational education and training depending on their geographic location, and these factors need to be duly considered when assessing Indigenous VET performance.
- ✧ Vocational education and training enhances employability and can provide other benefits in terms of individual, community and economic development. Data on benefits other than employment are not gathered in a comprehensive manner.
- ✧ Whole-of-government approaches to community development that are focused closely on meeting local needs in partnership with local people have the potential to improve training and employment outcomes for Indigenous people.
- ✧ The Community Development and Employment Program has the potential to integrate training, employment and community development, depending on purposes served by the program in different locations. The most effective Community Development and Employment Programs focus on partnership arrangements that tailor the program to the needs of the community and the training needs of participants. Training needs analyses are important features of successful Community Development and Employment Programs to match training and employment outcomes.
- ✧ Growth in Indigenous people's participation in New Apprenticeships is positive, especially at certificate III level. Group training companies employ a quarter of all Indigenous apprentices and trainees and play an important role in improving outcomes for Indigenous students.

Research program for 2003–2006

- 1 *Synthesis of research on Indigenous labour market engagement (2003)*: This project involves a synthesis of material on the Community Development and Employment Program and broader labour market issues, drawn largely from Hunter's Australian Bureau of Statistics monograph *Indigenous Australians in the contemporary labour market* (2004). It will provide background information for the survey of Indigenous students below, and for policy-makers seeking to improve Indigenous employment opportunities and outcomes. It will also support other projects of the Community Development and Employment Program and training being undertaken by the Australian Indigenous Training Advisory Council. The project will be completed by July 2004.
- 2 *Survey of Indigenous VET students (2004–2005)*: This major survey has been agreed to and funded by the National Training Statistics Committee and is overseen by an advisory group comprising representatives of the Australian Indigenous Training Advisory Council and various other organisations. The survey will involve approximately 1000 face-to-face interviews with Indigenous students in 63 locations across Australia, ranging from major cities to very remote areas. It will aim to answer the questions:
 - ◆ What individual, community and economic benefits arise from participation in vocational education and training by Indigenous people?
 - ◆ What factors influence participation and retention of Indigenous people in VET?
 First results from the survey will be available late in 2004, and Indigenous researchers will be involved in analysing the data and feeding information back to communities.
- 3 *Supplementary projects (2005)*: 2005 projects will be determined in consultation with the Australian Indigenous Training Advisory Council and other stakeholders. These will aim to fill any gaps that are apparent in the research, and will inform policy and practice.

References

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- 2003, *Shaping our future: Australia's national strategy for vocational education and training 2004–2010*, ANTA, Brisbane.
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Appendices

Appendix A

Membership of the Australian Indigenous Training Advisory Council and NCVER contacts as at April 2004.

Joint Chair

Bill Wilson (SA Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology—also SA State Training Authority representative)

Vacant (Indigenous member on the ANTA Board)

Members

Key organisations and agencies

Australian National Training Authority

Margo Couldrey (Director of Client Relationships)

Australian National Training Authority Chief Executive Officers

Peter Plummer (CEO, NT Department of Employment, Education and Training)

Department of Education, Science and Training

Shane Williams (Indigenous Education Leader, Indigenous and Transitions Group)

Aurora Andruska (Group Manager, VET Group)

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

Kylie Emery (Assistant Secretary, Indigenous Employment Programmes)

Indigenous Education Consultative Bodies

Charles Davison (CEO, NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group)

Federation of Independent Aboriginal Education Providers

Eileen Shaw (Institute for Aboriginal Development)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission

Klynton Wanganeen (Commissioner for South Australia)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services

Adrienne Gillam (Manager, Employment and Training Branch)

Australian Council of Trade Unions

Darcel Moyle (Australian Education Union)

Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry

William Trewlynn

Training Provider Representative

Marie Persson (Director, Sydney Institute of TAFE)

State Training Authority Representatives

Torres Strait Islands

Leo Akee (Manager, Education Services, Queensland Government)

Tasmania

Clair Andersen (Assistant Director, Riawuana Centre for Aboriginal Education, University of Tasmania)

Victoria

Lionel Bamblett (Victorian Aboriginal Education Association)

Queensland

Margaret Browne (Executive Officer, Accreditation, Department of Employment and Training)

Western Australia

Robert Somerville (Director, Aboriginal Education and Training Services, Department of Education and Training)

New South Wales

Pam Gill (Consultant)

Australian Capital Territory

Caroline Hughes (Manager, Yurauna Centre, Canberra Institute of Technology)

Secretariat

Georgina Richters (Executive Officer, ANTA)

Jan Palmer (Administrative Assistant, ANTA)

NCVER contacts

Kaye Bowman (General Manager)

Cydde Miller (Research Officer)

Appendix B

List of participants in NCVER workshops on 11–12 June 2003 in Darwin, ‘Towards developing a research strategy for Indigenous people in VET’.

Indigenous organisations

Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS)
Lester Irabinna Rigney

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC)
Kortlee Marshall (Senior Policy Advisor)

Federation of Independent Aboriginal Education Providers (FIAEP)
Derek Mitchell (Secretariat)

Researchers

Jo Balatti (James Cook University: Cairns)

Merridy Malin (Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal and Tropical Health
Northern Territory University: Alice Springs)

Stephen Kemmis (Charles Sturt University: Wagga Wagga)

Barry Golding (University of Ballarat: Melbourne)

Helen Smith (RMIT: Melbourne)

Banduk Marika (Gamarrua Nuwul Yirrkala Landcare: Nhulunbuy)

Jerry Schwab (Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research [CAEPR],
Australian National University: Canberra)

Dale Sutherland (Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research [CAEPR],
Australian National University: Canberra)

Bob Boughton (University of New England: Armidale)

Deborah Durnan (University of New England: Armidale)

Dorothy Lucardie (Central Australian Remote Health Development Services: Alice Springs)

Inge Kral (Central Australian Remote Health Development Services: Alice Springs)

Tom Stehlik (University of South Australia: Adelaide)

Josie Misko (NCVER, Senior Research Fellow)

Mel Butler (NCVER, Senior Research Officer)

Jennifer Gibb (NCVER, Manager, Research Management)

Kaye Bowman (NCVER, General Manager)

Mark Cully (NCVER, General Manager)

Tom Karmel (NCVER, Managing Director)

Government agencies

Australian National Training Authority

Margo Couldrey

Liz Furler

Department of Education, Science and Training

Paul Balnaves

Emily Regan

Maurice Bainbridge (NT State Office, Darwin)

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

Mariann Jonczyk

Enterprise and Career Education Foundation

Jim Syrmas

NT Department of Education, Employment and Training

Katherine Henderson

Karmi Dunn

NCVER Board members

Jim Varghese

Pat Forward

Peter Grant

Peter Glynn

Alison Raggatt

Colin Walters

Appendix C

Research projects funded by NCVET 1997–2004 relating to Indigenous students and vocational education and training.

In progress

- Flamsteed, K & Golding, B, 'Learning through Indigenous business', (in progress).
- Kral, I & Falk, I, 'What is all that learning for? Indigenous adult English literacy practices, training, community capacity and health' (in progress).
- Misko, J, 'The role of CDEP programs in remote communities' (in progress).

Published

- Balatti, J 2004, *Improving Indigenous completion rates in mainstream courses*, NCVET, Adelaide.
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- Marika, B, Lane, C, Smith, H & Reinke, L (forthcoming), 'Working towards an Indigenous training model: Learning from Gamarrwa Nuwul Landcare, Yirrkala' in *Equity in vocational education and training: Research readings*, ed. K Bowman, NCVET, Adelaide.
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- Saunders, J, Jones, M, Bowman, K, Loveder, P & Brooks, L 2003, *Indigenous people in vocational education and training: A statistical review of progress*, NCVET, Adelaide.

Appendix D

Research questions and issues by the objectives of *Partners in a learning culture* (ANTA 2000).

Below is a complete set of questions and issues raised throughout the consultation process for the development of this research strategy. These will be used in preparing briefs for the identified projects in the strategy. Also included are the priority issues surrounding each objective as identified from the mid-term review report (Kemmis et al. 2004).

Objective 1: Increasing the involvement of Indigenous people in decision-making about policy, planning, resources and delivery

Decision-making

- ✧ What is required to develop the capacity of Indigenous people, especially from rural and remote areas, to be effective on advisory boards?
- ✧ Investigate the extent and nature of Indigenous people's participation in decision-making and advisory bodies in the VET system, and the power derived from this type of involvement.
- ✧ Review of technical and further education (TAFE) institute policies to see if they are comprehensive and cover an appropriate range of inclusivity strategies that take into consideration Indigenous people and their communities.
- ✧ Action research which directly engages Indigenous VET leadership in discussion with other national organisations about research priorities to develop on-going mechanisms to move from consultation to negotiation.
- ✧ An analysis of how the health sector has involved Indigenous communities at local level in decision-making about delivery of health services (the aim of this research is to gain insights that might be relevant for vocational education and training).

Community focus

- ✧ What role does vocational education and training play in capacity building in Indigenous communities?
- ✧ Investigate the role vocational education and training is playing in contributing to the achievement of development plans developed by community councils.
- ✧ Document through case studies examples of communities that have developed and implemented their own training plans.
- ✧ Where does vocational education and training fit in terms of the whole-of-government response and collaboration between agencies?
- ✧ Find out who exactly represents 'community'—at the regional, community and family/individual level.
- ✧ How to better link VET training to community plans.

Funding issue

- ✧ What is the real cost of Indigenous VET provision in different jurisdictions and in different geographic areas and what funds will be required to ensure the system meets the needs of its Indigenous clients? (mid-term review priority)
- ✧ What sort of funding models would ensure that the provision of vocational education and training was appropriate to the needs of communities and would achieve desired outcomes?
- ✧ What is the impact of introducing higher education contributions scheme (HECS) on VET courses for Indigenous students and Indigenous community providers?
- ✧ What funding models will result in courses that are more appropriate to individuals and community requirements?
- ✧ Impact of course fees on Indigenous students and Indigenous programs (is the training that is offered delivered because there is a perception that all programs that target Indigenous students must be fully funded by government).

Whole-of-government approaches

- ✧ Investigate the extent to which the whole-of-government regional approach results in improved education and employment outcomes. (mid-term review priority)
- ✧ Undertake case studies of successful cross-government portfolio approaches to supporting and developing communities according to their wishes.
- ✧ Explore an example of where the VET sector, industry and government have worked together to better engage local Indigenous communities and conduct an analysis of mechanisms (local agreements like Indigenous land use agreements) and processes used to do this. Further analysis also to be done into barriers (structural, systemic and community) which impeded progress and strategies to overcome these.
- ✧ Document activities underway and research on whole-of-community and whole-of-government approaches to Indigenous issues and their lessons.
- ✧ Investigate how vocational education and training contributes to the quality of life within a community and in what ways it supports other institutions that seek to support health, housing and family life.
- ✧ How do we ensure training is linked to sustainable employment in a community?

Objective 2: Achieving participation in VET for Indigenous peoples equal to those of the rest of the Australian community

Pathways

- ✧ Investigate the extent to which vocational education and training is being used by early school leavers and mature-aged students as an alternative pathway into higher education. (mid-term review priority)
- ✧ Investigate school achievement and experience and its impact on pathways (in terms of progression to vocational education and training, higher education and work).
- ✧ Investigate VET in Schools and the issue of 'streaming' Indigenous students into these programs.
- ✧ Pathways from the Community Development and Employment Program (CDEP) to VET and the role it plays in facilitating employment.
- ✧ Indigenous New Apprenticeship outcomes.

Access and demand

- ✧ What is the likely level and pattern of demand for vocational education and training from Indigenous communities, given the anticipated rise in unemployment levels? (mid-term review priority)
- ✧ Investigate access to education and training—where is population growth occurring and where is there a need for education and training centres?
- ✧ Are people's needs for training in rural and remote locations being met?
- ✧ What is the impact of competitive policy on education and training offered to Indigenous people in remote/rural Australia?

Attainment

- ✧ Investigate why people undertake courses and whether they obtained what they wanted from their studies.
- ✧ Are success rates in terms of retention and completion better in Indigenous specific courses and in Indigenous registered training organisations?
- ✧ Investigate the reasons why Indigenous students fail to complete the course in which they enrol.
- ✧ Investigate why Indigenous people who do certificate I and II courses do not advance to certificate III and IV courses.

Participation

- ✧ Is the high level of participation in vocational education and training due to lower participation rates in Years 11 and 12 and in higher education? (mid-term review priority)
- ✧ Are Indigenous people being streamed into VET courses in order to get them to participate in education (i.e. is vocational education and training filling a gap in secondary education)?
- ✧ What impact do mechanisms such as the Community Development and Employment Program have on participation in vocational education and training?
- ✧ What role does literacy and numeracy (both English and own language) play in community development?
- ✧ What strategies can be adopted to better engage Indigenous school students in training? For instance:
 - ◆ involving Indigenous students in vocational education and training prior to post-compulsory years work-related outcomes
 - ◆ improve work-related outcomes including links to the Community Development and Employment Program
 - ◆ having culturally appropriate training for young Indigenous people
 - ◆ investigating barriers faced by Community Development and Employment Program participants progressing to formal apprenticeships.

Objective 3: Achieving increased, culturally appropriate, and flexibly delivered training, including use of information technology, for Indigenous people

Culturally appropriate learning environment

- ✧ Evaluate different teaching approaches and support mechanisms to find out which ones work for whom and in what context.
- ✧ How can culturally inclusive teaching practice be encouraged and rewarded?
- ✧ What features of a registered training organisation contribute to success and what factors inhibit success for Indigenous learners?

- ✧ How can we change the learning environment that is available to Indigenous people so as to increase their engagement with school, vocational education and training and adult learning?
- ✧ Training packages—can they be customised vs ‘Indigenised’?
- ✧ Evaluate learning communities to find out where they work, what makes them work and what constitutes good practice.

Literacy and numeracy

- ✧ What are effective methods of teaching literacy/numeracy for young people and adults whose literacy skills have not progressed beyond the Year 3 benchmark? What works, what does not work and in what contexts?
- ✧ What impact does poor literacy/numeracy have on enrolment/participation in vocational education and training?

Objective 4: Developing closer links between VET outcomes for Indigenous people and industry and employment

Employment outcomes resulting from participation in VET

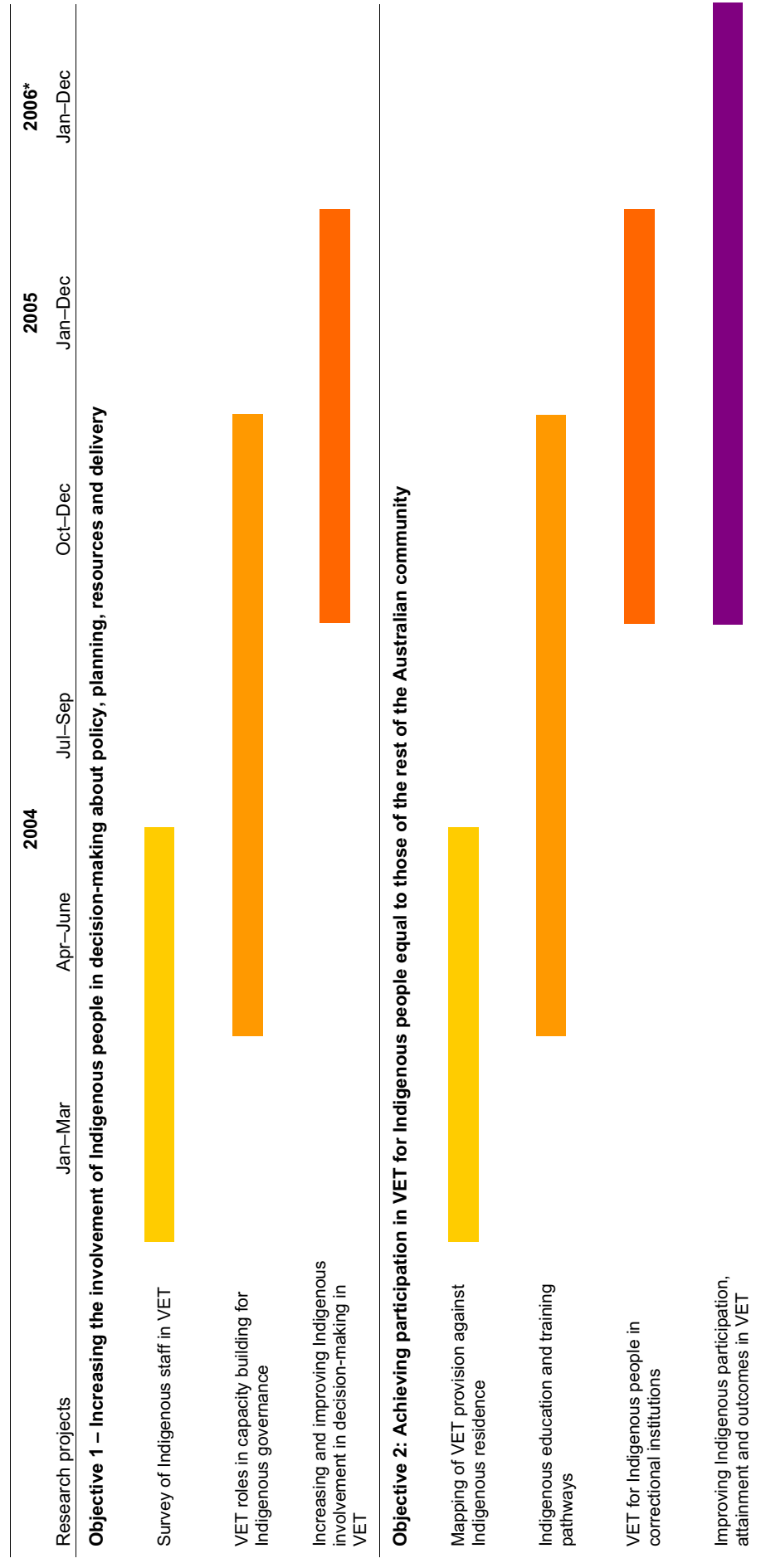
- ✧ To what extent is the focus on achieving higher levels of mainstream employment producing temporary subsidised jobs? (mid-term review priority)
- ✧ What are industry destinations of Indigenous VET graduates and to what extent are they employed to work in the Indigenous sector? (mid-term review priority)
- ✧ Why do Indigenous people who graduate from the higher education sector achieve better outcomes than VET graduates?
- ✧ How do you get successful and sustainable VET programs in rural/remote areas where there is a limited employment market?
- ✧ What are common patterns of training, work and unemployment among Indigenous students who do not complete mainstream courses?
- ✧ Undertake a study of the Community Development and Employment Program looking at how training has to be more clearly connected to the program, as well as the destination of participants in terms of employment, income and further training outcomes.
- ✧ Why are employment outcomes not improving when training participation rates are?

Non-employment outcomes of participation in VET






- ✧ What range of social, health, well-being indicators could be used as measures to gauge success of participation in education and training?
- ✧ Undertake a study to compare arrangements between the health and education sectors—for example, map at regional level participation in education and training and overall health of community.

Appendix E

Proposed timeline of research for 2003–2006



Note: * Work undertaken in 2006 will aim to fill gaps and consolidate all Indigenous research from 2003 and 2005, as a summary of activity under *Partners in a learning culture*. It is envisaged that the summary of findings from 2003 to 2005 will lead into a new research strategy for 2007 onwards.

Research projects	2004			2005	2006*
	Jan-Mar	Apr-June	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Dec
Objective 3: Achieving increased culturally appropriate, and flexibly delivered training, including use of information technology, for Indigenous people					
Systematic review of research on culturally appropriate VET					
Supplementary projects					
Objective 4: Developing closer links between VET outcomes for Indigenous people and industry and employment					
Synthesis of research on Indigenous labour market engagement					
Survey of Indigenous VET students					
Supplementary projects					

Note: * Work undertaken in 2006 will aim to fill gaps and consolidate all Indigenous research from 2003 and 2005, as a summary of activity under *Partners in a learning culture*. It is envisaged that the summary of findings from 2003 to 2005 will lead into a new research strategy for 2007 onwards.

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