



**Scope of ACE in Australia**

**Implications** for

**improved data collection**

and **reporting**

**Volume I**

*J Borthwick*

*B Knight*

*A Bender*

*P Loveder*

© Australian National Training Authority, 2001

This work has been produced by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) with the assistance of funding provided by the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA). It is published by NCVER under licence from ANTA. Apart from any use permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part of this publication may be reported by any process without the written permission of NCVER Ltd. Requests should be made in writing to NCVER Ltd.

The views and opinions expressed in this document are those of the author/project team and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian National Training Authority.

ISBN 0 87397 712 2 web edition  
TD/TNC 66.12

Published by NCVER  
ABN 87 007 967 311

252 Kensington Road, Leabrook, SA 5068  
PO Box 115, Kensington Park, SA 5068, Australia



# Contents

---

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Contents.....  | i   |
| Acknowledgements.....  | ii  |
| Glossary of terms and abbreviations.....   | iii |
| Executive Summary.....   | vii |
| Recommendations.....   | x   |
| 1. Introduction.....   | 1   |
| 1.1 Objectives of the project.....   | 1   |
| 1.2 Processes and methodology.....   | 2   |
| 1.3 Project timelines.....   | 4   |
| 2. Scope of adult and community education.....   | 5   |
| 2.1 Segmenting the Scope of ACE.....   | 7   |
| 2.2 Nationally reported ACE activity through the NCVER.....  | 8   |
| 2.3 Outputs and outcomes information currently available.....  | 13  |
| 3. Collection and reporting issues.....  | 14  |
| 3.1 Providers experience of current collection arrangements.....   | 15  |
| 3.2 The utility of data collected to providers.....  | 15  |
| 3.3 Measuring objectives of adult and community education including quality and diversity.....                           | 16  |
| 3.4 Gaps in information collected.....   | 17  |
| 3.5 Goods and Services Tax.....  | 17  |
| 4. Feasibility and costs of expanding current collection requirements.....   | 19  |
| 4.1 Collection requirements for providers in receipt of public vocational education and training funds.....              | 20  |
| 4.2 Proposed collection requirements for providers not in receipt of public vocational education and training funds..... | 21  |
| 4.3 Customer satisfaction and outcomes information.....  | 22  |
| Appendix 1.....  | 24  |
| Differing views of adult and community education (ACE).....  | 24  |
| Appendix 2.....  | 25  |
| Technical notes on ACE data in the national VET data collection.....   | 25  |
| Accredited vocational ACE activity.....  | 28  |
| Informal vocational ACE activity.....  | 31  |
| Non-vocational ACE activity.....   | 32  |
| Appendix 3.....  | 34  |
| Estimating the total level of ACE activity.....  | 34  |
| Appendix 4.....  | 36  |
| National overview of ACE: Matrix summarising findings from phase 1.....  | 36  |
| Appendix 5.....  | 38  |
| National overview of ACE - A tabular summary.....  | 38  |
| ACE Resources.....   | 61  |

# Acknowledgements

---

The National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) team would like to extend its appreciation to the formal Reference Group for the project for its guidance and support. The Reference Group was:

Professor Ken Wiltshire (Chair)

Dr Kaye Bowman (ANTA)

Ms Amanda Moore (BACE–NSW)

Ms Sue Bishop (BACE–NSW)

Ms Pam O’Neil (ACFEB—VIC)

Mr Tony Brown (ALA)

Ms Dorothy Lucardie (ALA)

Ms Jenny Butler (NTETA)

Gratitude is extended to Ms June Martin and Ms Claire Field of the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) for their ongoing assistance and to the many adult and community education (ACE) providers and State/Territory authorities who gave their time so freely. The team would also like to thank Ms Jane Schueler who assisted in the collection of State/Territory data on behalf of the NCVER.

Finally, the foresight and encouragement of the MCEETYA ACE Taskforce in supporting this important initiative is recognised.

# Glossary of terms and abbreviations

---

## **ACE**

adult and community education. The report adopts a very broad definition for ACE, to encompass all vocational and non-vocational programs delivered by community providers, and all non-vocational programs delivered by post-secondary education and training providers.

## **ACFEB**

(in Victoria) Adult, Community and Further Education Board.

## **ALA**

Adult Learning Australia, the peak organisation for adult and community education providers and participants, formerly known as Australian Association of Adult and Community Education (AAACE).

## **annual student contact hours**

(abbreviation **ASCH**; also called **annual hours**) the total nominal hours (supervised) for the modules undertaken in a year, used as a measure of total system delivery, e.g. for an institute, State or Territory.

## **ANTA**

Australian National Training Authority.

## **ANTA-agreement delivery**

that part of publicly funded VET which is covered by the ANTA agreement with States/Territories.

## **AQF**

Australian Qualifications Framework. A nationally consistent set of qualifications for all post-compulsory education and training in Australia. Under the AQF, a statement of attainment is issued for partial completion of a qualification.

## **Australian Recognition Framework**

(abbreviation **ARF**) a set of nationally agreed registration requirements for training providers, their products and services. The Australian Recognition Framework supersedes the National Framework for the Recognition of Training (NFROT).

## **AVETMISS**

the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information and Statistical Standard (AVETMISS), the data standard for the collection nationally of information on the public VET sector. See also **national collection(s)**.

## **BACE**

(in NSW) Board of Adult and Community Education.

**community centre**

(also called **community learning centre**, **neighbourhood centre**) a place providing social, educational and recreational facilities for the community.

**community college**

an educational institution for adults, offering a range of general, vocational, recreational and leisure courses, as well as subjects for the Senior Secondary Certificate of Education.

**community education**

education programs which are community-based and community-directed and intended primarily for the members of the local community. See also **adult and community education**.

**consultations**

the series of meetings with representatives of the ACE and VET sectors in each State/Territory, and at national level, to gather and exchange information relating to the 'scope of ACE' project.

**funding source**

the primary source of the monies or other resources which are used to fund the delivery of education and training programs.

**formally recognised VET**

(also **formal VET**) VET programs which lead to the award of recognised qualifications under the **Australian Recognition Framework (ARF)**.

**GST**

abbreviation for **goods and services tax**

**informal VET**

VET programs which do not lead to the award of recognised qualifications under the **Australian Recognition Framework (ARF)**.

**KPI**

key performance indicator, sometimes also known as a 'key performance measure' (KPM) or 'benchmark'.

**lifelong learning**

the process of acquiring knowledge or skills throughout life via education, training, work and general life experiences.

**MCEETYA**

Ministerial Council on Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs.

**national policy**

in this report, refers to the *National Policy on Adult Community Education (1997)*.

**national collection(s)**

the regular collections of vocational education and training data undertaken by the NCVER on behalf of ANTA. The collections comprise the annual collection of data from VET providers, the annual collection of State/Territory financial data, and the quarterly collection of apprenticeship and traineeship data. National data standards (see **AVETMISS**) govern all three collections.

**NCVER**

National Centre for Vocational Education Research Ltd

**non-vocational program**

(formerly **stream 1000**) programs or activities where the primary intention is recreation, leisure or personal enrichment and not the development of vocational knowledge or skills. See also **vocational education and training**.

**NTETA**

Northern Territory Employment and Training Authority

**public funding**

in this report refers to all State/Territory, Commonwealth and local government recurrent or specific purpose allocations for education and training, excluding funding for higher education, secondary education, primary education or pre-school education.

**publicly funded VET**

all vocational education and training funded from State/Territory or Commonwealth recurrent or specific purpose allocations for VET, including VET delivered on a fee-for-service basis by public VET organisations, such as institutes of technical and further education (**TAFE**), together with agricultural colleges and university VET campuses or departments in some States/Territories. See also **ANTA-agreement delivery**.

**registered training organisation**

(abbreviation **RTO**) an organisation registered by a State or Territory recognition authority to deliver training and/or conduct assessments and issue nationally recognised qualifications in accordance with the Australian Recognition Framework. Registered training organisations include TAFE colleges and institutes, adult and community education providers, private providers, community organisations, schools, higher education organisations, commercial and enterprise training providers, industry bodies and other organisations meeting the registration requirements.

**state training authority (STA)**

the organisation within each State/Territory which has formal responsibility for the management of the public VET system, including management of ANTA-agreement delivery.

**stream 1000**

programs where the primary intention is recreation, leisure or personal enrichment and not the development of vocational knowledge or skills; an alternative term for 'non-vocational' programs, now superseded.

**student outcomes survey (SOS)**

a questionnaire-based survey conducted annually by the NCVET on behalf of ANTA to ascertain student views of training, and the outcomes of training, for those who have completed a VET qualification or at least one module; formerly graduate destination survey (GDS).

**TAFE**

1. (in full **Technical and Further Education**) a publicly funded post-secondary organisation which provides a range of technical and vocational education and training courses and other programs, e.g. entry and bridging courses, language and literacy courses, adult basic education courses, Senior Secondary Certificate of Education courses, personal enrichment courses, and small business courses. Each State and Territory has its own TAFE system.

2. an institution offering TAFE courses; a college or institute.

**VET**

(also VET program) see **vocational education and training**

**vocational education and training**

(abbreviation VET, also VET program). Post-compulsory education and training, excluding degree and higher level programs delivered by higher education organisations, which provides people with occupational or work-related knowledge and skills. VET also includes programs which provide the basis for subsequent vocational programs.

**vocational education and training provider**

(abbreviation **VET provider**) an organisation which delivers vocational education and training programs. In Australia, the providers of vocational education and training comprise the State and Territory TAFE systems, adult and community education providers, agricultural colleges, the VET operations of some universities, schools, private providers, community organisations, industry skill centres, and commercial and enterprise training providers. See also **registered training organisation (RTO)**.

# Executive Summary

---

Adult and community education (ACE) plays an important role in educating and training Australia's people to become a society of lifelong learners. It contributes significantly to the overall education of Australia's population through a network of numerous ACE organisations and providers and the offer and provision of education and training courses in a wide range of fields. In doing this, Australia's ACE sector is a major player in setting up and emphasising the importance of a cultural background that fosters the open attitude towards flexible and lifelong learning.

The Australian National Training Authority (ANTA), endorsed by the MCEETYA ACE Taskforce commissioned the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) to undertake the project on *Scope of Adult and Community Education in Australia and Implications for Improved Data Collection and Reporting*. The NCVER consulted widely with key stakeholders in all States and Territories as part of this project during May 2000.

NCVER found that Australia's ACE sector shows great diversity and versatility with training organisations and providers delivering both vocational as well as non-vocational programs. While some ACE providers receive government funding from State/Territory or Commonwealth recurrent or specific-purpose allocations for VET, other ACE activity is funded on a fee-for-service basis, and volunteers or unpaid workers deliver some programs.

Partly because of this diversity the reporting on the training activity within Australia's ACE sector is a difficult task. Currently there is no national data standard for ACE and no obligation for providers to pass on data on ACE activity to a national ACE data collection except for that part which is funded from State/Territory or Commonwealth recurrent or specific purpose allocations for VET.

Reporting on ACE also varies quite considerably among the States and Territories. Some States/Territories, like Western Australia or the Northern Territory, have hardly any reporting mechanisms for ACE in place. The national VET data collection therefore only contains a small amount of information on ACE activity in those States/Territories. Other States/Territories, like Victoria and New South Wales, have established, and regularly update, State/Territory ACE data collections that capture activity of about 70% to 80% of ACE participants. As a result, in NSW and Victoria, and to a lesser extent in South Australia and Tasmania, the majority of the State/Territory ACE activity is reported to the national VET data collection.

Taking a broad view of adult and community education, NCVER estimates, very approximately, that in 1998 1.2 million to 1.4 million people, or 8.0% to 9.5% of Australia's adult population, were enrolled in some form of ACE. This ACE activity amounted to an estimated 25 million to 30 million hours of training.

The age and sex profile of these ACE students is remarkably consistent across the States and Territories.

- ❖ About three-quarters of ACE students are female.
- ❖ The median age of the ACE student population is approximately 40 years, about five years above the median age of Australia's population (35 years).

The information outlined below comprises all activity, including VET, delivered by adult and community education providers in receipt of State/Territory or Commonwealth recurrent or specific purpose allocations for VET, and some that is voluntarily reported to a State or Territory training authority.

In 1998, the national VET data collection contained data on ACE activity undertaken by 582 000 students. These students were enrolled either with community providers or in personal enrichment programs or both. ACE students aged 15 years or more (99% of the nationally reported ACE students) represented 3.9% of Australia's 1998 population of age 15 years or more.

In total, ACE activity nationally reported to the NCVER in 1998 accounted for more than 21.2 million training hours. Training associated with Australia's ACE sector and reported to the collection has been delivered at almost 940 different training locations.

Of the 582 000 ACE students (or about half the NCVER's total estimate) reported nationally in 1998;

- ❖ 71% were female and 29% male
- ❖ 50% were older than 38.5 years indicating that ACE students, on average, are significantly older than students participating in other post-compulsory education
- ❖ 22% undertook formal VET and 21% informal VET
- ❖ 62% were enrolled in personal enrichment programs (Table 2.1)<sup>1</sup>
- ❖ 82% were enrolled with community providers and 18% with other providers (TAFE institutes, universities etc.).

The distinction between 'vocational' and 'non-vocational' programs is based on the curricular intent (or expected vocational outcome) of the program. Under the old VET statistical Standard (AVETMISS 2.0) every training organisation that supplied information on courses was required to classify each course by stream of study<sup>2</sup>. Vocational streams were streams 2100 to 4500 while stream 1000 classified non-vocational, recreation, leisure and personal enrichment programs. This is the classification used here to distinguish between 'vocational' and 'non-vocational' ACE programs.

Vocational programs can be accredited and lead to a recognised qualification. If a student was enrolled in a program that could result in a qualification classified under the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) or the old Register of Awards in Tertiary Education (RATE), or in other certificates (including statements of attainment and endorsements to certificates), the vocational program is considered formal. Informal VET comprises all non-award vocational programs as well as module enrolment only activity. The table below illustrates this mix of programs.

---

<sup>1</sup> Students can be enrolled in both VET as well as personal enrichment programs. Therefore the percentages shown here add to more than 100.

<sup>2</sup> Even though under the new AVETMIS Standard 3.0 the stream of study classification has become obsolete, the vocational outcome is still reported as being either "vocational" or "non-vocational".

**Table: ACE activity by program type**

| <b>Program type</b>        | <b>Students (%)</b> | <b>Annual Hours (%)</b> |
|----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Formal VET                 | 22.3                | 46.6                    |
| Informal VET               | 20.7                | 14.7                    |
| <i>Total VET</i>           | <i>41.7</i>         | <i>61.3</i>             |
| <i>Personal enrichment</i> | <i>61.5</i>         | <i>38.7</i>             |
| <i>Total (%)</i>           | <i>100.0</i>        | <i>100.0</i>            |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>582 000</b>      | <b>21.2 million</b>     |

Note: The student column adds to more than 100% since some students undertake courses belonging to more than one program type.

During consultations, NCVET found that reporting to the AVETMIS Standard still presents difficulties to some providers, particularly small providers. This varies between States/Territories depending on how long reporting arrangements have been in place and what arrangements exist at the state government level.

Further, where providers are reporting to State Training Authorities (or other government agencies requiring such information), it appears that this information is seldom fed back to them for their own use. The information is therefore perceived largely as an imposition to ensure funding rather than a tool in management or planning. There was difference in opinion on this issue depending on whether providers had a commercial or advocacy role and what their core business was. That is, where a provider was part of a formally funded system, such as the public VET system or public funding from other sources, they were more likely to be sympathetic to the need for data collection.

Market information or market intelligence was seen by all (regardless of their funding status) as more valuable than enrolment, provider and organisational data. The majority if not all providers undertook customer satisfaction/ course evaluation feedback. This kind of information, including what students gained from their course, where they went on completion, what they thought of the course and where they found out about the course were seen as critical to the viability of the organisation. There was also interest in assessing and evaluating the learner's experience of the course. Instruments for collecting this information vary where they exist and are largely self-administered in class or face-to-face.

Providers consulted felt that any information collection arrangement should attempt to capture the outcomes in terms of the social and personal impact of adult and community education as well as vocational and employment related outcomes. Many felt that their own evaluation processes captured this information already, albeit the information was more likely to be qualitative than quantitative.

It is clear that gaps in the information currently collected preclude the development of national KPIs for ACE. On the other hand, the amount of detail which is collected is already seen by many in the ACE sector as adequate if not onerous.

The exception to this as noted above is 'market intelligence'. Gaps in information identified here included

- ❖ socio-economic information relating to clients
- ❖ whether clients were returning or repeat custom

- ❖ mode of transport to and from course
- ❖ what goals and outcomes had been achieved through training
- ❖ pathways before and after experience in adult and community education
- ❖ retention information
- ❖ sources of information about adult and community education
- ❖ local and regional level information, both about existing clients and potential clients.

Because of the current uneven development of information arrangements for adult and community education, NCVER considers there is a need for some additional information about adult and community education nationally. In order to meet the needs of users and allow for the possibility of a limited set of KPIs, this information needs to be broader in scope than is collected at present, but limited in depth in comparison with what is collected for the public VET system. This is underlined by the current review of the national strategy underway under the auspice of MCEETYA Adult and Community Education Taskforce and indeed, the variable depth and scope of quantitative information revealed through this project.

However, in looking at whether or not to extend the current scope of the collection it is important to consider both the need for and likely reception to, extending the scope to adult and community providers not in receipt of State/Territory or Commonwealth recurrent or specific purpose allocations for VET or other public funds. The level of detail currently collected for the public VET system (see glossary definition) is clearly the outer limit for ACE-sector activity. In fact, the NCVER suggests that the requirements for a limited set of national KPIs could be met by collecting information in considerably less detail than applies to VET.

## Recommendations

We recommend that:

1. The current arrangements be retained for all providers in the public VET system in Australia including full compliance with the AVETMIS Standard.  
This is cost neutral.
2. The issue of reporting and/or collecting a reduced amount of information in relation to personal and recreational programs be considered by the National Training Statistics Committee.  
This is cost neutral.
3. ANTA and the National Training Statistics Committee pursue with the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) the feasibility of collecting more information about participation in ACE through the ABS education and training survey or other relevant instruments.  
Costs: The cost of this could be expected to be in the range of \$50,000 - \$100,000.
4. Information on and by ACE providers be collected as a scoping exercise similar to this project every three to five years. Such a process would be greatly assisted if adult and community education advisory bodies in States and Territories held registers of adult and community providers in their states and updated these on a regular basis.  
Cost: \$100,000 every three to five years in additional funding.

5. In order to assess the feasibility of a collection of summary statistical information from ACE providers, we recommend conducting a pilot project on establishing an aggregated, provider-level ACE data collection with a diverse cross-section of ACE providers, to test the efficacy and restrictions of such an approach. The pilot project would not need to cover providers already included in existing data collection arrangements, such as Board of Adult and Community Education (BACE) providers in NSW and Adult, Community and Further Education Board (ACFEB) providers in Victoria.

Cost: approximately \$50 000 for designing data collection and data validation process, conducting pilot project, evaluating feasibility and estimating costs for national aggregate data collection. Costs highly depend on the extent of pilot project.

6. Common, do-it-yourself survey tools be developed for use by adult and community education providers in line with current development of a standard national do-it-yourself survey with a capacity for local customisation, for use within VET, including the use of electronic tools for data analysis

Cost: this would be at marginal cost or cost neutral, as there is an existing developmental project within the survey program for vocational education.

As an extension to provide a national perspective for KPI purposes, the feasibility of extending the survey to a sample of ACE providers to provide reliable information on outcomes should be explored with peak ACE organisations.

Extension cost: The final cost will depend on sample size and logistics, but could be expected to be approximately \$50 000.

7. NCVER investigate the possibility of developing an ACE — specific publication in the future, on an annual basis.

# 1. Introduction

---

Adult and community education (ACE) plays an important role in educating and training Australia's people to become a society of lifelong learners. It contributes significantly to the overall education of Australia's population through a network of numerous ACE organisations and providers and the offer and provision of education and training courses in a wide range of fields. In doing this, Australia's ACE sector is a major player in setting up and emphasising the importance of a cultural background that fosters the open attitude towards flexible and lifelong learning.

The project on *Scope of Adult and Community Education in Australia and Implications for Improved Data Collection and Reporting* was commissioned by the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) and endorsed by the MCEETYA ACE Taskforce.

## 1.1 Objectives of the project

The specific objectives of the project were to:

- ❖ Scope the provision of adult and community education in Australia
- ❖ Scope the current collection of data at the national and State/Territory level
- ❖ Review the scope and purpose of the data to assist in developing a statistics collection for ACE that measures achievement against objectives
- ❖ Identify gaps in data elements collected nationally
- ❖ Assess the feasibility of expanding the current collection arrangements to allow for more comprehensive collection and reporting of adult and community education delivery
- ❖ Estimate costs nationally and to States/Territories of any possible expansion to current collection arrangements.

The report '*Key Performance Indicators for Adult Community Education*' prepared by Kaye Schofield and Associates<sup>3</sup> concluded that there was, at that time, 'no shared view within the sector as to the set of performance indicators which can best capture the diversity of ACE activity and the outputs and outcomes of ACE.' However, the report did propose that the seven performance measures adopted by the VET sector, coupled with the strategic objectives set forth in the *National Policy on Adult Community Education* (1997) could, with appropriate adaptation, serve as the basis for KPIs for ACE.

As noted in the report, performance indicators address the relationships among four elements, namely:

- ❖ The resources used (inputs)
- ❖ What is done (processes)
- ❖ What is produced (outputs)
- ❖ What impacts are achieved (outcomes).

However, since not all ACE activity is funded from public allocations for VET or from other sources of public funds (e.g. State/Territory or local government) and issues of public accountability generally do not apply uniformly, accountability for inputs and processes is partly a matter for resolution by the provider. In these instances, and across ACE generally,

---

<sup>3</sup> '*Key Performance Indicators for Adult Community Education*' prepared by Kaye Schofield and Associates for the MCEETYA ACE Taskforce

there is an argument for KPI (and therefore information collection) to focus increasingly on market intelligence, including client destinations and satisfaction studies. This approach is adopted here, and is supported by the views expressed in project consultations.

By addressing the issue of the scope of ACE in Australia and the implications for improved data collection and reporting, the present report is an important step in the process of developing workable KPIs for the ACE sector.

## 1.2 Processes and methodology

The project required a multi-stage methodology which included desk work, consultation and document review. The following table 1.1 outlines the processes and methodologies used.

**Table 1.1 Process and methodology**

| <b>Requirement</b>   | <b>Activities and methodologies</b>  |
|--|--|
| Scope the provision of adult and community education in Australia    | <p>Use the project Steering Group as a resource for information and advice.</p> <p>Identify the principal ACE stakeholders and contacts in each state<sup>4</sup>, and a group of ACE-sector providers (small, medium and large) to participate in consultations.</p> <p>Obtain and collate information on scope from ACE stakeholders and contacts, and from state training authorities<sup>5</sup>.</p> <p>Identify and document, qualitatively, the extent to which ACE-sector activity extends beyond that of the publicly-funded VET sector in each state.</p> <p>Identify and document how ACE-sector activity is funded in each state and any reporting obligations related to funding.</p> |
| Scope the current collection of data at the national and state level | <p>Analyse, statistically, reported activity by training provider type and programme type.</p> <p>Report, statistically, on the relationship between national reporting scope and reported ACE-sector activity which falls outside the required reporting scope.</p> <p>Report, statistically, on trends in the relative contribution of VET and non-VET activity in total reported activity.</p> <p>Summarise reported ACE-sector activity by field of study, area of learning and qualification level, and identify trends over the period 1996 to 1999.</p>   |
| Identify gaps in data elements collected nationally                  | <p>Document the extent of reporting against all elements of the AVETMIS Standard over the period 1996 to 1999.</p> <p>Identify any data elements relevant to the ACE sector which are not part of AVETMISS.</p> <p>Document the likely impact of improved systems and reporting by ACE-sector providers, including the impact of release 3 of AVETMISS.</p> <p>Obtain from stakeholders views on data elements required from the ACE-sector to meet national information requirements.</p> <p>Formulate options for comment and costing (these will range from doing nothing to full-compliance with the AVETMIS Standard).</p>  |

<sup>4</sup> The term 'state' is used here to refer to all States and Territories.

<sup>5</sup> The term 'state training authority' refers to all State and Territory training authorities.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>Assess the feasibility of expanding the current collection arrangements to allow for more comprehensive collection and reporting of ACE-sector delivery</p> | <p>Undertake a round of consultations with stakeholders and provider representatives to obtain more detailed input and to discuss options. Obtain stakeholder views on jurisdictional information requirements for ACE and assess the feasibility of expanding the current collection arrangements.</p> <p>Prepare a 'reactions paper' for circulation to stakeholders and provider representatives.</p> <p>Request stakeholder and provider representatives to comment formally on the feasibility of various reporting scenarios.</p> <p>Convene a national forum of state and territory representatives to consider preliminary findings.</p> |
| <p>Estimate costs nationally and to states of any possible expansion to current collection arrangements</p>  | <p>Request stakeholders (including the NCVET) and provider representatives to make cost estimates for various reporting scenarios. This will include the costs associated with hardware/software, training and staff support to expand the current collection arrangements.</p> <p>Identify any national initiatives which might control costs and assist providers with reporting (e.g. software).</p>  |
| <p>Final project outputs</p>   | <p>A detailed consolidated report with supporting documentation and analyses, and recommendations.</p> <p>A suggested implementation plan, with costings, for the project recommendations.</p> <p>An executive summary suitable for circulation to providers and interested parties.</p>   |

### 1.3 Project timelines

The project was undertaken over seven months during 2000. Table 1.2 indicates the development timetable.

**Table 1.2 Project timelines**

| <b>Date of Completion</b>                       | <b>Activity</b>  |
|---|--|
| <b>Stage 1 Project Commencement</b>             |  |
| Week ending 14 <sup>th</sup> January 2000       | Project Steering Group established.<br>Draft methodology paper completed.  |
| Week ending 4 <sup>th</sup> February 2000       | Steering Group meeting 1.<br>Methodology paper, timeframe, deliverables and consultation targets agreed to.          |
| <b>Stage 2 Data Analysis and Interpretation</b> |  |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> April, 2000                     | Steering Group meeting 2. Discuss consultations and forum.   |
| Week ending 28 <sup>th</sup> April 2000         | Analysis of current national provider data completed.  |
| Week ending 28 <sup>th</sup> April 2000         | Analysis of other data through VET surveys and ABS completed.<br>Data summary paper completed and delivered to ANTA. |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> May, 2000                       | Discussion of Summary data paper at Steering Group meeting 3 (teleconference).                                       |
| <b>Stage 3 Consultations</b>                    |  |
| Week ending 1 <sup>st</sup> June, 2000          | Consultations completed with key stakeholders.   |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> June, 2000                      | Discussion of Interim report and findings at Steering Group meeting 4 (teleconference).                              |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> June 2000                       | Forum of MCEETYA and ACE project representatives conducted in Melbourne.   |
| <b>Stage 4 Report Development</b>               |  |
| Week ending 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2000          | Draft final report completed and delivered to ANTA and the Steering Group.   |
| Week ending 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2000          | Final report modified as required and delivered to ANTA.   |

## 2. Scope of adult and community education

---

Australia's adult and community education (ACE) sector shows great diversity and versatility and providers delivering both vocational as well as non-vocational programs. While some ACE providers receive government funding from State/Territory or Commonwealth recurrent or specific-purpose allocations for VET, other ACE activity is funded on a fee-for-service basis, and some programs are delivered by volunteers.

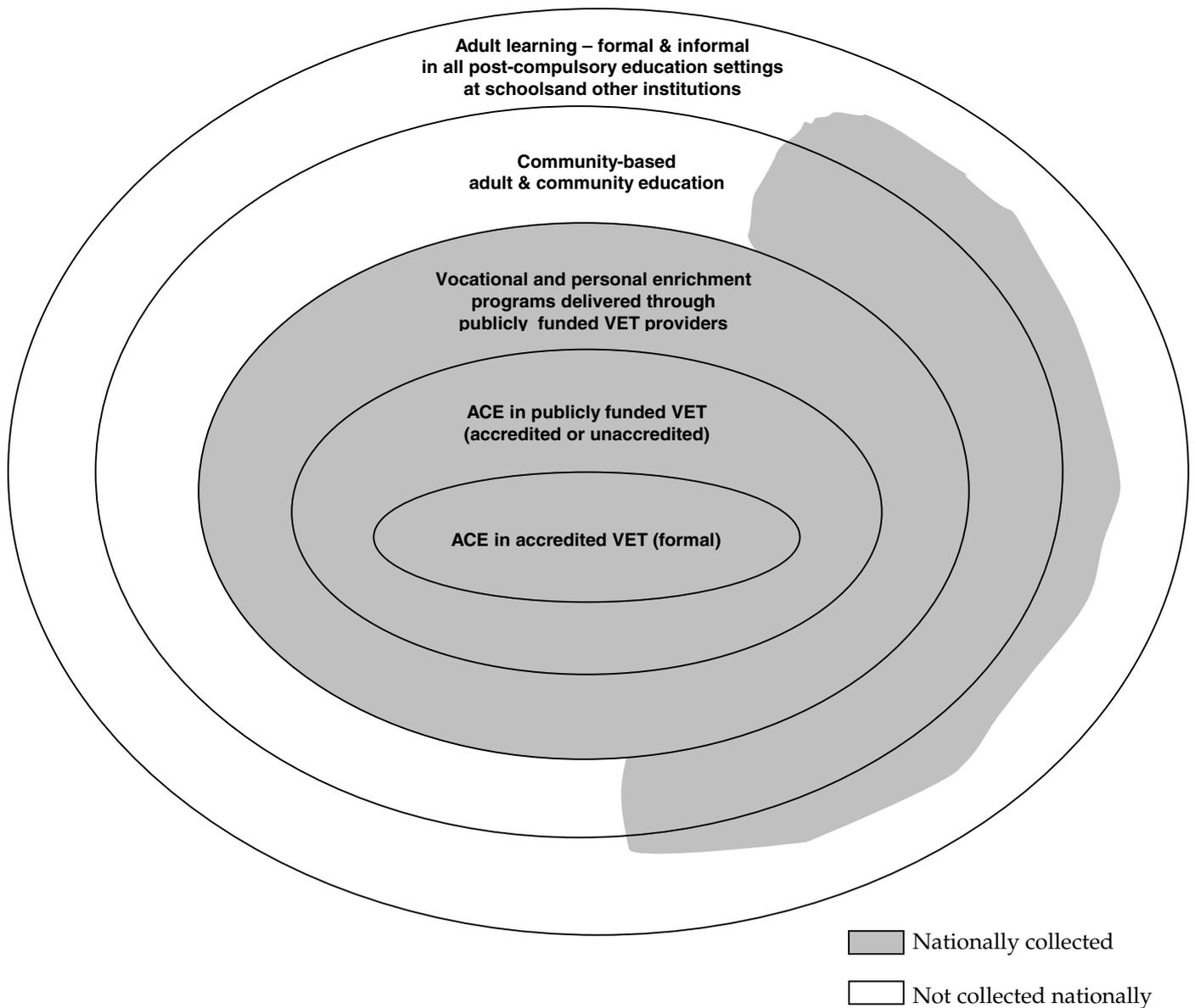
Partly because of this diversity the reporting on the training activity within Australia's ACE sector is a difficult task. Currently there is no national data standard for ACE and no obligation for providers to pass on data on ACE activity to a national ACE data collection except for that part which is funded from State/Territory or Commonwealth recurrent or specific purpose allocations for vocational education and training (VET).

Reporting on ACE also varies quite considerably among the States and Territories. Some States/Territories, like Western Australia or the Northern Territory, have few reporting mechanisms for ACE in place. The national VET data collection therefore only contains a small amount of information on ACE activity in those States/Territories. Other States/Territories, like Victoria and New South Wales, have established, and regularly update, State/Territory ACE data collections that capture activity of about 70% to 80% of ACE participants. As a result, in NSW and Victoria, and to a lesser extent in South Australia and Tasmania, the majority of the State/Territory ACE activity is reported to the national VET data collection.

The following diagram (figure 2.1) illustrates the scope of adult and community education in Australia and where data is collected. The outermost circle depicts ACE in its broadest definition, namely ACE as being post-compulsory adult learning in all formal and informal settings delivered by community and non-community training providers, while the innermost circle represents that part of ACE that is delivered in formal VET programs by community-based providers. The smaller the circle, the narrower the scope for ACE. (The shading indicates which parts of ACE are currently collected as a by-product of the national collection of VET data).

Because at the present time there is no agreed scope, and coverage varies considerably among the States/Territories, the data available do not provide an adequate basis for developing and implementing national KPIs for ACE, nor for consistent capture of information generally.

**Figure 2.1: Scope of Adult and Community Education in Australia from a national perspective**



NCVER estimates, very approximately, that in 1998 1.2 million to 1.4 million people, or 8.0% to 9.5% of Australia’s adult population, were enrolled in some form of ACE. This ACE activity amounted to an estimated 25 million to 30 million hours of training.

The basis for these estimates is provided in Appendices 2 and 3.

The age and sex profile of ACE students is remarkably consistent across the States and Territories.

- ❖ About three-quarters of these ACE students are female.
- ❖ The median age of the ACE student population is approximately 40 years, about five years above the median age of Australia’s population (35 years).

## 2.1 Segmenting the Scope of ACE

Some differences of opinion exist as to what actually constitutes adult and community education (ACE). The official or working definitions are found to vary among the States and Territories (see results of NCVER's desktop analysis – Appendix 5). The situation is further complicated by different opinions among providers and other ACE stakeholders within each State/Territory on what to include in ACE and what not. Views on the definition of ACE, as expressed in the consultation rounds held by NCVER, range from learning activity including only education, training and related services provided by community-based, community-managed organisations, to activity encompassing all post-compulsory training and education activity that contributes to the process of lifelong learning.

The diversity of definitions and variations in business arrangements among States and Territories add a great deal of difficulty to the task of scoping ACE in Australia. Underlying any scope for measurement or KPI purposes is a definition or set of parameters. Without making a decision on what these parameters are, the data collection and reporting is more than problematical.

In accordance with the Steering Committee's advice, NCVER has therefore adopted a broad scoping of ACE to capture the full diversity of the sector. However, looking at existing collections, the NCVER has included only:

- ❖ All education and training activity which is delivered by community-based or community-managed organisations with focus on providing learning opportunities for adults or contributing to the recurrent vocational, personal, cultural and social development of adults; **and**
- ❖ All education and training activity whose intention is non-vocational but contributes to the personal, cultural or social development of students, and which is delivered by TAFE institutes, universities, schools, commercial, industry or other private providers which are in receipt of State/Territory or Commonwealth recurrent or specific purpose allocations for VET.

The adult and community education sector can also be viewed as a market, involving providers and purchasers or users of services. The provider side of the market for adult and community education can be divided into those for whom the delivery of adult and community education is core business (accounting for roughly three-quarters of the students in the sector) and those for whom it is an adjunct, albeit an important one.

The current collection of ACE data, which is a by-product of the national collection of information on the public VET sector (see glossary), is centred largely on those for whom adult and community education is a core activity. The remaining market in this area which is not currently captured includes:

- ❖ most activity offered by Universities of the Third Age (U3A) and Schools for Seniors in States/Territories other than Victoria as well as some of Victoria's U3A activity
- ❖ some activity delivered by Community and Neighbourhood Houses, Community Adult Education Centres and Community Learning Centres
- ❖ non-TAFE activity in Western Australia
- ❖ non-vocational adult education programs and evening classes delivered at some Australian universities and libraries, and by the Evening and Community College's Association
- ❖ some recreation, leisure or personal enrichment activity at TAFE centres, which allows community access to TAFE facilities in accordance with State/Territory policies

- ❖ some activity at private and government secondary schools; and
- ❖ private recreation, leisure and personal enrichment activity such as that provided through cultural associations (Alliance Française, health centres, dance studios).

Funding for the ACE sector comes from a wide variety of sources, including:

- ❖ Public funds to deliver VET programs, disbursed from State/Territory and Commonwealth recurrent allocations for VET
- ❖ State/Territory and Commonwealth specific-purpose allocations for VET
- ❖ State/Territory administrative and support payments to ACE providers
- ❖ Payments made by public- or private-sector organisations for the delivery of specific ACE programs (for example, local government and community bodies, State/Territory health and community services organisations, employers purchasing education or training services for their employees)
- ❖ Tuition or membership fees paid by students undertaking ACE programs.

It is important to note that the scope of the current collection is determined largely by the reach of State/Territory or Commonwealth recurrent or specific purpose allocations for VET in what is a very contestable market. Those organisations which are successful in bidding for available funds in one year (and hence form part of the national VET collection for that year) may not be in subsequent years even though carrying out the same activity. This contributes to the variable scope in collecting national performance information. This variability is less in NSW and Victoria, where the Board of Adult Community Education and the Adult, Community and Further Education Board, respectively, collect data from the great majority of ACE providers at least once a year.

An approximate estimate of the size of the whole sector is given in Appendix 3.

## 2.2 Nationally reported ACE activity through the NCVER

As noted, the reporting mechanisms which do exist are typically only in place where data collection and collation are part of a State/Territory or Commonwealth funding arrangement for VET. The national VET data collection mirrors, to a large extent, such funding arrangements. It primarily collects data on VET as delivered by providers whose training delivery is funded, wholly or partly, from State/Territory or Commonwealth recurrent or specific-purpose allocations for VET. Government funding from sources other than allocations for VET do not generally result in data reporting to the NCVER even though data may be reported separately to the relevant funding authority.

Vocational education and training is defined as education or training activity which develops specific vocational skills or imparts knowledge which is needed in specific vocational contexts. VET also includes general education and training activity, and activity intended to develop generic skills in areas such as literacy and numeracy which serve as preparation for subsequent, more specific, vocational education or training activity. Consequently, vocational education and training can be seen as a subset of adult and community education when the latter is broadly defined.

The information outlined below comprises all activity, including VET, delivered by adult and community education providers in receipt of State/Territory or Commonwealth recurrent or specific purpose allocations for VET, and some that is voluntarily reported to a State or Territory training authority.

In 1998, the national VET data collection contained data on ACE activity undertaken by 582 000 students<sup>6</sup>. These students were enrolled either with community providers or in personal enrichment programs or both. ACE students aged 15 years or more (99% of the nationally reported ACE students) represented 3.9% of Australia's 1998 population of age 15 years or more.

In total, ACE activity nationally reported in 1998 accounted for more than 21.2 million training hours<sup>6</sup>. Training associated with Australia's ACE sector and reported to the collection has been delivered at almost 940 different training locations.

Of the 582 000 (or about half the NCVER's total estimates) ACE students nationally reported in 1998;

- ❖ 71% were female and 29% male
- ❖ 50% were older than 38.5 years indicating that ACE students, on average, are significantly older than students participating in other post-compulsory education
- ❖ 22% undertook formal VET and 21% informal VET
- ❖ 62% were enrolled in personal enrichment programs (Table 2.1)<sup>7,8</sup>
- ❖ 82% were enrolled with community providers and 18% with other providers (TAFE institutes, universities etc.).

Of those ACE students who provided information on their employment status<sup>9</sup> 70% were employed, 11% unemployed and 19% not in the labour force. The employment profile of students depends significantly on whether students undertake formal VET, informal VET or personal enrichment programs (see Appendix 2).

Of the 21.2 million annual ACE hours in the national VET database, almost half (47%) were delivered in accredited VET courses, 15% in informal VET programs and 39% in personal enrichment programs (Table 2.1). Until 1998, module outcomes for ACE activity were reported to the national collection on a voluntary basis. For this reason successful module completions for ACE activity are understated. However, the reported data for 1998 show that at least half (47%) of the annual hours for ACE activity resulted in successful completions.<sup>10</sup> For more details on module outcome see Appendix 2.

---

<sup>6</sup> Our estimates suggest that the national VET data collection contains information on roughly 40% to 50% Australia's ACE population and in the region of 70% to 90% of ACE activity measured in terms of annual hours.

<sup>7</sup> Students can be enrolled in both VET as well as personal enrichment programs. Therefore the percentages shown here add to more than 100.

<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that in Australia there exists VET which is not funded by the States/Territories or the Commonwealth. Since reporting of VET activity is a requirement of the funding arrangements between training organisations and public funding agencies, privately funded VET activity is not necessarily reported to the national VET database. Therefore the national data collection only contains such information on privately-funded VET activity that is provided to the NCVER on a voluntary basis.

<sup>9</sup> Only 50% of students supply information on their employment status. Therefore caution should be exercised when interpreting these figures.

<sup>10</sup> For about 40% of the annual hours the module outcome is not known since under AVETMISS 2.0 community-based providers were not obliged to report module outcomes to the national VET data collection. Under the new AVETMIS Standard 3.0, however, module outcomes have to be reported by all providers.

## 2.2.1 ACE activity by program type

The distinction between 'vocational' and 'non-vocational' programs is based on the curricular intent (or expected vocational outcome) of the program<sup>11</sup>. Under the old AVETMISS 2.0 every training organisation that supplied information on courses was required to classify each course by stream of study<sup>12</sup>. Vocational streams were streams 2100 to 4500 while stream 1000 classified non-vocational, recreation, leisure and personal enrichment programs. This is the classification used here to distinguish between 'vocational' and 'non-vocational' ACE programs.

Vocational programs can be accredited and lead to a recognised qualification. If a student was enrolled in a program that could result in a qualification classified under the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) or the old Register of Awards in Tertiary Education (RATE), or in other certificates (including statements of attainment and endorsements to certificates), the vocational program is considered formal. Informal VET comprises all non-award vocational programs as well as module enrolment only activity.

**Table 2.1: ACE activity by program type**

| <b>Program type</b>        | <b>Students (%)</b> | <b>Annual Hours (%)</b> |
|----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Formal VET                 | 22.3                | 46.6                    |
| Informal VET               | 20.7                | 14.7                    |
| <i>Total VET</i>           | <i>41.7</i>         | <i>61.3</i>             |
| <i>Personal enrichment</i> | <i>61.5</i>         | <i>38.7</i>             |
| <i>Total (%)</i>           | <i>100.0</i>        | <i>100.0</i>            |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>582 000</b>      | <b>21.2 million</b>     |

Note: The student column adds to more than 100% since some students undertake courses belonging to more than one program type.

## 2.2.2 Accredited vocational ACE activity reported nationally

In Australia's nationally reported ACE sector the provision of formal programs with vocational intent experienced significant growth over the past two years with student numbers increasing by 43% between 1996 (90 500 students) and 1998 (129 600) and annual hours by 90% (1996: 5.2 million hours; 1998: 9.9 million hours). Along with this increase, ACE activity in informal VET and personal enrichment programs decreased.

Of the 129 600 ACE students participating in formal VET programs in 1998:

- ❖ about two-thirds (66%) were female and one-third male, and
- ❖ half were older than 37.1 years.

They averaged 76 hours of training per person in 1998, significantly less than the average number of hours (204 hours) undertaken by students in rest of the public VET sector.

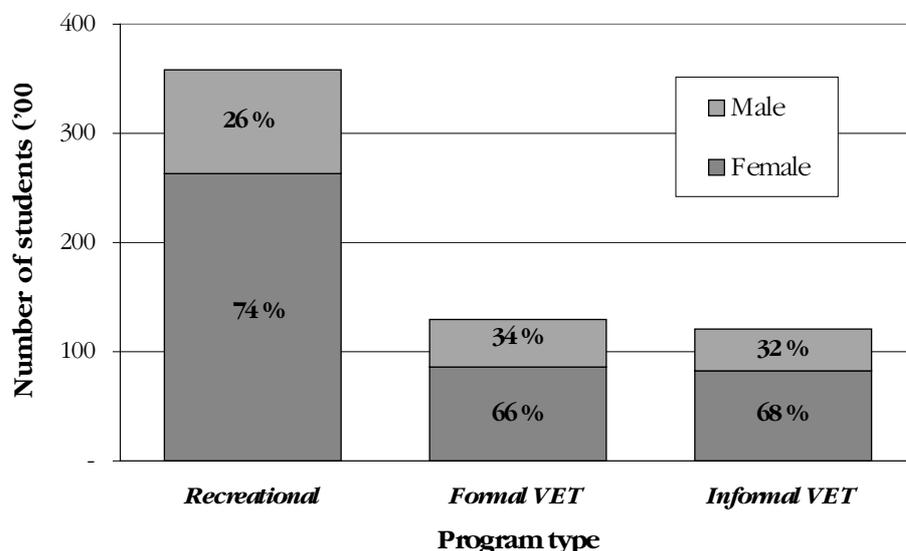
More than half of students were enrolled in courses that lead to statements of attainment, certificates of competency or proficiency, or endorsements to certificates, accounting for less than one quarter (22%) of annual ACE hours reported nationally. AQF-II qualifications were undertaken by one-fifth of the students accounting for slightly more than one quarter of annual hours.

<sup>11</sup> The classification 'non-vocational' therefore does not take into account the personal intent of the student which may as well be vocational.

<sup>12</sup> Even though under the new AVETMIS Standard 3.0 the stream of study classification has become obsolete, the vocational outcome is still reported as being either "vocational" or "non-vocational".

Most of the annual hours in the formal vocational ACE sector were funded from State/Territory or Commonwealth recurrent or specific purpose allocations for VET (96%). Only 3% were funded on a fee-for-service basis (unknowns: 1%).

**Figure 2.2: Nationally reported ACE participation numbers by sex and program type**



### 2.2.3 Informal vocational ACE activity reported nationally

While the nationally reported participation of ACE students in informal vocational training activity remained fairly steady over the past two years (1996: 123 700 students, 1998: 120 800 students), annual hours dropped quite significantly from 5.3 million hours in 1996 by 42% to 3.1 million in 1998.

Of the 120 800 nationally reported ACE students enrolled in informal VET activity in 1998,

- ❖ more than two-thirds (68%) were female and less than one-third male; and
- ❖ half were older than 38.4 years.

This indicates that ACE students enrolled in informal VET programs on average are slightly older and more likely to be female than those enrolled in formal VET programs.

ACE students enrolled in informal VET programs, on average, undertook 26 hours in 1998, about one-third of the training load of ACE students in formal VET programs.

Almost three-quarters of the annual hours in the informal vocational ACE sector were funded from State/Territory or Commonwealth recurrent or specific purpose allocations for VET (74%), the remaining quarter (25%) on a fee-for-service basis (unknowns: 2%)<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> Percentages add to more than 100 due to rounding.

## 2.2.4 Non-vocational activity reported nationally<sup>14</sup>

Non-vocational ('personal enrichment') ACE activity is characterised by short courses mainly consisting of one or two modules. In 1998 personal enrichment activity accounted for 358 200 students, 8.2 million hours, 501 200 module enrolments and 470 200 course enrolments and was delivered by more than 620 providers.

Community-based organisations are the most important providers for personal enrichment programs. In 1998, they accounted for 70% of students, 74% of annual hours, 73% of module enrolments and 75% of course enrolments delivered at more than 620 different provider locations.

TAFE and other government providers accounted for 30% of students, 25% of annual hours, 27% of module enrolments and 25% of course enrolments respectively.

Private and other non-government providers play a marginal role in the provision of personal enrichment education and training.

Personal enrichment and training activity, as reported to the national VET data collection, experienced an apparent decline over the past years. From 1996 to 1998:

- ❖ Student numbers dropped by 68 100 or 16.0%
- ❖ Annual hours decreased by 1.045 million hours or 11.3%.

This decline is partly due to improved data quality and enhancement in the scope of data reporting to the national VET collection with student numbers enrolled in 'module enrolment only' training activity (which is classified as VET) increasing from 100 in 1996 to 24 600 in 1998.

More details on the formal vocational, informal vocational and non-vocational parts of Australia's ACE sector reported to the national VET database can be found in Appendix 2.

## 2.2.5 Nationally reported ACE activity provided by community-based organisations

In 1998, nationally reported education and training delivered by community-based organisations amounted to 19.1 million of annual training hours and 475 600 students comprising 82% of ACE students and 90% of annual ACE hours in the national VET data collection. This activity has been delivered at almost 700 different locations. The total training activity comprised 846 700 module enrolments and 676 000 course enrolments.

Vocational ACE accounted for half (51%) of ACE students, two-thirds (68%) of ACE annual hours and 70% of module enrolments in ACE. It was delivered at about 630 different provider locations. Slightly more than one quarter (27%) of the ACE students undertook accredited vocational programs accounting for more than half (52%) of annual hours delivered by community providers.

Personal enrichment activity was delivered by 370 providers and comprised 53% of students, 32% of annual hours and 43% of module enrolments.

As compared with 1996, training delivered by community providers has shown an increase in module enrolments and annual hours. However, overall student numbers have decreased marginally. This suggests that community providers may have shifted towards delivering VET rather than personal enrichment programs. Further, in 1998 more community providers (almost 700) reported to the VET provider data collection than in 1996 (around 550).

---

<sup>14</sup> A detailed statistical analysis of the non-vocational ACE sector can be found in NCVER's publication *Australian Personal Enrichment Education and Training Programs Statistics 1998: an overview*.

While in 1996 some 489 000 students were enrolled with community providers reporting to the national VET data collection, this number dropped by 2.8% to 475 600 in 1998. However, total annual hours experienced significant growth over the two-year period under consideration. While in 1996 17.1 million hours of ACE were delivered, this number increased by 2.0 million, or 11.6%, to 19.1 million in 1998. Module enrolments also increased by 19.0% from 1996 to 1998, indicating a tendency of stronger modularisation of VET courses.

In 1996, vocational ACE programs accounted for 43% of students, 62% of annual hours, a noticeably lower proportion than in 1998 (51% of students and 68% of annual hours).

## 2.3 Outputs and outcomes information currently available

At the present time, very limited information is available nationally, and on a regular basis, about the outputs and outcomes from ACE-sector activity.

Some providers who submit data to the national VET collection include information about module results (pass, fail etc) and details of completed qualifications. However, this information is provided on a voluntary basis because, before 1999, ACE providers were not required to report module or course completions information as specified in the AVETMIS Standard. It should be noted that this same limitation applies to private providers receiving State/Territory or Commonwealth recurrent or specific purpose allocations for VET.

However, once ACE providers who receive public VET allocations to deliver VET programs are in a position to comply fully with the AVETMIS Standard, it will be possible to include their contribution to national skills formation within the domain of formally recognised VET in the performance measures for the public VET system.

In relation to outcomes, ACE providers in some States and Territories have expressed an interest in participating in the annual graduate destination and student outcomes surveys conducted by the NCVER. However, limitations in management information systems, concerns about confidentiality, logistical difficulties and the need to tailor these VET surveys to the ACE sector, have to date prevented reliable reporting despite the participation of some providers.

Some ACE organisations have undertaken research studies into the outputs and outcomes of participation in ACE. However, these studies tend to be limited in scope and do not provide national or nationally consistent information. As a result of these limitations, national KPIs for ACE based on outputs or outcomes information cannot be produced at the present time.

### 3. Collection and reporting issues

---

The previous chapter has discussed and analysed the scope and diversity of adult and community education, both in terms of what is currently collected, as well as information made available through research and consultations for this report.

A number of other issues arose as part of the NCVER's consultations and these are discussed below in addition to the issue of gaps in current data collection raised as part of the terms of reference for the project. Responses to the themes raised by the NCVER were fairly consistent across States and Territories. Differences were more pronounced between providers who are part of the public VET system and those who lie outside that scope. Within the public, formally funded part of the sector, differences revolved around whether or not the provider's core business was the delivery of adult and community education, broadly defined. These differences were not pronounced and there was broad consistency in responses given the mix and diversity of providers.

In the *Key Performance Indicators for Adult Community Education* report, the authors noted that the development and implementation of KPIs for the ACE sector would depend on the availability of relevant information in key areas, namely inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes. In the publicly funded VET sector, information about inputs and outputs is obtained from the national collections of provider and financial data, while information about outcomes is obtained from the annual student outcomes survey and the biennial employer satisfaction survey. A limited set of information about VET processes can be obtained from both the VET provider collection and the student outcomes survey.

The NCVER was asked to identify gaps in data elements collected nationally, particularly as it relates to the development of KPIs for the ACE sector and noting that any data collection regime needs to collect information on outputs as well as inputs. In doing so, the NCVER canvassed;

- ❖ Providers' experience of current data collection arrangements
- ❖ The utility of data collected currently to providers
- ❖ Gaps in information collected
- ❖ The extent and kind of data used by providers locally
- ❖ The possible impact of determinations in relation to ACE of the GST.

Before exploring these issues further it is important to note that data quality in adult and community education has improved enormously since its introduction to the national VET data collection in 1996. Further, the need for data collection is generally accepted by States/Territories, umbrella organisations and providers as important for recognising the magnitude of the contribution which the ACE sector makes to education, training and lifelong learning. Where ACE providers receive funds from government VET allocations or other public sources, data collection also serves as an important accountability and quality assurance tool. Many providers also noted the need for or usefulness of statistical information for the purposes of market research, program development and promotion.

Nevertheless, providers (both those within the current collection arrangements and those outside it) reported a number of continuing concerns. These are described briefly below.

### 3.1 Providers experience of current collection arrangements

As noted earlier, not all providers fall within the scope of current collection arrangements. The issues noted here are those raised in large part by providers who report to the NCVET, most, if not all of whom are community not-for-profit agencies.

Reporting to the AVETMIS Standard still presents difficulties to some providers, particularly small providers. This varies between States/Territories depending on how long reporting arrangements have been in place and what arrangements exist at the state government level.

The AVETMIS Standard was designed to collect comprehensive, consistent and comparable information in vocational education and training nationally. Many providers in adult and community education reported continuing difficulties in providing information to this level of detail.

Providers expressed concern at the costs incurred by a data reporting mechanism designed for use in the VET sector, even with a reduced or simplified set of data elements. Some providers reported employing additional staff to compile data requested. Despite the difficulties raised, most providers indicated that they would cooperate in some kind of data collection provided adequate funds were made available. In addition, many providers reported seeing no value in the information collected as it was not made available to them in a way they could use and understand. If they could see the 'reward' as one provider termed it, in having the information given back in a usable format there would be a greater appetite for collection.

Particular difficulties were also cited in relation to collecting full demographic details from clients in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status and other demographic characteristics, especially information on prior levels of education. This arose for a number of reasons including client reluctance to reveal information because of perceived embarrassment, resentment at the time such processes entail where clients are enrolled in very short programs of no more than a couple of hours duration, and a perception that such information would be used against them at such future date.

Further, the mechanics of collecting data to the Standard are still causing difficulties. Specifically, the lack of responsiveness of software providers to the needs of small users was raised repeatedly as an issue. Information systems are still under development, and finding software that is AVETMISS compliant in particular appears to be a barrier to reporting and using data effectively at the local level.

### 3.2 The utility of data collected to providers

As noted above, where providers are reporting to State Training Authorities (or other government agencies requiring such information), it appears that this information is seldom fed back to them for their own use. The information is therefore perceived largely as an imposition to ensure funding rather than a tool in management or planning. There was difference in opinion on this issue depending on whether providers had a commercial or advocacy role and what their core business was. That is, where a provider was part of a formally funded system, they were more likely to be sympathetic to the need for data collection.

Market information or market intelligence was seen by all (regardless of their funding status) as more valuable than enrolment, provider and organisational data.

Information and measures about client satisfaction, and the outputs and outcomes of ACE, are central to the KPI approach. From the consultations it was found that the majority if not all providers undertook customer satisfaction/ course evaluation feed-back. This kind of

information, including what students gained from their course, where they went on completion, what they thought of the course and where they found out about the course were seen as critical to the viability of the organisation. There was also interest in assessing and evaluating the learner's experience of the course. Instruments for collecting this information vary where they exist and are largely self-administered in class or face-to-face.

Although there is considerable interest in a student outcomes survey (SOS) of some kind, the current survey administered by the NCVET is not seen as user-friendly given length (the survey takes half an hour to complete), complexity and time after student left course. Providers were concerned that outcomes be seen in a broader context of achievement than that relating solely to employment objectives and outcomes. There was a general perception that the current SOS, and current thinking in terms of outcomes in general, focussed largely if not exclusively on employment related outcomes, with too little attention given to affective outcomes such as personal development or pathways to other education or training activities. In such a framework, it was felt, issues of improved life chances in terms of self-confidence and the capacity to cope with life and work in general were overlooked.

A related issue was the logistical difficulties of collecting any further information once a client has left the course or program.

It should be noted that the NCVET, on behalf of ANTA, is currently developing a do-it-yourself student outcomes survey for use by providers who wish to administer their own survey and compare the results with national KPIs. This survey will contain a core set of information which is nationally consistent, but the survey can also be augmented or customised to meet the needs of a provider. The NCVET considers that this approach has potential utility for the ACE sector.

### 3.3 Measuring objectives of adult and community education including quality and diversity

The *ACE National Policy* considers issues relating to 'quality' and identifies the value-added role that ACE plays in the national training system. A central outcome for this objective is that quantifiable data on the ACE sector's involvement in the VET system will be available. We asked what steps needed to be taken to enhance this objective. Strategic Objective 6 from the *ACE National Policy* relates to fostering inclusiveness in the ACE sector. We asked the question, to what extent can a national data collection system, which measures patterns of participation and non-participation across equity groups in ACE, contribute to this goal?

In many instances providers were not familiar with the objectives of the national adult and community education strategy. Obviously, where providers were part of the government-funded system there was greater familiarity. Most providers shared the view that the broader goals of quality and diversity were important despite the difficulties experienced in trying to capture information on these goals.

Capturing the contribution of adult and community education to the national training system is possible within the current collection parameters, many providers, however, saw this as incidental to the main information requirements of the sector. There were relatively few suggestions as to how this information might be enhanced. Also, the current approach to information about the ACE sector was questioned by some provider representatives as not giving sufficient attention to the affective outcomes of ACE.

Providers consulted felt that any information collection arrangement should attempt to capture the outcomes in terms of the social and personal impact of adult and community education as well as vocational and employment related outcomes. Many felt that their own evaluation

processes captured this information already, albeit the information was more likely to be qualitative than quantitative.

It was also apparent that many providers, again mostly those outside the current funding arrangements, were unaware of the strategic objectives identified at the national level.

### 3.4 Gaps in information collected

Gaps in the information currently collected preclude the development of national KPIs for ACE, or the production of a national report on the outputs and outcomes of ACE, all of which are seen as important priorities for ACE by MCEETYA and ANTA. On the other hand, the amount of detail which is collected currently is already seen by many in the ACE sector as adequate if not onerous.

The exception to this as noted above is 'market intelligence'. Gaps in information identified here included;

- ❖ socio-economic information relating to clients
- ❖ whether clients were returning or repeat custom
- ❖ mode of transport to and from course
- ❖ what goals and outcomes had been achieved through training
- ❖ pathways before and after experience in adult and community education
- ❖ retention or information
- ❖ sources of information about adult and community education
- ❖ local and regional level information, both about existing clients and potential clients.

Again, the overriding theme and preoccupation of providers is not with KPIs as such but around positioning themselves in the market so as to be able to meet the needs of current and future users of their services. When pressed on how such information should be collected, most providers were less confident that there were any easy solutions. Most reported that they would not be able to do so without specific resources to do so.

From the point of view of current collection arrangements for in-scope providers, the NCVER is satisfied that there has been a concerted effort to improve data collected. Data most commonly not reported or reported incorrectly from adult and community providers relates largely to classification and coding issues at the provider level, to specific data elements not being collected (for example, indigenous status, employment, prior education, disability information), the distinction between courses and modules, and the reporting of completed qualifications. The availability of improved software for use by small providers has ameliorated the situation to some extent, but there is still some way to go in this area, particularly if data are required to support national KPIs as foreshadowed.

### 3.5 Goods and Services Tax

Because of the possible impact of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) on provision of adult and community education, the Reference Group for the project asked the NCVER to canvass this as an issue during consultations.

At the time of the project consultations a determination had been drafted and was before the federal Minister of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, State and Territory training authorities and the MCEETYA ACE Taskforce. This determination was designed to provide the

guidelines for determining whether an activity can be considered GST liable or exempt. The likely scenario was that for GST exemption, an activity must be:

- ❖ an ACE course
- ❖ likely to add to employment-related skills.

The GST-free definition may become a boundary within the ACE sector and is likely to have an impact over time on the programs which are offered by providers or accessed by students. The impact of the GST was reported by some States/Territories only as an area where work has commenced in terms of assessing the impact on the ATO ruling noted above. There appears to have been little or no attempt to classify or categorise either all providers or those currently in receipt of funds from States/Territories in terms of this determination.

However, most providers themselves were examining the application. Most if not all providers consulted were in the process of establishing a GST exempt status on all or most of their activities, particularly where revenue bases were small. It was felt that some providers may go out of business because of the additional administrative load generated by the GST arrangements.

Since the project consultations, the determination has been tabled in the House of Representatives and the Senate. Under this determination and the GST legislation, the Minister for Employment, Training and Youth Affairs has the responsibility for deciding which courses will be GST free. The GST legislation requires that courses must 'be likely to add to the employment related skills of people undertaking the course' in order to be GST free. A series of tests has been formulated to establish whether an ACE course meets this criterion. The tests are to be applied independently of the subjective intentions of the providers of the course or the recipients. The ruling states, *inter alia*, that:

*A course will 'add' to the employment related skills if the intended outcome of the course is to develop, increase, advance or improve the employment related skills of the people undertaking the course. This includes gaining basic skills such as literacy and numeracy, building upon existing skills and developing skills in new areas.*

and also, that:

*Hobby and recreational courses are not likely to add to the employment related skills of people undertaking the course.*

From <http://law.ato.gov.au/atolaw>

The upshot of the ruling is that some ACE courses will be GST free and some will attract GST. Agreement has been reached to delegate the authority to determine the GST status of courses to the State and Territory ministers with responsibility for education and training.

## 4. Feasibility and costs of expanding current collection requirements

---

The Committee asked the NCVET to consider the feasibility and costs of expanding the current collection requirements.

Because of the current uneven development of information arrangements for adult and community education, we consider there is a need for some additional information about adult and community education nationally. In order to meet the needs of users and allow for the possibility of a limited set of KPIs, this information needs to be broader in scope than is collected at present, but limited in depth in comparison with what is collected for the public VET system. This is underlined by the current review of the national strategy underway under the auspice of MCEETYA Adult and Community Education Taskforce and indeed, the variable depth and scope of quantitative information revealed through this project.

However, in looking at whether or not to extend the current scope of the collection it is important to consider both the need for and likely reception to, extending the scope to adult and community providers not in receipt of public vocational education and training funds. The level of detail currently collected for publicly funded VET is clearly the outer limit for ACE-sector activity. In fact, the NCVET suggests that the requirements for a limited set of national KPIs could be met by collecting information in considerably less detail than applies to VET.

The research that the NCVET undertook as part of this project, including gathering information from State and Territory Training Authorities on current arrangements and consultations in all States, shows a tension between what would be the ideal and what is achievable in practice. On the one hand, many providers and ACE stakeholders would value information on ACE-sector activity and outcomes at the local, State/Territory and national levels. On the other hand, there is only a limited appetite for expanding the collection of information on adult and community education beyond its current scope because of the burden and costs of information collection. This concern applies particularly to a detailed, unit-record collection of information as applies in the public VET and higher education sectors, which in ACE would be overkill.

These views may in part reflect the structural arrangements at the State/Territory level where most policy and planning in relation to ACE is undertaken through training agencies. The role of State Training Authorities in managing and funding vocational education and training is clearly the main focus, although it is evident that all States/Territories maintain a commitment to adult and community education to varying extents.

The other issue which continues to confound efforts at collecting and reporting both more and better information, is the issue of the scope and boundary of adult and community education. The lack of definition makes it difficult to establish regular and comparable data. By the same token, imposing a definition for collection purposes may not be helpful both in terms of the burden of collection it imposes on small independent providers and by the very fact that any definition will exclude some activity that could claim to be adult and community learning at the very broadest level. For example, the scope of ACE could be defined in terms of organisations for whom the delivery of ACE programs is the primary or a major part of their business. However, this would then exclude organisations such as those in the health and community services sector, and cultural centres, which from the project consultations are clearly important providers of ACE programs.

In our view, additional information on adult and community education is needed only in very broad terms and at the national level only. We do not think a regular provider or organisational collection is either warranted or feasible without considerable and somewhat daunting additional resources. In looking at this question, we also considered that any additional, limited collection should be confined to the delivery of education and training by community-based and not-for-profit agencies.

In relation to collecting outcomes information, broadly defined, for KPI and other purposes, there are both more compelling arguments for proceeding and greater hope for instituting arrangements which would yield good information and be of benefit to providers and their clients.

These are outlined in more detail below.

#### 4.1 Collection requirements for providers in receipt of public vocational education and training funds

As described elsewhere in this report, the current scope and data collection requirements for adult and community education are determined by whether or not the provider is in receipt of public funds for the provision of vocational education and training. In other words, at the national level, the addition of adult and community education is only there in so far as it relates to the delivery of publicly-funded VET, although the situation is somewhat different in NSW and Victoria, where BACE and ACFEB have instituted State collection arrangements.

This applies equally to TAFE colleges providing personal enrichment, recreation and leisure courses and to adult and community providers providing vocational education and training. In effect it applies in large part to the 'formal' delivery of specifically vocational education as a tool for accountability and performance improvement. Information about personal enrichment programs finds its way into the collection only where it is delivered by in essence, TAFE or other providers receiving State/Territory or Commonwealth recurrent or specific purpose allocations for VET.

Arrangements for data collection are now well understood in all states and by most providers so funded. There are exceptions to this. Because ACE is a contestable market both in terms of public VET allocations and clients, providers move in and out of the system and are not always well equipped to undertake the reporting tasks required of them, particularly where they are funded for one calendar year at a time.

Nevertheless, the NCVER is of the view that where a provider is in receipt of funds for vocational education and training, it is incumbent upon the provider to comply with the same terms and conditions of accountability as applies to other providers in the sector.

- ❖ *We recommend that the current arrangements be retained for all publicly funded providers of VET in Australia including full compliance with the AVETMIS Standard.*
- ❖ *We recommend that NCVER investigate the possibility of developing an ACE specific publication in the future.*
- ❖ *This is cost neutral.*

Where a provider in receipt of State/Territory or Commonwealth recurrent or specific purpose allocations for VET is providing non-vocational education or training, i.e. a TAFE college or other organisation providing recreation, leisure and personal enrichment courses, there is an argument for collecting a reduced amount of information.

- ❖ *We recommend that the issue of reporting and/or collecting a reduced amount of information in relation to personal and recreational programs be considered by the National Training Statistics Committee.*
- ❖ *This is cost neutral.*

## 4.2 Proposed collection requirements for providers not in receipt of public vocational education and training funds

Our consultations showed a network of independent and autonomous organisations with a myriad of funding and reporting arrangements in place already. Our research has put together quantitative information from a range of sources in scoping the extent of the sector in very broad terms. Consultations also show that such providers, in our view, would not be able to collect information which is comparable in quality or scope to the AVETMIS Standard.

Any information collected would be likely to suffer from the defects of lack of comparability, accuracy and depth which would limit its usefulness except as an estimate of the quantum of activity currently taking place. Its utility for research, management or planning would be reduced. The most that could reasonably be expected is basic information relating to the number of participants and summary information about the ACE programs they undertake. On this basis, it might be possible to institute a scaled down collection of basic, key pieces of information. We suggest that such arrangements would only be feasible with the cooperation and support of the organisations which represent ACE providers, and with a resolution of the scope issues discussed previously.

However, NCVER's experience of introducing (or attempting to introduce) scaled down collection requirements on a reduced and voluntary basis does not give us great confidence in this as a strategy. In 1999, the NCVER on behalf of the National Training Statistics Committee pilot-tested collecting some core information from registered training organisations not in receipt of public funds through a trial questionnaire and focus groups. The results led us to recommend against collecting such information from providers. Instead, the NCVER recommended adding a question to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) household survey thus eliciting information straight from the client rather than the provider.

In relation to the adult and community education sector, difficulties remain. It may be difficult to define the type of activity or provision the client needed to have been engaged in and formulate a question for the survey accordingly. Nevertheless:

- ❖ *We recommend that ANTA and the National Training Statistics Committee pursue with the ABS the feasibility of collecting more information about participation in ACE through the ABS education and training survey or other relevant instruments.*
- ❖ *Cost: The cost of this could be expected to be in the range of \$50 000 — \$100 000.*

The current scope of ACE activity, and the scope of existing reporting, has been established through the present project. However, this scope may change over time as a result of factors such as the GST and demographic changes. Therefore:

- ❖ *We recommend that information on and by ACE providers be collected as a scoping exercise similar to this project every three to five years. Such a process would be greatly assisted if Adult and*

*Community Education advisory bodies in States and Territories held registers of adult and community providers in their states and updated these on a regular basis.*

- ❖ *Cost: Approximately \$100,000 every three to five years in additional funding.*

In relation to students and programs, we suggest that information is not needed at the unit record level but only in very aggregate terms from providers. If the collection of such aggregate data were to be pursued and to include providers not in receipt of State/Territory or Commonwealth recurrent or specific purpose allocations for VET, a scaled-down national collection based upon a small set of data elements could be explored. Given the feedback from the project consultations, data elements in this aggregate collection should cover

- ❖ basic student profiles (age, sex, equity groups);
- ❖ some enrolment information (fields of study or discipline groups); and
- ❖ information on intent, outcomes (including affective outcomes) and/or customer satisfaction.

We also advocate adding identifiers for ACE funding avenues to the above list of data elements since this information, if validated, can provide relevant input into public planning and management processes. Even though aggregation of data at provider level avoids problems relating to the collecting, administering and updating of huge amounts of single records, information contained in an aggregate data collection is only useful if data validity and quality can be ensured. Therefore the feasibility of putting in place a process of quality audits or quality checks on subsets of the data, should be investigated. Further, issues on how to deal with and support providers with limited resources to collect and report on performance data have to be addressed.

- ❖ *In order to assess the feasibility of a collection of summary statistical information from all ACE providers, we recommend conducting a pilot project on establishing an aggregated, provider-level ACE data collection with a diverse cross-section of ACE providers, and not just those in receipt of public funds, to test the efficacy and restrictions of such an approach. The pilot project would not need to cover providers already included in existing data collection arrangements, such as BACE providers in NSW and ACFEB providers in Victoria.*
- ❖ *Cost: approximately \$50 000 for designing data collection and data validation process, conducting pilot project, evaluating feasibility and estimating costs for national aggregate data collection. Costs highly depend on the extent of pilot project.*

### 4.3 Customer satisfaction and outcomes information

The area, which holds out greatest hopes of improved information as well as assisting the development of KPIs, performance improvement and local management, is in our view, the area of customer satisfaction and outcomes surveys. This would avoid the necessity for annual returns from providers or organisations and the concomitant costs associated at all levels of collection and reporting.

We are also of the view that the collection of such information is in line with current directions in other areas of education delivery and indeed service delivery more generally. There will, of course be areas of specific interest to adult and community education which would need special consideration. In particular, the need to establish a broader set of outcomes resulting from learner's experiences of adult and community education.

We suggest that the utility of such information would again be greatly enhanced if the scope of any such developmental work and collection were confined to the delivery of education and training through community-based not-for-profit agencies.

In looking at the question of surveys, the NCVER considered the possibility of adding additional questions to either the ABS household surveys or survey of training and education. We rejected these on the grounds that finding a succinct definition of the kind of provision in order to be able to question respondents would prove too difficult.

However, it would be relatively easy to develop a common survey instrument for use by providers locally, in addition to providing electronic web-based tools for analysis at the local level. The NCVER, on behalf of ANTA and the National Training Statistics Committee, is in the process of developing such tools for use by vocational education and training providers. This includes a do-it-yourself student outcomes survey for use by providers who wish to administer their own survey and compare the results with national KPIs. This survey will contain a core set of information which is nationally consistent, but it can also be augmented or customised to meet the needs of a provider. The NCVER considers that this approach has potential utility for the ACE sector.

- ❖ *We recommend that common, do-it-yourself survey tools be developed for use by adult and community education providers in line with current development of a standard national do-it-yourself surveys with capacity for local customisation for use within VET, including the use of electronic tools for data analysis*
- ❖ *Cost: this would be at marginal cost or cost neutral, as there is an existing developmental project within the survey program for vocational education and training.*
- ❖ *As an extension to provide a national perspective for KPI purposes, the feasibility of extending the survey to a sample of ACE providers to provide reliable information on outcomes should be explored with peak ACE organisations.*
- ❖ *Extension cost: The final cost will depend on sample size and logistics, but could be expected to be approximately \$50 000.*

We also considered expanding the existing NCVER surveys of VET student outcomes and employers both in terms of sample population and scope of the survey instrument. We also rejected these possibilities. The NCVER's experience with administering the current survey of student outcomes within the VET funded scope of delivery has not been such to give us great confidence in expanding this further. To date the NCVER has not considered information collected through this mechanism usable because of low response rates.

There would be significant costs involved in designing a survey which would yield useful information of community based adult education providers. Nevertheless this would be possible if:

- ❖ Providers were willing to take part
- ❖ Sufficient training and assistance were possible
- ❖ A targeted rather than 'scatter-gun' approach was adopted to sampling providers
- ❖ Provider saw value in having KPI information available to provide national benchmarks for their performance.

A possible option if this approach was adopted would be to survey a representative sample of ACE providers on an occasional basis (i.e) every 2-3 years.

## Differing views of adult and community education (ACE)

The following list shows a few examples of definitions of 'ACE', some of which are mutually exclusive:

- ❖ 'ACE' is both informal and formal learning delivered to the community by the community in ways that best suits the participants
- ❖ 'ACE' is an activity oriented toward lifelong learning and relates to the recurrent vocational, personal, cultural and social development of people in the community. It involves complex but coherent forms of co-operative learning
- ❖ 'ACE' provides learning opportunities for adults in the broad areas of general, vocational, basic and community education and is provided by independent, non-government, non-profit, community-owned and managed organisations
- ❖ 'ACE' has a major focus on providing educational programs to meet the needs of Australian adults. It serves, is managed by and responsive to the community. It is not delivered by TAFE institutes, universities, commercial providers or industry providers
- ❖ 'ACE' is non-accredited, personal enrichment activity offered by TAFE colleges and a range of other formal or less formal learning initiatives.

'ACE' can also cover a wide and diverse array of providers for whom adult and community education is not necessarily the core business. These include organisations providing programs and services in the areas of health, welfare, culture, the arts and employment services as well as migrant settlement programs and individual enterprises.

## Technical notes on ACE data in the national VET data collection

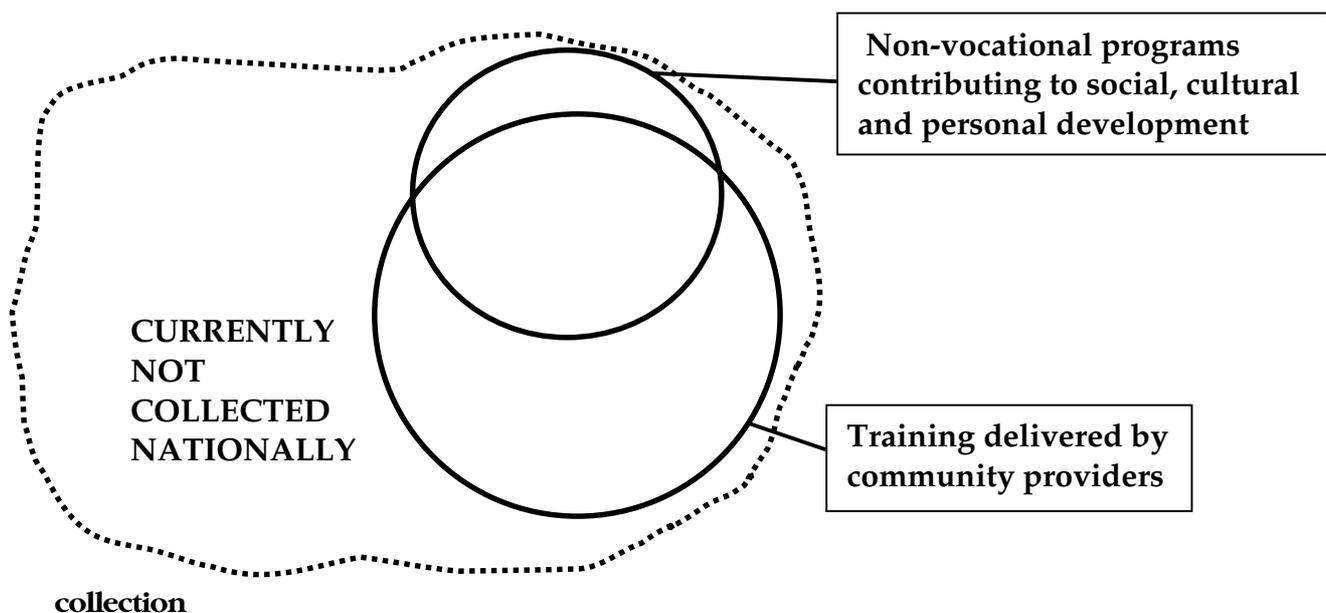
Since the national VET data collection complies with the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information System Standard (AVETMISS), it is relatively easy to extract data on ACE (in accordance with the definition noted in section 2.1 of the report). ACE as reported to the national VET database can be identified as:

1. All vocational and non-vocational training activity delivered by community providers. Here “community providers” are all providers who report through representative bodies for ACE such as BACE in NSW or ACFE in Victoria or identify themselves as Adult Education Centres or Community Access Centres;

AND

2. All activity delivered by non-community providers in recreation, leisure and personal enrichment (‘stream-1000’) programs

**Figure 1: Schematic illustration of ACE activity from perspective of national VET data**



It should be emphasised that the figures reported below do not reflect the activity in the whole ACE sector. Although most of the accredited vocational programs, and a majority of the vocational activity delivered in an informal context are covered, the data presented here are not at all complete. An attempt to estimate the size of the whole ACE sector is presented in Appendix 3.

In 1998, 582 000 students, or 31.1%, of the students for whom training activity had been reported to the national VET provider data collection, participated in some kind of adult and community education. These students were enrolled either with community providers or in personal enrichment programs or both. Students aged 15 years or more (99.2% of the ACE students) represented 3.9% of Australia's 1998 population of age 15 years or more.

ACE activity accounted for more than 21.2 million training hours in 1998 representing 6.6% of the total annual hours reported to the national VET database. Training associated with Australia's ACE sector and reported to the collection has been delivered by almost 940 training providers.

Between 1996 and 1998,

- ❖ the number of students apparently declined by 4.8% from 611 600 to 582 000 in 1998,
- ❖ the hours of training increased by 2.5% from 21.70 million to 21.21 million hours,
- ❖ the number of module enrolments grew by 12.7% from 867 700 to 932 400, and
- ❖ the number of course enrolments decreased by 2.9% from 817 600 to 793 600.

Even though this trend, to some extent, may be explained by community providers offering more VET in 1998 than in 1996, one should not ignore that parts of the data on ACE are merely reported to the national VET data collection on a voluntary basis. The scope for the data reported here therefore undergoes some fluctuations, and it is fair to state that ACE activity as reported to the national data collection remained fairly steady in the two years under consideration.

Of the 582 000 students undertaking ACE in 1998,

- ❖ 70.6% were female and 29.4% male
- ❖ 50% were older than 38.5 years indicating that ACE students, on average, are significantly older than students participating in other post-compulsory education (Median age of VET students: 28.4 years; of students in higher education: 21.8 years; of apprentices and trainees: 20.4 years).
- ❖ 22.3% undertook formal VET and 20.7% informal VET. 61.5% were enrolled in personal enrichment programs (Table 1)
- ❖ 81.7% were enrolled with community providers and 18.3% with other providers (TAFE institutes, universities etc.)

Typically, ACE students enrolled in recreational programs are more likely to be female and older than those enrolled in vocational programs. They tend to undertake very short programs.

**Table 1: ACE activity by program type**

| <b>Program type</b> | <b>Students (%)</b> | <b>Annual Hours (%)</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Formal VET          | 22.3                | 46.6                    |
| Informal VET        | 20.7                | 14.7                    |
| Total VET           | 41.7                | 61.3                    |
| Personal enrichment | 61.5                | 38.7                    |
| Total (%)           | 100.0               | 100.0                   |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>582 000</b>      | <b>21.21 million</b>    |

Note: The student column adds to more than 100% since some students undertake courses belonging to more than one program type.

Of the 21.21 million annual hours:

- ❖ 62.6% were funded from recurrent Commonwealth and State/Territory allocations for VET, 3.5% from specific public allocations for VET and 27.0% on a fee-for-service basis. For 6.9% of annual hours the source of funding was unknown.
- ❖ almost half (46.6%) were delivered in accredited VET courses, 14.7% in informal VET programs and 38.7% in personal enrichment programs,
- ❖ 90.0% were delivered at almost 690 community provider locations and 10.0% at 250 locations of other providers.

While in Tasmania, Victoria and New South Wales nationally reported ACE participation rates for 15 to 100 year olds are in the order of 5% or above, those rates are as low as one percent or lower for the two Australian territories (see Table 2). Since the results of the consultation rounds did not indicate such a large divergence in ACE participation patterns across States/Territories it is fair to conclude that reporting of ACE activity to the national VET data collection varies quite immensely from State/Territory to State/Territory.

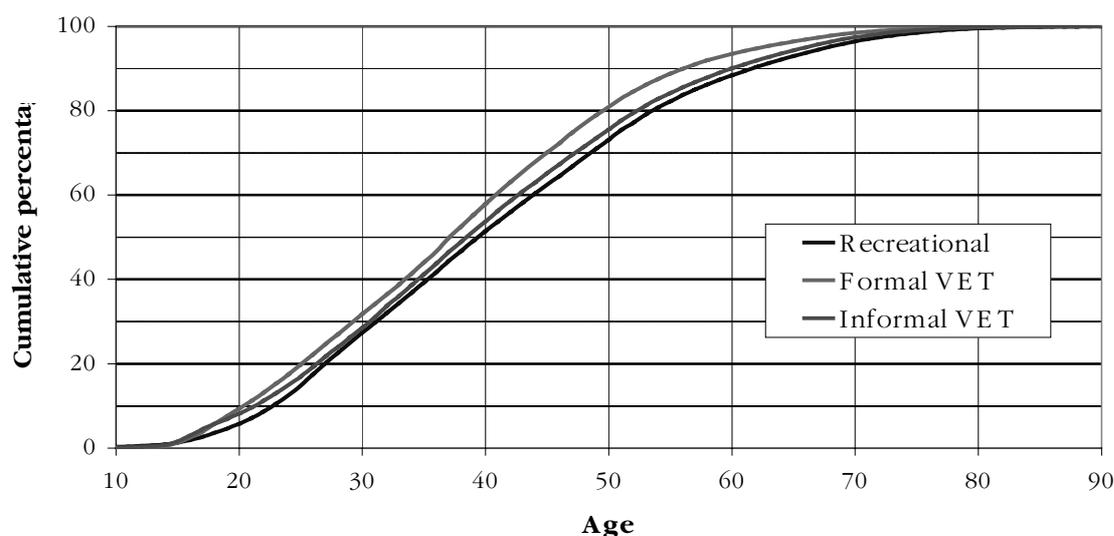
**Table 2: State/Territory activity in adult and community education**

| State/<br>Territory                    | ACT | New South<br>Wales | Northern<br>Territory | Queensland | South<br>Australia | Tasmania | Victoria | Western<br>Australia | Australia |
|--|-----|--------------------|-----------------------|------------|--------------------|----------|----------|----------------------|-----------|
| Students                               | 600 | 251,600            | 1,400                 | 42,900     | 28,200             | 22,100   | 203,200  | 32,000               | 582,000   |
| % population<br>(over 15 year<br>olds) | 0.3 | 4.9                | 1.0                   | 1.6        | 2.4                | 5.9      | 5.4      | 2.2                  | 3.9       |
| Annual hours<br>(‘000)                 | 22  | 6,681              | 133                   | 712        | 583                | 792      | 11,349   | 935                  | 21,208    |
| Training<br>providers                  | 18  | 155                | 16                    | 103        | 2                  | 42       | 525      | 75                   | 936       |

## Accredited vocational ACE activity

Formal vocational education and training is training activity in the formal setting of vocational programs which can lead to qualifications accredited under the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) or the outdated Register of Awards in Tertiary Education, or can result in the issuing of certificates of competency or proficiency, statements of attainment or endorsements to certificates.

**Figure 2: Cumulative age distribution of ACE students by program type**



In Australia's ACE sector the provision of formal programs with vocational intent experienced significant growth over the past two years. While in 1996 about 90 500 ACE students undertook formal VET programs, this number grew by 43.3% to 129 600 students in 1998. Similarly, annual hours increased from 5.20 million in 1996 by 90.4% to 9.89 million., and module enrolments more than doubled (1996: 125 000, 1998: 311 500).

Along with this increase ACE activity in informal VET and personal enrichment programs declined (see next sections). Therefore some of the increased formal VET activity in the ACE sector is very likely due to former informal VET and recreational programs having become accredited VET courses.

Of the 129 600 ACE students participating in formal VET programs in 1998,

- ❖ about two-thirds (66.2%) were female and one-third male (Figure 3).
- ❖ one quarter were younger than 27.2 years, half were younger than 37.1 years and one quarter was older than 47.1 years (Figure 2).
- ❖ 45.5% were employed, 11.9% unemployed and 10.2% not in the labour force (Table 3)<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> The quality of data on the employment status of ACE students is fairly poor with very high levels of missing data (Table 3). Therefore the figures provided should be interpreted very carefully.

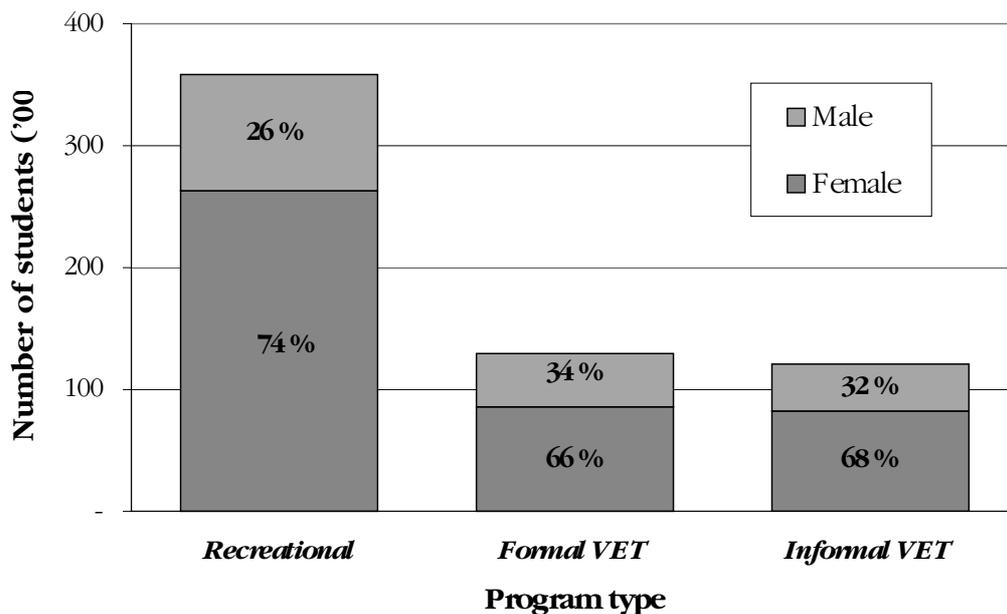
**Table 3: Employment status of ACE students by program type, 1998**

|                             | Formal VET (%) | Informal VET (%) | Non-vocational (%) | Total (%) |
|-----------------------------|----------------|------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| Employed                    | 45.5           | 30.9             | 32.8               | 35.0      |
| Unemployed                  | 11.9           | 5.9              | 2.9                | 5.3       |
| Not in labour force         | 10.2           | 11.4             | 9.3                | 9.7       |
| Unknown labour force status | 32.4           | 51.8             | 55.0               | 50.1      |
| Total (%)                   | 100.0          | 100.0            | 100.0              | 100.0     |
| Total ('000)                | 129.6          | 120.8            | 358.2              | 582.0     |

Most of the annual hours were publicly funded (96.2%). Only 2.7% were funded on a fee-for-service basis (unknowns: 1.1%).

57.0% of annual hours (57.8% of module enrolments) resulted in a successful outcome. This percentage is anticipated to be higher since for 18.4% of annual hours (24.1% of module enrolments) the outcome is unknown.

**Figure 3: ACE numbers by sex and program type**



On average, ACE students enrolled in formal VET courses undertook 76 hours in 1998, significantly less than the average number of hours undertaken by students in the whole publicly-funded VET sector (204 hours per student).

More than half (51.7%) of students were enrolled in courses that entitle to statements of attainment, certificates of competency or proficiency, or endorsements to certificates (Table 2). These students accounted for 22.2% of annual hours in this part of Australia's ACE sector.

AQF-II qualifications were undertaken by one-fifth of the students accounting for 26.4% of annual hours.

**Table 2: Participation of ACE students in formal VET programs by qualification**

| Qualification                    | Students (%) | Course enrolments (%) | Module enrolments (%) | Annual hours (%) |
|----------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| AQF secondary                    | 1.0          | 0.8                   | 0.8                   | 3.0              |
| AQF I                            | 8.5          | 7.9                   | 9.7                   | 14.6             |
| AQF II                           | 20.0         | 20.0                  | 27.1                  | 26.4             |
| AQF III or equivalent            | 6.4          | 6.5                   | 13.8                  | 13.1             |
| AQF IV or equivalent             | 3.9          | 3.3                   | 7.6                   | 8.6              |
| AQF Diploma, equivalent or above | 1.0          | 0.8                   | 1.4                   | 2.1              |
| AQF - other                      | 14.1         | 11.6                  | 9.7                   | 10.0             |
| Other qualifications             | 51.7         | 49.0                  | 29.8                  | 22.2             |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>100.0</b> | <b>100.0</b>          | <b>100.0</b>          | <b>100.0</b>     |

The fields of study in formal VET programs with the most enrolled ACE students and most annual hours were:

- ❖ VET multi-field education (27.1% of students, 43.7% of annual hours), ie. courses which often provide foundation for further study in more specialised vocational fields
- ❖ Business and administration (22.6% of students, 18.2% of annual hours)
- ❖ Science (17.5% of students, 4.3% of annual hours)
- ❖ Health and community services (12.1% of students, 11.9% of annual hours)
- ❖ Arts and humanities (12.1% of students, 6.5% of annual hours)

The areas of learning in formal VET courses with most of the enrolled ACE students and annual hours were:

- ❖ Mathematics and computing (34.1% of students, 11.7% of annual hours)
- ❖ Social, educational and employment skills (24.2% of students, 38.0% of annual hours)
- ❖ Administration, business, economics and law (15.9% of students, 13.7% of annual hours)
- ❖ Humanities (15.9% of students, 9.4% of annual hours)
- ❖ Health sciences (14.9% of students, 10.9% of annual hours)

## Informal vocational ACE activity

Informal vocational education is all non-award vocational activity as well as activity resulting from module-only enrolments.

While the participation of ACE students in informal vocational training activity remained fairly steady over the past two years (1996: 123 700 students and 171 200 module enrolments, 1998: 120 800 students and 165 500 module enrolments), annual hours dropped quite significantly from 5.32 million hours in 1996 by 41.6% to 3.11 million in 1998.

Of the 120 800 ACE students participating in informal VET programs in 1998,

- ❖ more than two-thirds (68.1%) were female and less than one-third male (Figure 3).
- ❖ one quarter were younger than 28.5 years, half were younger than 38.4 years and one quarter was older than 49.7 years (Figure 2). This indicates that ACE students enrolled in informal VET programs on average are slightly older than those enrolled in formal VET programs.
- ❖ 30.9% were employed, 5.9% unemployed and 11.4% not in the labour force (Table 3)<sup>16</sup>.

ACE students enrolled in informal VET programs, on average, undertook 26 hours in 1998, about one-third of the training load of ACE students in formal VET programs.

Almost three-quarters of the annual hours were publicly funded (73.7%), the remaining quarter (24.5%) on a fee-for-service basis (unknowns: 1.8%).

51.8% of annual hours (38.7% of module enrolments) resulted in a successful outcome. Caution should be exercised when interpreting this figure since for 43.4% of annual hours (59.6% of module enrolments) the outcome is unknown.

The fields of study in informal VET programs with the most enrolled ACE students and most annual hours were:

- ❖ VET multi-field education (29.9% of students, 42.9% of annual hours), ie. courses which often provide foundation for further study in more specialised vocational fields
- ❖ Science (17.0% of students, 10.0% of annual hours)
- ❖ Arts and humanities (16.3% of students, 18.3% of annual hours)
- ❖ Business and administration (11.4% of students, 8.6% of annual hours)

The areas of learning in informal VET programs with most enrolled ACE students and annual hours were:

- ❖ Mathematics and computing (26.8% of students, 15.7% of annual hours)
- ❖ Social, educational and employment skills (23.0% of students, 35.7% of annual hours)
- ❖ Humanities (16.2% of students, 17.7% of annual hours)
- ❖ Administration, business, economics and law (11.2% of students, 7.6% of annual hours)
- ❖ Visual and performing arts (10.5% of students, 9.7% of annual hours)

---

<sup>16</sup> The quality of data on the employment status of ACE students is fairly poor with very high levels of missing data (see Table 3). Therefore the figures provided should be interpreted very carefully.

## Non-vocational ACE activity<sup>17</sup>

Here all activity classified as “stream-1000”, ie. leisure, recreation and personal enrichment activity is considered non-vocational. The classification is based on the curricular intent and does not take into account the personal intent of the student which may as well be vocational.

Participation of ACE students in non-vocational training activity dropped over the past two years (1996: 426 300 students and 9.25 million annual hours, 1998: 358 200 students and 8.21 million annual hours). It should be noted, however, that parts of this decline is due to reclassification of what constitutes “recreational” and what “vocational”. Some of the drop may be attributed to fluctuations in the scope of the collected data, an effect that can be expected for data mainly reported on a voluntary basis.

Of the 358 200 ACE students participating in personal enrichment programs in 1998,

- ❖ About three-quarters (73.4%) were female and the remaining quarter male (Figure 3)
- ❖ one quarter were younger than 29.0 years, half were younger than 39.3 years and one quarter was older than 50.8 years (Figure 2). This indicates that ACE students undertaking recreational and personal enrichment training on average are older than those enrolled in VET programs.
- ❖ 70.3% were enrolled with community providers and 29.7% with other providers
- ❖ 32.8% were employed, 2.9% unemployed and 9.3% not in the labour force (Table 3)<sup>18</sup>.

ACE students in personal enrichment programs, on average, undertook 23 hours in 1998, slightly less than ACE students in informal VET programs (26 hours).

More than half of the annual hours were funded on a fee-for-service basis (57.3%) while only one quarter (26.9%) were publicly funded. For the remaining annual hours (15.8%) the source of funding is unknown.

33.9% of annual hours (32.1% of module enrolments) resulted in a successful outcome. However, this low success rate should be treated with caution since for 63.0% of annual hours (65.6% of module enrolments) the outcome is unknown.

The fields of study in personal enrichment programs with the most enrolled students and the most annual hours were:

- ❖ Art, humanities, social sciences (34.1% of students, 41.0% of annual hours) including popular courses such as “crafts”, “art”, “pottery”, “calligraphy”, “music dance and drama”, “photography”, “belly dancing” and others
- ❖ Health, community services (19.5% of students, 18.6% of annual hours) including popular courses such as “yoga”, “health and wellbeing”, “massage”, “tai chi”, “golf”, “meditation” and others
- ❖ VET multi-field education (19.3% of students, 20.8% of annual hours), ie. courses that often provide foundation for further study in more specialised vocational fields.

---

<sup>17</sup> A detailed statistical analysis of the non-vocational ACE sector can be found in NCVER’s publication *Australian Personal Enrichment Education and Training Programs Statistics 1998: an overview*.

<sup>18</sup> The quality of data on the employment status of ACE students is fairly poor with very high levels of missing data (see Table 3). Therefore the figures provided should be interpreted very carefully.

The areas of learning in personal enrichment programs with most of the enrolled students and annual hours were:

- ❖ Hospitality, tourism and personal services (42.0% of students, 35.0% of annual hours)
- ❖ Visual/Performing arts (24.4% of students, 24.1% of annual hours)
- ❖ Humanities (8.4% of students, 7.9% of annual hours)
- ❖ Education (7.0% of students, 11.8% of annual hours)

## Estimating the total level of ACE activity

As already mentioned (Appendix 2) the national VET data collection does not contain complete data on adult and community education in Australia. There exist quite significant gaps, in particular in that part of ACE delivered by community organisations or groups for whom education or training is not the core business.

However, the information on vocational education and training delivered in communities by community based and community-managed organisations is fairly comprehensive with approximately 95% to 99% of accredited VET reported to the national data base. Since formal VET involves longer courses and multi-enrolments with training loads, as measured in terms of annual hours per student, on average being three to ten times higher than the training loads in informal or recreational programs, NCVER estimates that the national VET data collection contains information on slightly more than three-quarters of the annual hours delivered in Australia's ACE sector.

In the following, some estimates for missing data are provided.

- ❖ Training activity delivered by Universities of the Third Age and Schools for Seniors experienced dramatic growth in the past five years with currently more than 140 universities and schools in Australia and U3A membership numbers at around 43 000 to 45 000 (as at June 2000). The national VET data collection only contains ACE activity delivered at 24 U3A's in Victoria accounting for approximately 5 000 students. The preliminary results of the Tasmanian ACE mapping project indicate that U3A members, on average, undertake slightly more than five hours of ACE per year. Therefore NCVER estimates that the missing data associated with U3A activity accounts for approximately 40 000 students and 120 000 to 150 000 annual hours currently not reported to the national data collection
- ❖ Activity provided by Neighbourhood Houses, Community Adult Education Centres and Community Learning Centres which is not reported to the national VET data collection account for approximately 120 000 to 150 000 students and about 500 000 to 600 000 hours of training nation-wide. This indicates that the national VET database contains data on quite large proportion of the ACE activity delivered at Neighbourhood Houses and similar organisations (ACE activity of about 240 Neighbourhood Houses and Community Learning Centres is reported to the national collection). The estimate is based on information from the Tasmanian ACE mapping project and censuses undertaken by Neighbourhood House networks in some States and Territories
- ❖ With regard to adult and community education delivered in Western Australia outside of TAFE, the NCVER estimates that around 120 000 to 150 000 students and about 2.5 million to 3.5 million annual hours of activity is delivered, taking the average non-TAFE provision across Australia as a basis for estimation
- ❖ Taking the ACE mapping project in Tasmania as an indicator for how to approximately calculate ACE participation figures related to other activity not covered in the national VET data collection, (i.e. non-vocational adult education programs and evening classes delivered at some Australian universities and libraries, extra-curricular activity at TAFE centres, some ACE activity at private and government secondary schools and some private personal enrichment and recreational activity) one arrives at the conclusion that there is ACE activity undertaken by about 300 000 to 500 000 students and accounting for about three to five

million annual hours not covered by the national VET data collection and the above estimates.

From all this it is estimated that in 1998 about 1.2 million to 1.4 million people undertook some form of ACE accounting for a total of 25 million to 30 million annual hours.

# Appendix 4

National overview of ACE: Matrix summarising findings from phase 1

|   | ACT  | NSW   | NT   | Queensland   | SA  | Tasmania   | Victoria   | WA  |
|---|--|---|--|--|---|--|--|---|
| How is ACE defined in the state/territory?                      | By program type and client target group                | By provider and program type  | Not distinguished from VET   | Current project will address this  | Follows National ACE Policy 1997  | By program type but difficulty exists at provider level                    | By provider and program type   | By program type (non-accredited, non-VET courses or subjects)   |
| How are ACE providers defined/described in the state/territory? |  | Independent, non-government, non-profit community-based organisations |  | Community-based  | In receipt of State ACE funds   | Access and learning programs within TAFE Tasmania                          | Non-profit, community-based and not TAFE, university, community or industry provider | TAFE colleges   |
| Formal policy statement on ACE?                                 | Yes: <i>ACT Policy on ACE, 1997</i>                    | Yes: <i>Recognising the Value of Lifelong Learning for All</i>        | No: policies implemented within the VET system are the same for ACE            | No: policy currently under development   | No: generally follow the National ACE Policy 1997                                 | No: policy currently under development                                     | Yes: contained in Adult, Community and Further Education Act 1991                    | Yes: Strategy for Adult Community Education ..... 1999-2001     |
| Formal ACE advisory body  | ACT Advisory Council on ACE                            | NSW Board of Adult and Community Education (BACE)                     | Community, Education and Training Advisory Group                               | ACE Advisory Committee   | ACE Council   | Tasmania State Training Authority ACE Advisory Committee                   | Adult, Community and Further Education Board (ACFE Board)                            | WADTE ACE Advisory Committee                                    |
| Strategic plan for ACE  | Adult and Community Education Strategic Plan 1999-2002 | NSW Board of Adult and Community Education Strategic Plan 1998-2000   | NT Employment and Training Authority is proposing to conduct a project on ACE. | ACE Committee's initial task is to prepare an ACE policy and implementation plan | ACE Council has prepared a strategic plan which reflects the National ACE policy. | Developing an ACE strategic plan based on the National ACE Policy strategy | Taking ACE to the Year 2000  | Strategy for ACE: Promoting partnerships and pathways 1999-2001 |

|  | ACT  | NSW   | NT  | Queensland  | SA  | Tasmania  | Victoria   | WA  |
|--|--|---|---|---|---|---|--|---|
| Major ACE stakeholders   | Office of Training and Adult Education and various providers | BACE and an extensive network of providers                              | NTETA and providers                                       | TAFE Queensland (offers non-VET programs) and other providers | DETE ACE unit and various providers and community organisations | TAFE Tasmania, AMES and various providers and community organisations | ACFEB and an extensive network of providers            | WADTE and partner agencies, including TAFE colleges   |
| Funding arrangements for ACE                                     | Annual ACE grants, administered by OTAE (\$240,000)          | Funding through BACE to providers and regional councils (\$13m in 1999) | Only provided to registered training organisations (RTOs) | Funding provided for specific programs only                   | ACE Council receives and distributes funding (\$600,000)        | Funding provided for specific, VET programs only                      | Funding provided by ACFE through regional councils     | WADTE provides funding for accredited VET programs only, Learning Centre Links are funded by DFCS |
| <b>Information currently collected (1998):</b>                   |  |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |
| Internal state/territory data                                    | Yes  | Yes   | No  | Some  | Yes, if funded  | Not at this stage   | Yes  | TAFE only   |
| Data submitted to national collection                            | Yes  | Yes   | Some (NT University only)                                 | Some  | Yes   | Yes   | Yes  | No (WADTE providers only)   |
| National data includes 'ACE in TAFE'                             | No   | Yes   | Yes   | Yes   | Yes   | No  | Yes  | Yes   |
| ACE provider data includes non-VET                               | No   | Yes   | Yes   | No  | Yes   | Yes   | Yes  | Not applicable  |
| ACE provider data includes VET                                   | Yes  | Yes   | Yes   | Yes   | Yes   | Yes   | Yes  | Not applicable  |
| Consider there to be gaps in ACE information currently collected | Yes  | National data does not adequately reflect ACE effort                    | Yes (proposed project will address this)                  | Yes   | Some (mainly related to outcomes)                               | Yes (current project will address this)                               | Some (related to unmet demand, pathways, outcomes etc) | No specific comment provided at this stage  |

## National overview of ACE

### A tabular summary

#### Tables

1. Definitions of ACE
2. Formal ACE Policy statements
3. Main ACE advisory bodies
4. ACE Strategic Plans
5. Key ACE Stakeholders
6. Funding arrangements
7. Information currently collected
8. Gaps in ACE information

**Table 1: Definitions of ACE**

| State Territory              | ACE Definitions  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Australian Capital Territory | <p>In terms of the ACT ACE policy and the Strategic plan of the ACE Advisory Council, ACE is defined in the following way.</p> <p>Adult and Community Education is an activity oriented toward life long learning which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Makes provision for the recurrent vocational, personal, cultural and social development of people regardless of their employment status, who are beyond compulsory school age but are not primarily engaged in post-school education and training programs</li> <li>❖ Involves complex but coherent forms of cooperative learning geared to the adult status of its participants, and committed to their empowerment through skill acquisition, access to information and introduction to fields of knowledge</li> <li>❖ Is not necessarily constrained by the conventions of place, time and teaching/learning methods which may apply in the familiar settings of the school, TAFE college or university</li> <li>❖ Is fundamentally a learner-centred, needs-based practice, characterised by active concern for accessibility, democratic processes, social justice, and success measured primarily in terms relevant to the needs and aspirations of the individual participants</li> </ul> |
| New South Wales              | <p>In terms of the NSW ACE Policy – <i>Recognising the Value of Lifelong Learning for All</i>, ACE is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Education and training provided by independent, non government, non profit, community owned and managed organisations</li> <li>❖ Provides learning opportunities for adults in the broad areas of general, vocational, basic and community education</li> <li>❖ Responds to the broad vocational needs of the community by offering an alternative entry point to the VET system</li> <li>❖ Offers flexible locally based delivery of accredited and non accredited courses for unemployed people and those already in the workforce</li> </ul>  |
| Northern Territory           | <p>The Northern Territory does not distinguish between ACE and VET providers</p>   |
| Queensland                   | <p>The Mapping and Identification of ACE in Queensland project will assist in forming a definition of ACE in Queensland. This project is due for completion in June 2000.</p> <p>Generally, ACE is both informal and formal learning delivered to the community by the community in ways that best suits the participants.</p>   |
| South Australia              | <p>The definition of ACE is aligned to the National ACE Policy 1997, i.e. ACE is characterised as learner-centred, responsive to the community, accessible and inclusive, diverse, varied and flexible.</p> <p>There is no state specific definition of ACE. However, ACE providers are defined as those currently in receipt of state funds.</p>  |

**Table 1: Definitions of ACE (cont'd)**

| State Territory   | ACE Definitions  |
|-------------------|--|
| Tasmania          | <p>ACE is characterised as being flexible, varied, diverse, accessible, inclusive, learner-centred and responsive to community needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Adult and Community Education is an activity oriented toward life long learning which:</li> <li>❖ Makes provision for the recurrent vocational, personal, cultural and social development of people regardless of their employment status, who are beyond compulsory school age but are not primarily engaged in post-school education and training programs</li> <li>❖ Involves complex but coherent forms of cooperative learning geared to the adult status of its participants, and committed to their empowerment through skill acquisition, access to information and introduction to fields of knowledge</li> <li>❖ Is not necessarily constrained by the conventions of place, time and teaching/learning methods which may apply in the familiar settings of the school, TAFE college or university</li> <li>❖ Is fundamentally a learner-centred, needs-based practice, characterised by active concern for accessibility, democratic processes, social justice, and success measured primarily in terms relevant to the needs and aspirations of the individual participants</li> </ul> <p>However the definition of ACE in Tasmania has become more problematic. Historically ACE was defined as programs which were situated in or administered by the now defunct Institute of Adult Education. The restructuring of TAFE and the institute has meant the Institute programs still exist in TAFE Tasmania but now fall within a program area called Access and Learning. In the past Access and bridging courses (Stream 2000) have not been counted as part of ACE mostly due to the location of the venue than the content or client group. This problem remains.</p> |
| Victoria          | <p>In terms of the <i>Guidelines and Conditions for Eligibility and Registration of ACE organisations</i>, status as an ACE organisation is defined in the following way:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Is incorporated or has a deed of delegation from an incorporated organisation or is acting under the auspices of an incorporated organisation</li> <li>❖ Has a major focus on providing educational programs to meet the needs of Victorian adults</li> <li>❖ Is managed by and responsive to the community which it serves</li> <li>❖ Is not a TAFE institute, University, commercial provider or industry provider</li> <li>❖ Is not for profit - defined as meaning that the rules of the organisation prevent (a) members of the organisation or its governing body receiving remuneration as members (b) the distribution of any of the organisation's revenue or property to members of the organisation or its governing body</li> </ul> <p>As defined in the ACE Strategic Plan, the ACE sector is flexible and innovative, locally responsive and accessible and defined by its self determining status.</p> <p>ACE is learner-centred, has education as its core, is community owned and driven, values and promotes diversity, is adaptive, responsive and innovative.</p> <p>In Victoria the term ACE sector refers only to community owned and managed adult education.</p>  |
| Western Australia | <p>ACE is non-accredited courses such as Stream 1000 offered by TAFE colleges and a range of other formal or less formal learning initiatives.</p>   |

**Table 2: Formal policy statement on ACE**

| State Territory              | Formal ACE policy | Policy   | Purpose/goals   |
|------------------------------|-------------------|--|---|
| Australian Capital Territory | Yes               | ACT Policy on ACE<br><br>This policy was launched by the Minister for Education in July 1997.            | The policy aims to improve the environment for ACE by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Maximising lifelong learning opportunities through the development of closer linkages within the ACE sector</li> <li>❖ Opening pathways to other education and training sectors and the world of work</li> <li>❖ Encouraging diversified ACE delivery and participation to help more people benefit from ACE</li> <li>❖ Increasing the support for ACE by Government, industry and community organisations</li> <li>❖ Promoting ACE to help Government, industry and the community appreciate its value</li> <li>❖ Ensuring that quality and excellence are the basis for ACE activity</li> </ul> |
| New South Wales              | Yes               | Recognising the Value of Lifelong Learning for All   | In 1996 the NSW Board of Adult and Community Education developed this state policy. The five key goals of the policy are equitable, effective, responsive, efficient and complementary provision.   |
| Northern Territory           | No                | Policies implemented within the VET system are the same for ACE.   |   |
| Queensland                   | No                | An ACE policy is expected to be forwarded to Cabinet in early 2001 after consultation with stakeholders. | The ACE Advisory Committee has adopted the goals and strategic objectives of the 1997 National ACE policy and integrated these into their Workplan 2000 and the development of a Queensland ACE policy.<br><br>DETIR with assistance from the ACE Advisory Committee will conduct consultations in April/May 2000 to identify and map the ACE sector. The project outcomes will inform the development of an ACE policy.  |
| South Australia              | No                | There is no state specific ACE policy.   | The ACE Council is legislated under VEET Act 1995 and reports to the Minister of Employment and Training. Although the Council is embedded in legislation no formal policy statement is attached to the legislation.  |
| Tasmania                     | No                | Tasmania is currently developing a draft policy.   | TASTA ACE Advisory Committee decided that the National ACE policy be adopted as a working document for the State, with the State's Strategic Plan being an appendix to this Policy.   |

|                   |     |   |  |
|-------------------|-----|---|--|
| Victoria          | Yes | Adult, Community and Further Education Act 1991                                       | The partnership between the government and community was formalised in the Adult, Community and Further Education Act. The Act recognises ACE as a distinct education sector by virtue of its focus on adult education and its community ownership and management. It provides a framework to ensure adult education continues to meet the community's changing needs. |
| Western Australia | Yes | Strategy for Adult Community Education: Promoting partnerships and pathways 1999-2001 | This is the formal policy statement for ACE in WA. The State has endorsed the national policy for ACE and has further committed to fostering growth in participation in formal and informal learning. The policy is focused on establishing strategic partnerships.  |

**Table 3: Formal ACE Advisory bodies**

| State Territory              | ACE advisory body                                 | Structure  | Terms of reference  |
|------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Australian Capital Territory | ACT Advisory Council on ACE                       | <p>The Council was established in February 1997. It functions as a committee of the Board of VETA.</p> <p>12 members are appointed to the Advisory Council by the Minister for Education for a 2 year term.</p> <p>The Council is supported by the Office of Training and Adult Education (OTAE) within the Department of Education and Community Services. It assumes formal responsibility for ACE.</p>  | <p>The Council advises the Minister on matters relevant to ACE. Their terms of reference are to provide advice on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ The role of the ACE sector in the ACT and its relationship to VET</li> <li>❖ The structures and administration of ACE in the ACT</li> <li>❖ Training priorities in the ACE sector</li> <li>❖ The provision of citizenship education</li> <li>❖ The funding needs of the ACE sector</li> </ul>   |
| New South Wales              | NSW Board of Adult and Community Education (BACE) | <p>The relationship between Government and Adult and Community Education was established through the BACE Act 1990. A statutory Board was established in 1991 under the Act.</p> <p>13 members are appointed to the Board by the Minister for a maximum term of 4 years.</p> <p>A Secretariat in the ACE and Education Access Directorate within the Department of Education and Training supports the work of the Board.</p> <p>The Board is assisted in the country regions by 9 Regional Councils. The Regional Councils employ Regional Officers and Regional Language and Literacy Co-ordinators to implement support activities.</p> | <p>The Board's terms of reference are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ promote the provision of ACE in NSW</li> <li>❖ allocate government funds and grants to ACE providers</li> <li>❖ foster and support the establishment of organisational structures and mechanisms that facilitate the co-ordinated provision of ACE in the state</li> <li>❖ advise the Minister on needs and trends in ACE</li> </ul> <p>The Regional Councils are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ The oversight and co-ordination of efficient and effective planning and provision of ACE in the regions</li> <li>❖ Support and encouragement to ACE providers</li> <li>❖ Providing advice to the Board on the regional distribution of funds and</li> <li>❖ Ensuring the accountability of the use of funds</li> </ul> |
| Northern Territory           | Community, Education and Training Advisory Group  |  |   |

|                            |                    |   |   |
|----------------------------|--------------------|---|---|
| <p>South<br/>Australia</p> | <p>ACE Council</p> | <p>The Council was established under the VEET Act 1994.</p> <p>Not more than 9 persons are appointed to the Council by the Minister.</p> <p>The ACE Unit provides executive and administrative support to the Council and is assisted by ACE Community Liaison Officers who provide support and assistance to the funded organisations with regard to educational programs.</p> | <p>The Council's functions are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Promote and encourage the provision of adult community education</li> <li>❖ Advise the Minister on matters relating to government support for ACE</li> <li>❖ Make recommendations to the Minister on the allocation of grants to ACE providers</li> </ul> |
|----------------------------|--------------------|---|---|

**Table 3: Formal ACE Advisory bodies (cont'd)**

| State Territory | ACE advisory body   | Structure  | Terms of reference   |
|-----------------|---|--|--|
| Queensland      | ACE Advisory Committee                                    | <p>The Queensland Government established the Committee in April 1999.</p> <p>The Committee consists of 13 members and reports to VETEC.</p>  | <p>Provide advice to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ VETEC on the provision of ACE with a focus on lifelong learning, skills development and employment</li> <li>❖ Bodies such as Jobs Policy Council concerning community employment programs and to other government bodies concerning national issues including lifelong learning and health</li> </ul>   |
| Tasmania        | TASTA ACE Advisory Committee                              | <p>The Committee was established in 1998. It advises the State Training Authority (TASTA) and the Minister on policy issues and implementation.</p> <p>Committee representatives are from TAFE Tasmania, ALA, Tasmanian Association of Community Houses, U3A, School for Seniors and equity group stakeholders</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Provide advice to the Department of Education on national and State policies and programs</li> <li>❖ Monitor the implementation of state implementation plans</li> <li>❖ Advise on best practice in ACE</li> <li>❖ Respond to documents as requested by the Department of Education</li> <li>❖ Monitor projects relating to ACE</li> <li>❖ Advise on the provision of training programs in ACE</li> <li>❖ Advise on issues requiring research</li> <li>❖ Consult with key stakeholders outside the committee</li> </ul>                     |
| Victoria        | Adult, Community and Further Education Board (ACFE Board) | <p>The Board and the Regional Councils were established in 1992 under the ACFE Act 1991.</p> <p>13 board members are appointed by the Minister for Tertiary Education and Training for a 3 year term.</p> <p>The ACFE Board works with the State Training Board to plan the direction and delivery of ACE.</p> <p>The Board is supported by the ACFE Division of OTFE within the Department of Education. The Board is assisted by 9 Regional Councils in the country regions.</p> | <p>The major functions of the Board are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Plan, promote and allocate resources</li> <li>❖ Develop policies</li> <li>❖ Advise the Minister on matters related to adult, community and further education</li> </ul> <p>The regional councils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Develop regional plans and policies</li> <li>❖ Promote, support, resource and evaluate adult education provision</li> <li>❖ Contribute to statewide planning and policy development</li> <li>❖ Prepare reports for the ACFE Board</li> </ul> |

|                      |                           |  |   |
|----------------------|---------------------------|--|---|
| Western<br>Australia | ACE Advisory<br>Committee | <p>The Committee reports to the Chief Executive of WADOT.</p> <p>12 members are invited to the Committee by the Chief Executive for a 3 year term.</p> <p>Administrative support is provided by the Access and Participation Directorate within WADOT.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Assist in data definition, collection and administration for the purposes of the State Training Profile, in relation to the participation of the ACE sector</li> <li>❖ Provide advice with the implementation of National and State policies and strategies including the National Policy on ACE, in the context of the State's definition of an operational framework for ACE</li> <li>❖ Provide advice on community needs for recognition of adult learning</li> <li>❖ Provide advice on TAFE colleges and centres developing co-operative and/or collaborative arrangements with community providers</li> </ul> |
|----------------------|---------------------------|--|---|

**Table 4: Strategic Plans for ACE**

| State Territory              | Strategic Plan  | Strategic goals  |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| Australian Capital Territory | Adult and Community Education Strategic Plan 1999-2002  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Promote and value the benefits of ACE</li> <li>2. Foster opportunities for a diversity of adult and community learning</li> <li>3. Strengthen the lifelong learning connections of ACE</li> <li>4. Foster the contribution of ACE to community well being and development</li> </ol>   |
| New South Wales              | NSW Board of Adult and Community Education Strategic Plan 1998-2000                             | <p><i>Vision:</i> People's lives are enriched through high quality lifelong learning.</p> <p><i>Mission:</i> To support and guide the development of efficient, locally responsive adult and community education that contributes to a creative, highly skilled, productive and equitable society.</p> <p>The key strategic goals are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Equitable provision</i> – ensure that ACE is responsive to the needs of learners and reflects the diversity in communities in NSW</li> <li>2. <i>Effective provision</i> – ensure quality learning outcomes for all ACE participants</li> <li>3. <i>Responsive provision</i> – ensure that the delivery of ACE is flexible, meets the needs of local communities and is underpinned by sound research</li> <li>4. <i>Efficient provision</i> – ensure that there is enhanced quality of services for learners and clear accountability of providers for funds received</li> <li>5. <i>Complementary provision</i> – ensure clear cross-sectoral pathways which reflect society's need for lifelong learning and meets this need by providing enhanced opportunities</li> </ol> |
| Northern Territory           | NTETA is proposing to conduct a project on ACE.   |  |
| Queensland                   | The ACE Committee's initial task is to prepare a Queensland ACE policy and implementation plan. | <p>The <i>vision</i> of the Committee is to encourage adult learning which will drive structural change to achieve equity of access, participation and outcome.</p> <p>Currently the Committee has adopted the goals and strategic objectives of the 1997 National ACE policy. These are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Realise the potential of ACE</li> <li>❖ Diversify opportunities for lifelong learning</li> <li>❖ Strengthen the responsiveness of ACE to learners</li> </ul>   |

|                   |  |   |
|-------------------|--|---|
| South Australia   | The ACE Council has prepared a strategic plan which reflects the National ACE policy.  | <p>The Council is committed to ensuring ACE improves knowledge, skills and quality of life for SA with a particular emphasis on the disadvantaged.</p> <p>To achieve the vision of developing a sector that has the flexibility to respond effectively to these needs, the strategic plan affirms the increasing importance of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Fostering a culture of learning in Australian society and organisations</li> <li>❖ Collaborating with all education and training sectors within a context of lifelong learning.</li> </ul>   |
| Tasmania          | Tasmania is developing an ACE strategic plan based on the National ACE Policy strategy |   |
| Victoria          | Taking ACE to the Year 2000  | <p><i>Vision:</i> Lifelong learning opportunities in ACE generate educated and empowered citizens and a strong Victorian Community.</p> <p><i>Mission:</i> To lead the vigorous development of lifelong learning in the community so that more people can realise their potential as individuals, citizens and workers.</p> <p>The ACE Board and the STB are required by legislation to develop 3 year plans for the development of ACE in Victoria. The current key strategies are to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Widen participation</i> in ACE through policies which recognise, respond to and affirm the diversity of Victoria's population</li> <li>2. <i>Augment learning structures</i> in ACE which will give expression to the best of lifelong learning in community settings</li> <li>3. <i>Create self-renewing learning societies</i> through community ownership of ACE</li> <li>4. <i>Use public funds flexibly</i> to extend opportunities and improve the quality of outcomes in ACE</li> </ol> |
| Western Australia | Strategy for ACE: Promoting partnerships and pathways 1999-2001                        | <p>WADOT commits itself to activities which will: <i>Foster a culture of lifelong learning through the collaboration of all education and training sectors.</i></p> <p>The Department has established strategic partnerships with community-based organisations to improve the range of learning opportunities. In committing to the implementation of the national policy the department has 3 objectives consistent with the State Training Strategy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Acknowledge and foster the capacity of ACE to be an important agent of lifelong learning</li> <li>2. Promote a culture of continuous improvement and customer satisfaction among providers of ACE</li> <li>3. Enhance recognition of the contribution of ACE to vocational education and training and employment</li> </ol>   |

**Table 5: Key ACE Stakeholders**

| State Territory              | Stakeholders   |
|------------------------------|--|
| Australian Capital Territory | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT), TAFE in the ACT - major provider of second-chance education.</li> <li>❖ ACT Secondary Colleges – most run extensive ACE programs</li> <li>❖ CIT Solutions - the commercial arm of CIT runs an extensive ACE program</li> <li>❖ Community Services Organisations (5) - non-profit community based organisations that deliver a range of ACE and community support programs</li> <li>❖ CanACT – the peak body of Neighbourhood Houses in the ACT</li> <li>❖ Tuggeranong Link of Neighbourhood Houses – deliver a range of ACE and community support programs</li> <li>❖ Other ACE providers – Centre for Continuing Education at the Australian National University and smaller issues-focused organisations (e.g. Migrant Resource Centre, Red Cross, Work Resources Centre)</li> </ul>  |
| New South Wales              | <p>There are 70 major ACE providers (Multi-ACE providers) and smaller community organisations (Other Providers) funded by the Board to deliver ACE courses. More than 50 of these providers are located in regional, rural or remote areas.</p> <p>In 1998 there were more than 348,000 enrolments in courses run by Multi-ACE providers with 213,000 enrolments in courses conducted by Multi-ACE providers in the Sydney metropolitan area and 134,000 enrolments in regional, rural and remote areas.</p> <p><b>Multi-ACE providers consist of:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <i>Evening and Community Colleges: (24)</i> – daytime/evening and weekend classes using school facilities and other venues; 17 are in the metropolitan area and 7 in regional areas</li> <li>❖ <i>Community Adult Education Centres (CAECs) (46)</i> - located in rural/regional NSW and range from small organisations with a P/T co-ordinator with limited courses in a few venues to large entities with several F/T staff co-ordinators and large range of courses and many venues</li> <li>❖ <i>Workers Educational Association (WEA) (3)</i> – centres are located in metropolitan Sydney and in regional areas in Newcastle and Wollongong</li> </ul> <p><i>Regional Councils of Adult and Community Education</i></p> <p>Regional Councils were established as community owned and managed organisations with volunteer management committees and incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act. There are 9 regional councils.</p> <p><b>Peak Body organisations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ NSW ACE Council – promotes and protects the interest of all adult and community education centres</li> <li>❖ Community Adult Education Centres (CAECs)</li> <li>❖ Evening and Community College’s Association (ECCA)</li> <li>❖ Worker’s Educational Association State Executive (WEA)</li> </ul> <p>The CAECs, ECCA and WEA represent providers across NSW and hold membership of the NSW ACE Council.</p> |

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Northern Territory | Key stakeholders include registered training organisations, clients, industry, communities, ITABs and Government. NTETA have proposed a project (to be funded) to map the ACE sector in the NT.   |
| Queensland         | <p>TAFE Queensland's Stream 1000 programs play a significant role for ACE in Queensland. The consultations in mapping and identifying the ACE sector will include the following stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Trade Union Provincial Councils</li> <li>❖ ACE-VET program applicants</li> <li>❖ Adult Learning Australia Queensland, Job Australia Queensland, Open Learning, Volunteering Queensland Networks</li> <li>❖ ACE Advisory Council members</li> <li>❖ Australian South Sea Islander, Migrant and Ethnic Groups</li> <li>❖ Canegrowers, Country Women's, Graziers, Parent and Citizen, Regional Councils of Development Association</li> <li>❖ Chamber of Commerce and ITABs</li> <li>❖ Church bodies and service clubs</li> <li>❖ Community Health, Migrant Resource, Neighbourhood and Youth Crisis Centres</li> <li>❖ Community Literacy program providers, Registered Training providers and U3A</li> <li>❖ Disability and women's organisations</li> <li>❖ Individuals</li> <li>❖ Libraries, Local, State Governments, DETIR regional offices</li> <li>❖ Nursing Mothers</li> <li>❖ Office of Rural Communities and rural agencies</li> <li>❖ TAFE-ACE Queensland, schools and tertiary sector</li> </ul> |
| South Australia    | <p>SA Peak agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Adult Learning Australia (SA)</li> <li>❖ SACAL</li> <li>❖ Workers' Educational Association of SA</li> <li>❖ Community and Neighbourhood Houses Association</li> <li>❖ University of the Third Age (SA) Inc</li> <li>❖ Council on the Ageing (COTA)</li> <li>❖ Network of Women in Further Education</li> </ul>  |
| Tasmania           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Adult Education division of TAFE Tasmania – runs adult education courses (Class program) which includes accredited (up to Certificate IV), non accredited and Stream 2000 courses</li> <li>❖ Adult Literacy and Basic Education and Workplace Adult Education Services of TAFE</li> <li>❖ Adult Migrant English Service</li> <li>❖ Neighbourhood Houses – non accredited adult education courses</li> <li>❖ Community organisations, on-line access centres, businesses or government agencies providing training/courses or information sessions.</li> </ul> <p>A mapping ACE project is due for completion in June 2000. This will provide identification of the true range of ACE in Tasmania.</p>  |

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Victoria          | <p>In 1998, 8.97 million student contact hours (SCH) were delivered in ACE organisations through 316,995 module enrolments. Key stakeholders providing these programs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ TAFE institutes</li> <li>❖ Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES)</li> <li>❖ Community organisations – there are more than 550 providers – refer to list in Annual report</li> <li>❖ Council of Adult Education (CAE)</li> <li>❖ Private agencies</li> <li>❖ Regional Councils</li> </ul> |
| Western Australia | <p>WADOT's partners include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Adult Learning Australia (WA)</li> <li>❖ Learning Centre Link</li> <li>❖ TAFE colleges</li> <li>❖ Telecentre Network</li> <li>❖ University of Western Australia Extension</li> </ul>   |

**Table 6: ACE Funding arrangements**

| State<br>Territory                 | Funding types   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Australian<br>Capital<br>Territory | <p>The major funding of ACE in the ACT is through the annual ACE grants. These are sponsored by the Advisory Council and administered by OTAE. In 2000 grants totalled approximately \$240,000 for 41 ACE programs delivered by 35 different organisations. Training providers do not have to be registered to received government funding.</p> <p>The selection criteria for ACE grants includes delivering a program which increases the level of adult learning, meets a demonstrated need in the community and preferably meets the needs of identified disadvantaged groups.</p> <p>ACE organisations also access other community development and health funding from other ACT Government agencies.</p> <p>ACE programs e.g. Secondary Colleges Community Education Programs are provided on a cost recovery fee-for-service basis.</p>   |
| New South<br>Wales                 | <p>The Department of Education and Training provide annual funding to the NSW ACE sector through BACE. The majority of funds are allocated on a funding formula basis which reflects the demographic differences and the needs of communities servicing disadvantaged groups. In 1999 more than \$13 million of government funds were allocated.</p> <p><i>Multi-ACE providers (main providers)</i></p> <p>There are about 70 providers who receive recurrent funding from BACE. Programs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ General and non-accredited ACE (Stream 1000 and non-accredited Streams 2100-4500)</li> <li>❖ Language and literacy</li> <li>❖ VET (including funding for Equipment and Resources)</li> <li>❖ Equity initiatives</li> <li>❖ Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives</li> </ul> <p>To be eligible for funds in this program providers must be independent, community owned and managed, not for profit organisation based in NSW and incorporated as a company, association or co-operative for primary purpose of providing ACE.</p> <p><i>General ACE Type B Provider (other providers)</i></p> <p>Approximately 30 providers receive small grants from BACE on a yearly basis. This program does not offer funding for language and literacy and VET.</p> <p><i>Regional Council funding</i></p> <p>The Board also funds the 9 Regional Councils of ACE which are eligible for funding for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Language and literacy funding allocations to support activities not directly involved in ACE delivery</li> <li>❖ As a 'caretaker' or sponsor on behalf of ACE organisations not yet eligible to receive funds under the Maintenance of ACE program</li> </ul> <p>To be eligible for this funding Regional Councils must be incorporated as a not for profit association for the primary purpose of supporting local ACE and had received funding for 1999 under the Regional Councils program. Funds are allocated on a funding formula basis and include baseline office expenses and 2 variable amounts which take account of regional variations in population, area and level of ACE activity.</p> <p>Other types of ACE funding include fee-for-service revenue, contracted training, sponsorships, membership and donations.</p> |
| Northern<br>Territory              | <p>To receive government funds all providers in the Northern Territory are required to be registered as a training organisation (RTO). To qualify as an RTO the organisation must meet the Australian Recognition Framework arrangements.</p>   |

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Queensland      | <p>Within DETIR, funding for ACE providers is provided for the following programs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Community Literacy Program</i> – funds non-government community based agencies to deliver accredited literacy and numeracy training. This is particularly aimed at people who are disadvantaged and not likely to attend formal institutions. Maximum \$5000 per year.</li> <li>2. <i>ACE-VET program</i> – funds registered and non-registered community based organisations to deliver accredited VET courses. Non registered community based organisations are encouraged to partner with a local VETEC RTO.</li> <li>3. <i>The Community Employment Assistance Program</i> – a component of the Government’s Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative which funds community and public sector organisations to work with long term unemployed people.</li> <li>4. <i>Community Jobs Plan</i> – a component of Government’s Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative which funds community organisations for projects that offer learning work experiences.</li> <li>5. <i>TAFE-ACE (Stream 1000)</i>: These courses offer a variety of subjects including vocationally orientated short courses, personal development and recreational programs on a full cost-recovery basis with concession rates offered to people who are financially in need.</li> </ol> <p>DETIR does not fund non accredited programs. However other state government departments and local governments offer funding for different learning activities.</p>   |
| South Australia | <p>The ACE Council receives funding from the State and Commonwealth Governments of about \$600,000 per year.</p> <p>The WEA is the largest provider of ACE in SA. It receives funding under a Performance Agreement with the Minister (\$50,000).</p> <p>Funding categories cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Category A: One year grant offered annually up to \$1250 – suited to organisations planning to deliver short courses for an identified target group – a minimum of 312 student contact hours (SCH) is required</li> <li>❖ Category B: Two year grant of up to \$5000 a year – general program of short courses/ or educational opportunities with a pathway that could benefit the pursuit of further education, employment or training – a minimum of 1250 SCH is required</li> <li>❖ Category C: specific community-based language, literacy and numeracy programs: one year grant offered annually up to \$5500 – a minimum 1100 SCH is required</li> <li>❖ Category D: special initiatives funds – includes professional development and promotional activities</li> </ul> <p>Organisations eligible to apply for funding must be incorporated under the SA Corporate Affairs 'Not for Profit' Act or auspiced (sponsored through an incorporated organisation) and be a community based organisation able to provide ACE programs to people who are more comfortable learning in a community setting. Individuals, State/Commonwealth Government departments and agencies including TAFE Institutes, schools, adult re-entry schools and organisations receiving significant education and training funding are not eligible to apply.</p> |

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| Tasmania | <p><i>Adult education programs and adult literacy and basic education programs</i> is purchased from TAFE Tasmania by the Office of VET. Funding is managed through a negotiated purchase agreement.</p> <p>TAFE Tasmania also obtains funds through fees charged for Adult Education class programs.</p> <p>Funding for <i>Advanced English for Migrants Program</i> (part of the AMES) is sourced from DETYA.</p> <p>State recurrent funding for ACE provision by the non government community organisations is also administered by the Equity Standards branch of the Department of Education. Funding is allocated on a submission basis. Organisations which are eligible to apply for funding are Community Houses and other non profit, non government community based organisations. The ACE Advisory Council assess the applications.</p>  |
| Victoria | <p>ACFE program areas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Adult Literacy and Basic Education</li> <li>❖ Victorian Certificate of Education for adults</li> <li>❖ General preparatory and bridging programs</li> <li>❖ English as a Second Language</li> <li>❖ Training and further education</li> <li>❖ General adult education programs</li> </ul> <p>Funds are allocated through the ACFE Board and Regional Councils for the following funding types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <i>State recurrent funding</i> for programs conducted by community-based organisations and CAEs are allocated for program delivery, support, infrastructure and administration of minor works and services.</li> <li>❖ <i>Commonwealth growth funds</i> for community based organisations to deliver access and vocational courses in priority areas are allocated to ACE organisations including CAEs and AMES.</li> <li>❖ <i>ANTA adult literacy funds</i> are allocated to ACE organisations, AMES and TAFE institutes for program and program support initiatives.</li> </ul> <p>The ACFE Board also manages the allocation of funds to TAFE Institutes and other providers for the DETYA Advanced English for Migrants program.</p> <p>To apply for government funds ACE organisations must first be assessed for eligibility to deliver non accredited training and meet the needs of the Council. To deliver accredited further education courses ACE organisations must first be eligible to apply for government funds and then seek registration through the Regional Councils. ACE organisations seeking to deliver accredited vocational education courses or training packages must register with the State Training Board.</p> <p>The <i>Statewide Funding Model</i> implements the ACFE Board's policies and processes for determining the distribution of the allocation of funds to the 9 Regional Councils. The <i>Regional Funding Framework</i> implements the Board's policy on the allocation of funds by the Regional Councils to eligible ACE organisations. This also includes a performance agreement between the ACFE Board and the Councils.</p> |

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <p>Western Australia</p> | <p>The WA Government provides funding for accredited programs. These include bridging and entry courses for targeted groups and language literacy courses.</p> <p>All accredited courses are delivered by registered training organisations of which some are community based. Training organisations must be registered to obtain government funding. There are two levels of registration; (1) QETO – quality endorsed training organisation i.e. full registration and (2) partial registration where the training organisation is endorsed to deliver nominated courses.</p> <p>Learning Centre Links are funded by the Department of Family and Children’s Services.</p> |
|--------------------------|---|

**Table 7: ACE information currently collected**

| State or Territory           | AVETMISS data  | Other data   |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| Australian Capital Territory | <p>Programs funded through the ACT ACE grants are required to provide the following data in addition to the descriptions and program content:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Number of participants</li> <li>❖ Postcode of participants</li> <li>❖ Program hours delivered</li> <li>❖ Numbers in designated target groups</li> </ul> <p>Enrolment records are required to be kept up to 2 years with client identifying information.</p> <p>Support is provided in terms of master files for course/module classifications. Software for enrolment systems can be purchased for a minimal fee. These systems produce AVETMISS reports and are compliant with the new standard.</p> | <p>Information on ACE programs was collected on a one-off basis as part of an ANTYA funded project: <i>Report on ACE in the ACT (1999)</i>. The report includes the following information on ACE in 1998:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ programs offered (classification)</li> <li>❖ registered providers of accredited curriculum</li> <li>❖ origin of participants</li> <li>❖ target audiences for ACE programs</li> <li>❖ funding sources accessed</li> <li>❖ program hours delivered</li> <li>❖ number of programs</li> <li>❖ program attendance</li> <li>❖ staffing of ACE provision</li> <li>❖ desire to provide more programs</li> <li>❖ determination of program need</li> <li>❖ use of syllabus</li> </ul> |
| New South Wales              | <p>ACE providers receiving funds from BACE collect data to the AVETMISS standard on all accredited and non-accredited activity.</p> <p>In addition 5 data items specific to NSW ACE are collected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ ACE affiliation</li> <li>❖ Venue postcode</li> <li>❖ BACE funding source</li> <li>❖ Concessions</li> <li>❖ Student contact hours (nominal module hours x module enrolments)</li> </ul> <p>BACE annually produces the Statistical Data Collection Guidelines to assist ACE providers in the AVETMISS data collection process and classification issues. Computer based enrolment systems are available (4) which are AVETMISS compliant.</p>      | <p>BACE also produces the NSW ACE Enrolment Statistics which includes ACE participation profiles of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Enrolments by region</li> <li>❖ Multi-ACE providers</li> <li>❖ Students</li> <li>❖ Accredited VET enrolments</li> <li>❖ Language and Literacy enrolments</li> <li>❖ Equity enrolments</li> <li>❖ General ACE Providers</li> </ul>  |
| Northern Territory           | <p>Statistics for ACE providers is not available as a separate item in the data provided to NCVER.</p>   |  |

|                 |  |   |
|-----------------|--|---|
| Queensland      | <p>AVETMISS data is collected on the activities of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ TAFE-ACE</li> <li>❖ ACE-VET program</li> <li>❖ Community Literacy program.</li> </ul> <p>Support is provided in the form of enrolment forms. Software packages for computer based enrolment systems which are AVETMISS compliant can also be purchased.</p>   | <p>The mapping and identification project will assist in the collection of ACE data. Information will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Types of learners, providers, provision, infrastructure, roles and responsibilities in the delivery of ACE</li> <li>❖ Ascertaining trends in the motivation of students to choose ACE</li> <li>❖ a means of supporting awareness and infrastructure in the development of adult education in the community based sector in Qld</li> </ul>   |
| South Australia | <p>ACE providers receiving state funds must collect data based on student outcomes and student contact hours.</p> <p>ACE providers are given a free ACE computer based or paper based enrolment system which is AVETMISS compliant. Ongoing support is also provided along with module/course descriptions and coding master files.</p>  | <p>In 1995 the <i>Path-finder: Mapping ACE in SA</i> project was conducted. This project aimed to demographically map the ACE sector, identify providers of ACE and establish a database of ACE providers in SA. Information collected included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Number of ACE providers in SA</li> <li>❖ Courses offered</li> <li>❖ Attendances</li> <li>❖ Registered providers</li> <li>❖ Funding sources</li> <li>❖ Staffing resources</li> </ul> <p>During 1999 some ACE providers also submitted all activity as part of a trial. ACE client surveys are also randomly conducted. and this information covers reasons for enrolling, course usefulness and course outcomes.</p> |
| Tasmania        |  | <p>The current project <i>Mapping ACE in Tasmania</i> (to be completed in June 2000) will collect ACE information.</p>  |
| Victoria        | <p>AVETMISS compliant enrolment and client data is collected from all ACE organisations receiving government funding. In addition to this data the following information is collected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Program categories</li> <li>❖ Funding categories</li> <li>❖ Concessions</li> </ul> <p>Organisations do not have to provide data on programs not funded by government but the majority forward data on all courses offered including user pays or those funded through other sources.</p> <p>ACE providers are supported through the Regional councils in terms of training and purchase of software systems.</p> | <p>Funded organisations also conduct student satisfaction surveys and are required to report summary results of these annually.</p> <p>The ACFE Board also produces <i>Access for Adults: Summary Report</i> publications which utilises ACE data with the ABS census and provides an overview of participation in further education and adult community education across Victoria. <i>Key information on ACFE – Victoria</i> provides statistical highlights.</p>  |

|                      |  |  |
|----------------------|--|--|
| Western<br>Australia | Student contact and enrolment data is collected only for accredited training funded by WADOT and for Stream 1000 courses delivered in TAFE colleges. |  |
|----------------------|--|--|

**Table 8: Gaps in ACE information**

| State or Territory           | ACE information gaps   |
|------------------------------|--|
| Australian Capital Territory | <p>For the 2000 ACE grants the ACE Advisory Council will request more comprehensive information on participants which is AVETMISS compliant. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Postcode</li> <li>❖ Date of birth</li> <li>❖ Sex</li> <li>❖ Ethnicity (language spoken at home other than English Y/N flag)</li> <li>❖ Disability</li> <li>❖ Schooling level</li> <li>❖ Prior qualification level</li> <li>❖ Employment status</li> </ul>   |
| New South Wales              | <p>ACE providers and the Board view the AVETMIS standard as not adequately reflecting ACE effort particularly in the area of non-accredited VET. In addition they state that some fields are not applicable to NSW ACE such as client names.</p> <p>NSW suggests that the project methodology incorporate some modifications to the AVETMIS Standard to allow for greater flexibility at a state level and enable a range of options to be included.</p> <p>NSW ACE supports recommendations 1 to 8 in the National Key Performance Indicators for ACE report (Kaye Schofield and Associates) and would like these to be included in the project. However they argue that this will not be feasible unless the AVETMIS Standard is modified.</p> <p>NSW supports the following recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ National principles as outlined in the ‘Performance Indicators in ACE’ report should be adopted for performance measurement in ACE</li> <li>❖ Improvement of AVETMISS fields ‘outcomes values’ and ‘description’ for modules outside the AQF</li> <li>❖ Common ACE data specification be included in the provider outcome identifier field which would be based on the Mayer competencies</li> <li>❖ When the ABS is collecting information and reporting on the type of education/training provider ‘Community Education Providers’ be included</li> <li>❖ An ACE specific Employer Satisfaction Survey be distributed</li> <li>❖ A Community Satisfaction Survey be commissioned, at least every 2 years to ascertain community perceptions on the benefits and outcomes of post-compulsory education</li> <li>❖ Student Outcomes Survey be modified which separates ACE providers from registered private providers</li> <li>❖ The question which relates to the reasons for undertaking the course and outcomes gained better reflect the aspirations of ACE and other learners</li> <li>❖ The Student Outcomes Survey sample include those who have completed non-VET modules</li> <li>❖ A trial telephone interview methodology be used in the Employer Satisfaction Survey</li> </ul> <p>NSW proposes that several amendments to enhance the project scope be made. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Possible changes to the current collection arrangements be considered (2<sup>nd</sup> recommendation page 3) and</li> </ul> <p>an Executive Summary should be circulated to provider and key stakeholders (instead of interested parties) as a final project output (3<sup>rd</sup> recommendation page 3)</p> |

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Northern Territory | <p>NTETA is proposing a project on ACE to be funded - <i>Mapping the ACE sector in the Northern Territory</i>. The project will aim to determine the type and extent of ACE provision in the NT.</p> <p>Information collected will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ The number and type of providers, including provider details</li> <li>❖ The target clientele and areas of ACE sector in which they fall</li> <li>❖ Type and level of courses</li> <li>❖ Unmet course demand</li> </ul> <p>The information will be used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Develop and promote ACE in the NT</li> <li>❖ Inform NTETA planning for ACE</li> <li>❖ Strengthen ACE provision in line with NTETA's three year plan</li> </ul> |
| Queensland         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ The wide variety of learning programs offered by community-based organisations</li> <li>❖ The outcomes of these activities</li> <li>❖ The ability or otherwise of community-based organisations to enter into the vocational education and training sector</li> <li>❖ The ability or otherwise of community-based organisations to comply with AVETMISS standards</li> <li>❖ The resources required by community-based providers i.e. how to assist community providers</li> <li>❖ The destination pathways to employment and/or further education and training</li> </ul>   |
| South Australia    | <p>The SA data collection meets the ACE Councils and departmental requirements. However providers would like to see more value placed on student outcomes and achievements.</p>   |
| Tasmania           | <p>The current project <i>Mapping ACE in Tasmania</i> (to be completed in June 2000) will collect information relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Type of organisation</li> <li>❖ Significance of ACE within the organisation's work</li> <li>❖ Types of programs</li> <li>❖ Delivery methods</li> <li>❖ Registration as RTO</li> <li>❖ Target groups</li> <li>❖ Sources of funding</li> <li>❖ Staffing</li> <li>❖ Unmet demand</li> <li>❖ Level of community input into organisation</li> </ul>  |
| Victoria           | <p>In Victoria there is a need for more information about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Unmet demand</li> <li>❖ Reasons for non completion</li> <li>❖ Pathways taken by students who did not achieve a qualification or who did not complete course/module</li> </ul>   |
| Western Australia  | <p>No comment</p>   |

# ACE Resources

---

## National

Adult Learning Australia Inc, Annual Report 1998-1999  
Australian Association of Adult and Community Education Inc, Annual Report 1997-1998  
Key Performance Indicators for Adult and Community Education, Kaye Schofield and Associates, 1998  
National Marketing Strategy: Skills and Lifelong Learning. Summary community and employer research, prepared for ANTA Ministerial Council 1999  
National Policy Adult Community Education, Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, 1997

## Australian Capital City

ACE Grant Programs funded in 2000  
ACE Adult and Community Education News, March-April 2000  
ACT Advisory Council on ACE Strategic Plan, 1999-2002  
ACT Advisory Council on Adult and Community Education's response to NCVER's initial request for ACE information  
ACT Policy on Adult and Community Education, 1997  
Report on Adult and Community Education in the ACT, 1999  
2000 ACE funding reports  
2000 ACE grants: General information

## New South Wales

Board of Adult and Community Education Act 1990  
NSW ACE Enrolment Statistics 1997, NSW Board of Adult and Community Education  
NSW ACE Enrolment Statistics 1998, NSW Board of Adult and Community Education  
NSW Board of Adult and Community Education: Background Information about the Board of Adult and Community Education  
NSW BACE's response to NCVER's initial request for ACE information  
NSW Board of Adult and Community Education Strategic Plan 1998-2000  
Recognising the Value of Lifelong Learning for All, NSW Government, Policy on Adult and Community Education  
Statistical Data Collection Guidelines for 2000, NSW Board of Adult and Community Education  
Strategic Directions in Research by NSW Board of Adult and Community Education, 1998-2000  
The ACE Advantage: ACE Information Kit

## Northern Territory

Mapping the ACE sector in the NT: Project Aims (project proposal)  
Northern Territory Employment and Training Authority's response to NCVER's initial request for ACE information.

## Queensland

ACE Advisory Committee's response to NCVER's initial request for ACE information  
ACE-VET: Bringing learning opportunities to you and your community, DETIR (brochure)  
AVETMISS compliant software suppliers, DETIR  
Community employment assistance program, DETIR 1999 (brochure)  
Community jobs plan, DETIR 1999 (brochure)

Mapping and Identifying the Adult and Community Education Sector in Queensland, 1999 (in progress)  
Negotiating the Funding Maze: Funding for Youth Activities, Office of Youth Affairs, Department of Families, Youth and Community Care, 1999  
Rags and Riches: A Report on ACE in TAFE 1994-1995 Participation Rates in Rural and Remote Queensland, ACE Network Support Unit, TAFE Queensland, 1997  
State Fund Source Codes and Descriptions, DETIR  
1999 Community Training Identification Project: Phase II, Access and Equity Unit, DETIR Queensland  
1999 Enrolment Form, DETIR

## South Australia

ACEC Enrolment form  
Adult Community Education Unit's response to NCVER's initial request for ACE information  
Adult Community Education (ACE) Unit Adult Community Education Grant Program Evaluation DEET - Grant Declaration 1999-2000  
Adult Community Education Program ACE Student Survey, 2000  
Department of Education, Training and Employment Minor Grant Agreement Category  
Department of Education, Training and Employment Minor Grant Agreement Category D – 2000  
Eastwood Community Centre – ACE funded and non ACE funded activity  
Funding Agreement between Minister for Education, Children's Services and Training and the Southern Mallee Community Education Group Incorporated, 1999  
Path-finder: Mapping Adult Community Education in South Australia, ACE Unit, DEET, 1996  
The Adult Community Education (ACE) Grant Information Book 2000/2001 Part I: General Information, ACE Council, DEET 2000  
The Adult Community Education (ACE) Grant Information Book 2000/2001 Part II: Application Forms and Information, ACE Council, DEET  
Vocational Education, Employment and Training ACT 1994  
WEA Adult Education Annual Report 1998

## Tasmania

ACE Advisory Committee's response to NCVER's initial request for ACE information  
Department of Education Adult Community Education (ACE) Advisory Committee – Terms of Reference  
Guidelines for 2000 Non Government Organisation Adult and Community Education (ACE) Grants  
Mapping ACE in Tasmania 1999: A project brief (in progress)  
Mentoring project: Tasmanian and Victorian Community Houses

## Victoria

Adult, Community and Further Education Act 1991  
Adult, Community and Further Education Board Annual report 1998-99  
Adult, Community and Further Education Board 2000 Funding Policies, October 1999  
Adult, Community and Further Education Board's response to NCVER's initial request for ACE information.  
Guidelines and Conditions for Eligibility and Registration of ACE Organisations, Adult, Community and Further Education Board Victoria May 1999  
Key Information on Adult, Community and Further Education – Victoria, ACFE Board, 1999  
Taking ACE to the Year 2000: A Vision, Adult, Community and Further Education Board Strategic Plan  
1998 Adult, Community and Further Education Access for Adults: Summary Report, ACFE Board, 1999

## Western Australia

ACE Advisory Council's response to NCVER's initial request for ACE information.

Strategy for Adult Community Education: Promoting partnerships and pathways 1999-2001,  
WADOT

Adult Community Education Advisory Committee: Information for Members' Manual, WADOT  
November 1998



The National Centre for Vocational Education Research is Australia's primary research and development organisation in the field of vocational education and training.

NCVER undertakes and manages research programs and monitors the performance of Australia's training system.

NCVER provides a range of information aimed at improving the quality of training at all levels.

ISBN 0 87397 712 2 web edition