

## Expanding national VET statistical collections: Private provider engagement – Support document

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This document was produced by the author(s) based on their research for the report *Expanding national vocational education and training statistical collections: Private provider engagement* and is an added resource for further information. The report is available on NCVET's website:  
<<http://www.ncver.edu.au>>

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# Detailed Results of Phase 1 - Focus Groups

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Focus group sessions were analysed by use of notes taken at the time and through the audio recordings. What is provided below is a collective summary of contributions made during the meetings, organised by focus group question.

*Question 1: How do you believe your business planning and operation could be enhanced with better access to training and education statistical data?*

- ✧ Good source of comparative data between sectors, states, programs – useful for benchmarking, marketing, planning and for overseas and offshore business development
- ✧ Good for developing forecasting and accurate forecasting models
- ✧ Helps the industry understand demand drivers
- ✧ Trend data is useful on uptake of training packages globally and domestically
- ✧ Useful data on movements between sectors and training formats
- ✧ Identification of new markets
- ✧ Useful data for contestability planning
- ✧ Analysis over time would be ‘incredibly useful for business and resource planning’
- ✧ Useful to see what the market is doing and what competitors are providing
- ✧ Identifying opportunities through government policy and funding – knowing where the movements are in our clienteles would enable better planning for government funded programs
- ✧ Showing clients (particularly overseas) that the private provider sector is large, well established and robust
- ✧ Putting media reported provider dysfunction into a broader context of success
- ✧ A way of testing that competitive forces are working equitably between private and public providers and sectors
- ✧ Identification of client groups under-represented in participation statistics

*Question 2: What sort of data would be most useful to you?*

- ✧ Data needs to be at least down to qualification/course level
- ✧ Analysis of socio-economic data and demand drivers
- ✧ Data that would allow benchmarking for program quality, delivery quality and outcomes for students, administrative and management functions
- ✧ Data on the changes in clienteles, their demographics, prior qualifications and where they move to after their VET qualification

- ✧ Data that would enable the identification of performance improvement and would enable some exploration of the change in performance
- ✧ Data that would enable non-compliance issues to be identified and addressed
- ✧ To enable the tracking of alumni and their employment
- ✧ Data on enquiry to enrolment conversion rates
- ✧ Progression and attrition rates
- ✧ Participation statistics by course/by region
- ✧ Socio-economic data on participants
- ✧ Benchmarking data that is commonly collected across all providers
- ✧ Delivery mode data by program – to enable completion rate outcomes to be explored by mode by program
- ✧ Data that shows the lengths of time that providers offer students for each course – these vary widely between providers for any given training package yielding quality concerns

*Question 3: What sort of data do you already use?*

- ✧ Corporate clients want detailed data on their own employee learners, particularly progress data
- ✧ AVETMISS data is a good basis for commencement of a data collection process
- ✧ Conversion rates of enquiries to enrolments
- ✧ Completion rates progression rates by course – good for monitoring/attrition and for course reviews
- ✧ Customer satisfaction data
- ✧ Compliance data
- ✧ For international students – where they come from by program
- ✧ Staff management to adjust staffing requirements to needs areas/growing areas etc
- ✧ Industry knowledge data from networks
- ✧ Progression data that allows intervention with individual students when they look as though they may be going to fail – this is useful with overseas students for visa purposes, and for all students as a customer retention process, and as a learner support strategy

*Question 4: How do you currently collect, store and manage that data?*

- ✧ Already use AVETMISS format for data collection
- ✧ WISENET
- ✧ VET Track
- ✧ AVETMISS compliant for government funded programs – makes sense to use the same system for fee for service students too
- ✧ Electronically – an Excel based database is the most broadly user-friendly and accessible
- ✧ Common to get a new student application in hard copy and then enrol online, but hard copy enrolment is still not unusual

- ✧ Corporate client enrolments tend to come in a block from the company while individual student come one at a time
- ✧ For some providers the application to enrolment to student records to outcomes reporting is contained within the one software product

*Question 5: How would you want to access and use data from a national collection?*

- ✧ A question of whether all data – domestic and international/offshore will be collected and treated in the same way?
- ✧ Access through the web or an electronically available database would be OK
- ✧ There is a need for an agency that will identify industry and sector needs and produce the reports that are most useful
- ✧ Easy electronic upload of provider data to the database is required
- ✧ All providers should have access to their own data. Other data to be available on a nation/State/regional basis with judgement exercised where a data report may accidentally reveal the identity of a provider

*Question 6: What data would you be able to provide to the database?*

- ✧ AVETMISS compliant data
- ✧ Socioeconomic data
- ✧ Enrolments, completions, progression

*Question 7: What problems might there be for you in providing the data?*

- ✧ New software requirements may be a problem, and software that requires hardware upgrades may also be problematic
- ✧ Depending on the privacy of the data upload could be web-based, but some data may require more secure upload processes
- ✧ The time and cost to do it need to have a pay-off in terms of the benefits that can be derived from the data
- ✧ Frequency of reporting is an issue of balance between the frequency that the RTO needs to do the work required and the currency of the database – greater frequency will be tolerated if the services provided from the data reflect currency
- ✧ A concern that there is always potential for initially modest data requirements to creep up in size – there would be value in guaranteeing for a number of years the type of data to be collected, and review those requirements on a known and published periodical basis
- ✧ While AVETMISS is a good basis it is problematic where an individual is enrolled in more than one program – AVETMISS requires the students data to be input again as a different individual
- ✧ The supply of financial data, staffing data, operational data, audit data and performance against excellence data shouldn't be placed on a national database

*Question 8: What needs to be done to assist you to provide that data?*

- ✧ Clear and agreed definitions of each data term
- ✧ Provision of services in return that make the effort worthwhile to providers
- ✧ Some assistance with understanding new software and data protocol requirements and professional development as required
- ✧ Development of a clear and transparent data model that shows what is to be collected, how it is used, how it is linked to other data, clear definitions, and the service standards of the collection agency – also to ensure that data demands are stable over agreed periods of time and then reviewed on an agreed and known periodic basis.
- ✧ Ensure that all providers (public and private) participate so that the onus doesn't fall only on the willing and compliant
- ✧ Development of data requirements that are agreed across the States/Commonwealth and other agencies with a legitimate data reporting requirement – and the generation of a data collection protocol that enables all of those requirements to be met from the same data collection system at RTO level. Common reporting dates across the various agencies requiring data
- ✧ Excel based student management software that enables the one student record to serve the RTO internal requirements as well as external data reporting requirements
- ✧ Confidence that collection and archiving agencies understand the sensitivity of the data and the need to maintain provider confidentiality and security – some professional development in government agencies may be required to ensure that confidence.

*Question 9: What sort of organization would you wish to provide the data to, and with what safeguards?*

- ✧ Commercially and politically independent
- ✧ Unable to identify individual providers
- ✧ Good understanding of VET
- ✧ History of good behaviour as an organization, with clear ethical and performance standards
- ✧ Clear service standards
- ✧ Competent and professional staff and management
- ✧ Recognised as an authority in VET both nationally and internationally
- ✧ Capable of assisting providers in knowing how to place data on the database, and how to best use the data for business and planning purposes
- ✧ Capable of maintaining current data and archival data
- ✧ Understanding and commitment to a mutual obligation – in return for provider input clearly articulated services are provided free of charge. Beyond those agreed mutual obligation services there would be clearly understood charging rates and prices.
- ✧ Security integrity
- ✧ Lobbyist and spokesperson function – some felt this was a good thing in the collection organization, others felt that these functions should not be associated with the data collection agency
- ✧ Capacity to exercise judgement where a data report or request may inadvertently identify a provider

- ✧ Establishment of clear policies and processes on who has access to what data for what purposes, and in what form
- ✧ The agency needs to be subject to external audit
- ✧ There need to be processes for the rectification of error in recording, reporting or interpretation

# Detailed Results of Phase 2 - Survey

## NCVER VET Data Collection project

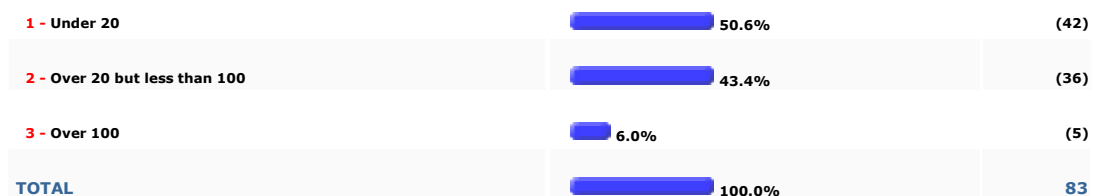
ACPET recently completed a series of focus sessions in most states and territories to give private providers the opportunity to influence the process of how national education and training statistical data will be collected. If you missed out on these sessions, it is not too late to have your say. Private education and training providers contribute significantly to Australia's national training and education effort. There is an emerging need for us to more systematically report our contribution to this effort. ACPET is working with the National Centre for Vocational Education and Research (NCVER) on a consultative project aimed at enabling the private sector to participate in, and benefit from, national statistical collection. The information collected from you is confidential and neither your name nor the name of your organization will be provided in any report on the project. The project will yield a report to the NCVER providing advice on: • how best to collect the statistical information from providers; • how providers would wish to access and use the information to enhance business performance; • what safeguards will be required on the confidentiality and use of the data; • what resources will be needed to support collection and accessing; and • the characteristics and behaviours required of the collection agency by ACPET members. Privacy: completion of the registration component, a response to this survey and/or acceptance to attend further focus sessions represents your agreement that the information collected from you will be used to generate the report to NCVER. As stated, this information will remain confidential and neither your name nor the name of your organisation will be provided in any report on the project.

**Total Responses For This Survey: 83**

### 1. Indicate if you attended a focus session during phase I of this project.







### 2. Number of employees (full-time, part-time, contractual)



### 3. Number of full time students enrolled per annum

<b>1 - Under 200</b>	 57.8%	(48)
<b>2 - Over 200 but less than 1,000</b>	 31.3%	(26)
<b>3 - Over 1,000</b>	 10.8%	(9)
<b>TOTAL</b>	 100.0%	<b>83</b>


### 4. Number of part time students enrolled per annum

<b>1 - Under 200</b>	 72.3%	(60)
<b>2 - Over 200 but less than 1,000</b>	 21.7%	(18)
<b>3 - Over 1,000</b>	 6.0%	(5)
<b>TOTAL</b>	 100.0%	<b>83</b>










### 5. Are you an enterprise registered training organisation?

<b>1 - Yes</b>	 44.6%	(37)
<b>2 - No</b>	 55.4%	(46)
<b>TOTAL</b>	 100.0%	<b>83</b>







### 6. Which of the following represents the largest number of your students. Tick one box only.

<b>1 - Domestic students</b>	 73.5%	(61)
<b>2 - Onshore international students</b>	 10.8%	(9)
<b>3 - Offshore international students</b>	 18.1%	(15)
<b>TOTAL</b>	 100.0%	<b>83</b>






7. Please indicate whether you operate nationally or in selected states and/or territories. You may tick more than one box.

1 - Nationally	 25.3%	(21)
2 - Queensland	 27.7%	(23)
3 - New South Wales	 31.3%	(26)
4 - Australian Capital Territory	 4.8%	(4)
5 - Victoria	 26.5%	(22)
6 - Tasmania		(0)
7 - South Australia	 16.9%	(14)
8 - Western Australia	 7.2%	(6)
9 - Northern Territory	 2.4%	(2)
<b>TOTAL</b>	 100.0%	<b>83</b>

8. Please indicate which type of delivery you use most frequently. Please tick one box only.

1 - Workplace delivery	 19.3%	(16)
2 - Institutional (classroom) delivery	 73.5%	(61)
3 - Online delivery	 8.4%	(7)
4 - RTO run commercial business ie:salon	 1.2%	(1)
5 - Other	 9.6%	(8)
<b>TOTAL</b>	 100.0%	<b>83</b>

9. Please indicate which type of funding represents the largest share of your business. Please tick one box only.

1 - Fee for service (no government funding)	 71.1%	(59)
2 - Government funded programs (not user choice)	 18.1%	(15)
3 - User choice (apprenticeships & traineeships)	 12.0%	(10)
4 - Other	 1.2%	(1)
<b>TOTAL</b>	 100.0%	<b>83</b>

10. Please indicate the highest qualification level you deliver (Australian Quality Framework - AQF). Please tick one box only.





1 - Advanced Diploma/Diploma	60.2%	(50)
2 - Certificate IV	21.7%	(18)
3 - Certificate III	8.4%	(7)
4 - Certificate II	1.2%	(1)
5 - Other	12.0%	(10)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>83</b>

11. Indicate what student data you currently collect. You may tick a number of boxes.

1 - Course code and name	98.8%	(82)
2 - Gender	95.2%	(79)
3 - Date of Birth	96.4%	(80)
4 - Nationality	85.5%	(71)
5 - Main language spoken at home	68.7%	(57)
6 - Special target group ie: Indigenous, disability	59.0%	(49)
7 - Address	98.8%	(82)
8 - Highest relevant qualification attained previously	78.3%	(65)
9 - Student outcomes	72.3%	(60)
10 - Whether student was publicly or privately funded	47.0%	(39)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>83</b>

12. Indicate what student data you would be willing to provide to a national VET database. You may tick a number of boxes.

1 - Course code and name	100.0%	(83)
2 - Gender	91.6%	(76)
3 - Date of Birth	79.5%	(66)
4 - Nationality	81.9%	(68)
5 - Main language spoken at home	66.3%	(55)
6 - Special target group ie: Indigenous, disability	60.2%	(50)
7 - Address	56.6%	(47)

<b>8 - Highest relevant qualification attained previously</b>	 65.1%	(54)
<b>9 - Student outcomes</b>	 71.1%	(59)
<b>10 - Whether student was publicly or privately funded</b>	 53.0%	(44)
<b>TOTAL</b>	 100.0%	<b>83</b>

**13. What software package or type of program/system do you currently use to collect and store student records?**

#	Response
1	a product called MAZE
1	Access DATA BASE specially designed for this RTO
1	access/excel
1	ACT! Software database.
1	CAZ Software, MAZE
1	Coreskill
1	Currently a customised version but are moving to a web based version Pepi
1	Currently use eMinerva. Next year will be using Pepi.
1	customised SQL
1	E-Minerva database.
1	e-TQM, PRISMS, excel
1	Edupro
1	Eminerva
1	Enquiry Mate for Trainers (Actually we developed it)
1	Enquiry Mate Training Database
2	excel
1	Excel, MYOB.
1	File maker Pro9
1	Filemaker
1	FTA has a in house developed software that keeps all personal data of students.
1	ICARE
1	iMIS
1	In house developed Microsoft Access database
1	In house property system
1	In-house developed database
1	LCMS and paper based
1	Microsoft Access (specifically designed)

1	Microsoft Access database for data storage (manual data entry)
1	MS Access database
1	None In house documents
1	Ochre WiseNet
1	Off the shelf database system (PEPi system) Off the shelf CRM system (Sales Logic)
1	organisational purpose-built database
1	Paradigm EMS
1	Peoplesoft Own developed Student Portal
2	PEPi
1	PreSys
1	PRISMS self-developed
1	Proprietary in house system
1	SA = STELA NSW = TED
1	SABA all of government database
1	TASS
1	TEAMS Student Administration System, Quickbooks, Internally developed Intranet
1	TED
1	VET track
1	VETRAK
1	Vetrak - Advantage Plus
18	Vettrak
1	VETTRAK - Advantage Lite
1	VETtrak Trakker Advantage Lite
1	Vettrak, Retriever
1	vettrakker
1	VISTA operations/ cryptainer
1	we use paper
1	wise net
1	Wise.Net
4	WiseNet
1	WISENET,
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>96.4% (80/83)</b>

14. Rank the following statements (using number 1 as the highest) in order of the benefits a national VET database would have for the public image of the private VET sector. Please do not use NA.

Please Note: The Following Scale Applies:

- 1 1
- 2 2
- 3 3
- 4 4
- 5 5

	Average rank						
	1	2	3	4	5		
1 - Greater public understanding and valuing by the public of the contribution made by private providers						(2.3)	
2 - Better public image for private providers						(2.5)	
3 - More informed government expenditure on VET						(2.1)	
4 - Greater understanding at the political level of the private sector contribution						(1.9)	
5 - Provision of data to facilitate a more powerful lobbying and bargaining position with stakeholders						(2.2)	
<b>TOTAL</b>						<b>100.0 %</b>	<b>83</b>

15. Rank the following statements (using number 1 as the highest) that a national VET database would have for the business development and operations of a private RTO. Please do not use NA.

Please Note: The Following Scale Applies:

- 1 1
- 2 2
- 3 3
- 4 4

	Average rank					
	1	2	3	4		
1 - More balanced, transparent and accountable public/private funding mix					(2.1)	
2 - Greater understanding and valuing by employers of the private sector contribution					(1.9)	
3 - Data to inform individual provider based strategic and market planning and development					(2.3)	
4 - Ability for providers to benchmark their own performance against national and state indicators					(2.1)	
<b>TOTAL</b>					<b>100.0 %</b>	<b>83</b>






16. Do you see any other advantages not listed in the previous two questions?

#	Response
1	Better understanding of candidates and their abilities and needs in Education.
1	Can determine training trends earlier
1	Ease for students to claim RPL or other information when on a national data base Ease for RTO to assist students apply for RPL CREDIT transfer etc
1	Enable better targeting of AQTF audits based on risk profile (the original stated intention). In theory, this should reduce the burden on low-risk providers, increasing the chances of catching out the problem providers which damage the industry's reputation and put pressure on the TAS.
1	I am only a very small RTO and can see no advantage of national database
1	I would like to see TAFE held more accountable and to be under the same 'rules' as private providers.
1	If the Training Package for the industry being delivered was delivered and assessed to one national level instead of each state delivering to different hours for each state, and if Western Australia could provide full time courses for the qualification as in all other states of Australia this would be beneficial to employers and also to students wishing to enter the industry from other states
1	industry benchmarking
7	No
1	Possibly if there was more available data
1	The risk of bureaucratic misinterpretation, regulatory misuse or public domain misrepresentation of private provider data represents a very real, serious and immediate threat to individual business reputation, confidentiality, viability, commercial autonomy and competitive positioning in contested markets. This risk cannot be adequately placated, ameliorated or justified by any presumed (but unsubstantiated) sector-wide benefit, government curiosity/comfort or appeal to the common or public good. Also the increased administrative overheads imposed on the business by external data reporting places an ongoing financial burden on private provider operations not in receipt of public funding. The additional effort and costs involved cannot help but erode business efficiency and will inevitably need to be passed on to students via increased fees. While this may not be the intention of the exercise, past experience has shown that it will most certainly be an unavoidable consequence of increased compliance with respect to mandated data collection. The compounded risk exposure and negative cost/benefit rationale are decidedly counterproductive at the provider level and so will continue to be avoided.
1	To provide workplace interface linked with relevant communities
1	With an increased focus on the VET sector by the federal and state governments, who appear to be moving away from funding traditional tertiary institutions, there needs to be recognition and focus of the value of privately funded RTO's who have been successfully delivering training for many years. These supporting enterprises will be endangered by governments over-zealously funding public institutions and ignoring the benefits that private providers offer.
1	Yes. Will give Private RTO's a better opportunity to provide to the market information on Private RTO's and how they're qualifications are equivalent to Public RTO's.
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>24.1% (20/83)</b>

17. Rank what you would have the most difficulty with (use number 1 for the most difficult) in contributing to a national VET database. Please do not use NA.

Please Note: The Following Scale Applies:

- 1 1
- 2 2
- 3 3
- 4 4
- 5 5

	Average rank					
	1	2	3	4	5	
1 - Collecting the data at the point of enrolment						(4.0)
2 - Acquiring suitable software and computer platform to run it						(3.1)
3 - Staff professional development						(3.0)
4 - Maintaining confidentiality of the student records						(3.1)
5 - Marginal labour and other costs associated with the collection						(2.4)
<b>TOTAL</b>					100.0 %	<b>83</b>

18. What other difficulties do you expect to confront?

#	Response
1	benefits to the RTO compared to effort put in
1	Consistency and stability of electronic records management (and therefore reliability of data over time) in the event a different software package is used at a later point in time (for example, switching from Trakker Advantage Lite to WISE). Each company has its own database structure with little consistency between them.
1	Consistency of data across organisations.
1	COST
1	Current reporting software is unwieldy but few other compliant options exist. Reporting all data likely to result in error reports when submitted to DETA and these need to be rectified which is time consuming and labour intensive. We currently don't report fee for service because of this.
1	Deadlines may be a problem dependant on format
1	Depends on what the data looks like for the submission; if it has to be entered a second time, that created double handling. If it is done as a report that can be exported from an existing management system, that is fairly easy.
1	Extracting the data from our current student database will require extensive modification to our computer software system.
1	Having to report the same data for both national statistical collection and for funding purposes. Different business rules may apply and this will be a problem if they are contradictory. In particular, the NSW-DET ePayments system requires a bogus qualification completion record to make a final claim if the funded course is not a full qualification. Module start and finish dates in the files are used in special ways by OTTE in Victoria (to estimate actual hours completed to date). We would not want the situation where a provider has to adjust their data for funding purposes, submit a funding claim file, and then adjust them back for national collection purposes. The timing would be very difficult to manage and prone to errors.
1	I have rated the above on the assumption that DEEWR/VETAB will ensure that systems like ours that are public (E-Minerva) will be able to upload simply to the VET database. I have rated these on the basis that we are already collecting the data etc. In terms of confidentiality as long as not identifying data was uploaded then that would be maintained. However, if the upload was difficult & involved data manipulation to work or if we had to enter the data twice in a separate system for example, then staff professional development, would go to 1 & labour costs would move to 1. If we had to purchase this extra software, that would also move to 1.
1	It is not so much the time taken to collect the data, but the time and cost associated with producing the data in a format that suits another software system that is likely to cause us issues.

1	<b>LONG TERM STORAGE / ARCHIVING</b>
1	Nil
1	no others
4	None
1	Our current software does not run a report to pull the information stated above, this is manually extracted from the system. Im concerned about Student Privacy and what details are required for the reporting. Students will need to be advised prior to enrolment that their information is going to be collected for the purpose of contributing to a national VET database and I believe an official statement should be provided by NCVET to Providers to include on all Enrolment Forms to ensure students are fully aware of what data is being collected and why.
1	our experience with DEEWR HEP reporting is that IT and staffing costs are a major concern Other difficulties possibly posed in design of a system not sufficiently flexible to cater for accredited courses
1	Potential for adverse data manipulation by third party users. Administrative burden distracting from core business of teaching and learning. Getting caught up in an escalating academic and bureaucratic expectation for more and more 'nice to have' data at the cost of the provider with NIL direct benefit for primary stakeholders ie. private provider businesses and the fee paying students they teach.
1	software compatability with current systems
1	Students not willing to provide certain information about themselves.
1	the ability to have a unified consensus of the data being submitted from RTO's without them being penalised. Similiar to the ABS consensus scenario where it's not compulsory but it has become a enjoyable culture that we do together as a nation for the better good of all.
1	The fine line and balance between honest data collection and the interpretation of that data by auditors.
1	Western Australia having a registration board that will only accept applicants who can provide evidence that a three year apprenticeship has been completed.
<b>TOTAL: 31.3% (26/83)</b>	

19. Rank which concern is of most importance to you (use number 1 for the most important) in contributing to a national VET database. Please do not use NA.

Please Note: The Following Scale Applies:

- 1 1
- 2 2
- 3 3
- 4 4
- 5 5

	Average rank						
	1	2	3	4	5		
1 - Maintaining the privacy of my own RTO in published reports						(2.2)	
2 - Unstable and ever-changing government data requirements						(1.9)	
3 - Security of my data in government agencies						(2.3)	
4 - Inadequate precision in the definitions of what data is to be provided						(2.2)	
5 - Who will have access to what levels of data						(2.3)	
<b>TOTAL</b>						<b>100.0 %</b>	<b>83</b>

20. What other concerns do you have?

#	Response
1	actual benefit to our RTO
1	As noted above, the potential for unscrupulous, inappropriate or retrospective analysis of data collected with respect to regulatory determination of the "risk management status" of the RTO. Who arbitrates with respect to private RTOs servicing too many or too few students, of domestic or international origin, paying or not paying full fees, with or without government subsidy, at one or other AQF level? As there is no guaranteed probity of interpretation or set criteria for analysing or extrapolating the data there is every possibility that the information can be used in a punitive way to actively constrain business activity and artificially restrict trade. This suspicion is evidenced in the assumptions behind your questions 21 and 22 below that propose to place the private provider data in the hands of some "agency" potentially with the power to disseminate the aggregated data on demand (potentially at a price) to a wide range of third party users.
1	Concern with competitors accessing client and market information
1	Data is used to strengthen the public providers case
1	For qualifications that have few providers, it will be difficult to maintain commercial 'privacy' as it will be easy to work out who has what business in the market. The reporting of data to this agency should remain between the individual provider, the agency and the relevant registration authority. Why is there any need for public reporting of data? Wasn't the purpose of outcomes reporting to ensure the individual RTO was meeting expected benchmarks on training quality and student progress? It is also important that any 'benchmarks' take into account the delivery and assessment methods utilised by the individual RTO and the level of the course. Eg self-paced vs. fixed time/progress through the course; classroom vs. external study, etc.
1	For some equity groups i.e. people with disabilities - an outcomes based assessment of RTO success through reporting such as this can show an inaccurate representation of the value of training - not all students will complete due to a range of medical and non-medical reasons this does not equate to a failed training program though reporting on outcomes would give that view.
1	Has NCVET stated how this data impacts on an RTO? Will the data be solely used for reporting? OR Will it be provided to other Government Agencies including the State Training Authority?
1	no others
5	None

1	Providing a record to government of the participation in certain courses may raise real or perceived confidentiality concerns with customers, especially if data may get to Centrelink or the ATO, who have many rights to acquire data from other government agencies.
1	Some organisations cooking the data for better outcomes.
1	That an ill thought through system is introduced; that the various stakeholders eg state accrediting bodies, various branches of DEEWR, COAG, and the plethora of committees that are now in place all look at this and see it is an opportunity to do their bit of research about the VET sector on the cheap, that instead of commissioning research looking at a specific issue, that they all have their 2 bobs worth and we all have to collect extra data that is not essential but is interesting for them to know; that they system keeps on changing all the time; the system they impose is unwieldy and timeconsuming; that it is used as a stick: we don't have great completion rates - all our students are publicly funded and our material often triggers a very personal reaction (counselling) and it is in their best interest to stop studying and get help with these issues. My big concern is that this information will be used against us without the capacity for us to explain why. (Ironically this will create more work but if we can make general comments to qualify our data (not on an individual basis) I will feel that at least they can contextualise the information they are getting.
1	That the collection of data will not produce meaningful results. Given the vast differences between RTO's in terms of scope, size, client group etc, it is hard to see how meaningful data can be collected. There is also a risk that people will make inferences from data at a superficial level without really understanding the complexity of the VET system.
1	The accuracy fo the data that is submitted and how it is used to draw conclusions on the quality of training offered by private providers. The purpose of the data collection????? There has been no definitive response or confirmation of the collection rights and the relationship to the qulaity of education provided and the recording of data (particularly the samples of the evaluation samples seen lately which provide a broad brush approach with no real quality)
1	The quality of the data and the use of this without other indicators of quality/performance
1	Who will be responsible for the benchmark for participation in this national database
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>24.1% (20/83)</b>

**21. Please rank in order of importance the characteristics (using number 1 for the most important) for any agency appointed to collect and store data from private providers. Please do not use NA.**

Please Note: The Following Scale Applies:

- 1 1
- 2 2
- 3 3
- 4 4

	Average rank				
	1	2	3	4	
1 - Commercially and politically independent					(1.6)
2 - Knowledgeable about VET					(1.8)
3 - Clear in its ethical and service standards					(1.7)
4 - Clear in its policies on access and confidentiality					(1.6)
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>100.0%</b>	<b>83</b>

**22. Please rank in order of importance the services (using number 1 for the most important) for any agency appointed to collect and store data from private providers. Please do not use NA.**

Please Note: The Following Scale Applies:

- 1 1
- 2 2
- 3 3
- 4 4

	Average rank				
	1	2	3	4	
<b>1 - Reports on request by individual providers or provider groups; reports on request by other groups with legitimate interests</b>					(1.7)
<b>2 - Capable of providing professional reports determined by the collection agency as useful to the industry;</b>					(1.6)
<b>3 - Capable of fielding media questions that can be answered through statistical data about VET</b>					(2.3)
<b>4 - Capable of building an international reputation as an authority</b>					(2.5)
<b>TOTAL</b>					<b>100.0 % 83</b>

**23. What other characteristics and/or services would you want to see in any collection agency?**

#	Response
1	A legal obligation for maintaining confidentiality with accountability back to the providers of the data to protect such information from misuse by third parties.
1	Customer Service!
1	high standards of data integrity and reliability as a government agency or with strong accountability for data standards consistent with government standards
1	I would like to see information on a national data base for all students who have completed a qualification. This information should list the qualification, units completed as well as the RTO name. That way every RTO could search on qualifications that students use as evidence for direct credit transfer to check their validity...especially difficult if the RTO is in longer in operation.
1	If reports can not be provided to an RTO for whatever reason, FOC advice should be given to assist RTO's with understanding various markets in order to develop courses. If RTO are taking the time to filter this information to NCVER (FOC) The information should be available FOC to RTO's. If this is not possible, anything over \$20 is unreasonable.
1	It concerns me that this agency will be making media comments - unless NCVER win the contract as I feel they have the background and experience to place this information in a context. This agency should be robust, able to withstand political pressure from government and opposition, independent of all state accrediting bodies, very sound capacity to collect and protect electronic data from hacking etc, proven background in sound research methodologies and report writing etc.
1	Minimal other involvement in the VET sector and other government work. This reduced the risk of conflicts of interest and data leakage (intentional or accidental). A commercial market research company would be much better than a quasi-government body like NCVER or TVET. ACER are probably on the edge of this criteria, being a commercial body but having many other links with government and universities.
5	None
1	Offering online access (similar to AEI student database) to RTOs for their own analysis through standard software such as Excel Pivot Tables
1	Strict performance criteria Auditing of ethics
1	That the information was Valid, Reliable and Accurate.
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>18.1% (15/83)</b>

24. Tick the following strategies and services that would help you to contribute to a national VET database.

1 - Provision of either free or at cost suitable software		78.3%	(65)
2 - A free telephone help desk while you are installing the software and becoming familiar with it		74.7%	(62)
3 - Clear definitions for data to be collected		95.2%	(79)
4 - Development of a service that provides regular standard reports to you on a National and State basis – free of charge		88.0%	(73)
5 - Development of a service that provides tailored reports provided to you at your request and cost		50.6%	(42)
6 - Development of a vigorous and evidence based marketing and image building program for private VET providers		63.9%	(53)
7 - Development of web-based database access with appropriate levels of security		72.3%	(60)
8 - Payment to your RTO for its contribution to the national statistical database		63.9%	(53)
9 - Provision of initial professional development of key staff at no cost to you		84.3%	(70)
10 - Assurance that data requirements would remain stable over a specified period of time, with changes negotiated at specified intervals		88.0%	(73)
11 - Development of clear service and ethical standards for the collection agency		84.3%	(70)
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100.0%</b>	<b>83</b>

25. Are there any other strategies and/or services you can suggest that would help you to contribute to a national VET database?

#	Response
1	Although I support the VET dataase initiative I do not see from the data collected how this initiative will improve the Private VET sector's image in the public and political spheres. Our biggest issue is in non legitimate operators. By collecting demographic data and studen outcomes the legitimate providers who deem students as NYC and do not pass every student will be at a disadvantage. If I am a general public member or even a prospective student I will select the school with the 100% pass mark. The only way to bring to the surface the non legitimate operators and to right perceptions is through an effective policing system (VRQA / NARA) AND an method to independently assess and benchmark student outcomes.
1	An unequivocal national guarantee that RTO participation in data collection automatically counts for specific AQTF compliance requirements, where State Authorities cannot demand further evidence because they take the national data collection for granted and want something more and something different. To make it worthwhile for providers to participate there needs to be some concession against a already over regulated and unwheldy bureaucratic demands. Ever more information, just for the sake of gathering it because we can, will of itself do nothing to improve the quality, viability or professionalism of the Australian VET sector. Only some real regulatory concession or business incentive might encourage providers to overcome their collective distrust of the motives behind this data collection initiative and agree to contribute.
1	I would suggest that the agency managing this initiative consult with the groups involved with collecting student data from Higher Education Providers. They already have a free, easy to use software. They also tick many of the boxes in question 24. Their reporting of aggregate data back to providers is something that still requires work. Similarly, we are also reporting on students in the 15-17 year age bracket for the Queensland Certificate of Education. Surely there is some way that all this reporting may be streamlined?
1	If RTO's are paid for providing the information, we would have no objection to pay for 'tailored' reports so long as the fee is not excessive. If manual labour is involved in developing the tailored reports this should be outlined to providers in addition to exact costing.
1	It would need to interface with our current software because we do not have the time or manpower to double entry.
1	More information on how it will ad value to my Management systems.Teacher quality and retention,Student numbers and partnerships with the WA Department of Education and Training.
2	No
3	None

- 1 **STUDENT/EMPLOYER SATISFACTION DATA** If the collection agency provided the system to collect data from students via an on-line survey for national "customer satisfaction" data, it would remove a huge burden from providers to implement systems. In the big picture, a single national system has to cost less to implement than 1000s of systems implemented by each provider and the interfaces to get the data back to the central agency. If providers could simply provide contact details or students and employers to the agency, the data collection would be easy. The agency could then manage sampling, incentives to participate, tailor questions to be asked by course/industry or literacy level, etc in a consistent manner. The whole concept that you can get absolute numbers that mean something from a national satisfaction survey is ridiculous. **UNIT/QUALIFICATION COMPLETION DATA** For completion data, however, a complete collection is possible, and the standards for collecting that data using a new file format and national upload system seems possible. The current QI3 standard may be too coarse, and I don't see why anonymous demographic data on individual students should not be included.
- 1 That there is capacity for systems like E-Minerva to upload data - directly and simply or it becomes a nightmare.
- 1 The data collection method needs to integrate with those currently commercially available and not be another collection burden placed on RTO's i.e. integrate into AVETMISS reporting using compatible software such as VETtrak. Adding an additional software requirements will not be seen as added value but rather added workload with no compensation/value.
- 1 Turnaround information is faster than normal government channels
- 1 Use same or similar fields as other VET data collecting programs, such VET FEE HELP.
- 1 Whilst the provision of free or at cost software would be useful, if it doesn't integrate simply with our existing system then we end up having to run two systems which is very inefficient. The software would also need to be simple to use and not duplicate existing Government systems where we are already submitting student data (eg STELA, PIMS)
- 1 will RTO involvement be voluntary? There should be the ability to opt out if not government funded, or if not involved in national training packages or if/when VET FEE-HELP scheme is extended to Cert IV level (ie DEEWR becomes de facto the collector of student data as in higher ed)

**TOTAL: 21.7% (18/83)**

# Detailed Results of Phase 3 - Focus Groups

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*Question 1: Who will collect the data?*

- ✧ Only one agency – not a multiplicity of State-based organizations or other authorities
- ✧ Single national agency
- ✧ Single national set of data definitions and protocols
- ✧ An organization that understands VET and its terminology
- ✧ English Australia has a data collection model that may be useful as a guide

*Question 2: What data will be collected?*

- ✧ Competency completion indicator data – compulsory now anyway:
- ✧ Qualifications – enrolments and completions
- ✧ Units of competency – enrolments and completions
- ✧ Age
- ✧ Gender
- ✧ Postcode of the learner or, in the case of international students, the fact that the student is international
- ✧ Employment status
- ✧ Advanced standing/RPL awarded
- ✧ AVETMISS is a good model
- ✧ Stability in requirements is necessary over agreed periods of time
- ✧ There may be too much diversity in the sector for this data to be other than a measure of activity. Closer analysis could be difficult to achieve.

*Question 3: How will the data be collected?*

- ✧ Use excel file base
- ✧ Suggestion of an individual student file for each learner so the file contains all information about the student and is portable – XML format
- ✧ Upload via the web or direct to data collection agency

*Question 4: When will the data be collected?*

- ✧ Twice a year, perhaps at the same time as higher education to assist those providers with VET and higher education

*Question 5: What reports will be available?*

- ✧ Access to the provider's own data
- ✧ Enrolments and completions:
  - ✧ by qualification and unit of competency
  - ✧ by age of students
  - ✧ by industry
  - ✧ by nationality
  - ✧ by mode of delivery
- ✧ Reports will be useful for benchmarking by individual providers, regions, States etc

*Question 6: When will reports be available?*

- ✧ Individual provider reports back to providers on demand
- ✧ Otherwise two releases a year with online access at any time after report availability

*Question 7: How will reports be made available*

- ✧ Online and on demand
- ✧ Levels of access determined for different users
- ✧ Levels of detail determined for different users
- ✧ Individual providers should not be identifiable
- ✧ Individual learners should not be identifiable
- ✧ Individual corporate etc customers should not be identifiable
- ✧ Hard copies of some available for broader community purposes

*Question 8: Who has ownership of the data?*

- ✧ Subscribers and collection agency
- ✧ Government and the general community
- ✧ Preference for data contribution to attract no cost nor fee; and for data access and output to attract no fee for a standard and agreed set of services
- ✧ Services beyond those agreed may cost
- ✧ A Memorandum of Understanding between Government, collection agency and subscribers would form the framework for these arrangements

*Question 9: What type of support will be available for implementation and future requirements?*

- ✧ Collection upload needs to be able to accept from a wide range of student records systems currently used in the private sector
- ✧ Some more detailed costing work may be required to gauge whether or not financial support is needed
- ✧ Smaller providers may need some financial support
- ✧ Professional development sessions be available
- ✧ Large forum-based PD would be useful to encourage involvement, discussion, mutual understanding, networking etc
- ✧ A helpline would be useful
- ✧ Extent of the financial and PD support required will be a function of the complexity of the eventual requirements

*Question 10: How will future requirements be managed?*

- ✧ Memorandum of understanding between government and the collection agency on what is to be collected, when and how; and the period of time of the MoU
- ✧ Changes will require lead-in time to be negotiated;
- ✧ The data collection system and its uses need also to be evaluated on a regular basis

*Question 11: Who will oversee the decision-making?*

- ✧ During the set-up phase a wider group of government, collection agency and providers will be required
- ✧ During maintenance mode a steering committee comprising stakeholders would suffice
- ✧ Renegotiating changing arrangements will require a broader reference group