

Introduction



It is a pleasure to write this introduction to the history of NCVER in its 20th year. I also take particular pride in being the chair of the NCVER's Board at this landmark time.

In the last 20 years vocational education has grown and changed. So has NCVER. It is an organisation which has always been there in the background, but often also in the forefront.

Its growth and success have been due to the foresight of its Boards and of its three managing directors, Graham Hermann, Bill Hall and Chris Robinson. But its strength has always been its hard working and dedicated staff and the success the Centre enjoys today is due in no small measure to the collective efforts of all who have worked there in the past and at the present time.

As someone who has known and worked with the Centre and its staff throughout its life, it has been interesting and rewarding to watch its journey unfold. In its earliest years it was the focus of what little research was done in the sector. As time went on, and under its second director, Bill Hall, the Centre grew and diversified, always trying to address the issues which were important at the time.

Over the period it has had a growing responsibility for the statistical collections and, in late 1996, following the appointment of Chris Robinson as managing director, the research, statistical and surveys functions for the sector were consolidated at NCVER. This enabled development of exciting and innovative approaches to analysing and reporting the information needed by those in the sector.

Thank you to all who have served as chairs and as members of NCVER's Board over the years. Congratulations to the managing directors and the past and present staff for the organisation you have all grown and nurtured.

Happy birthday and may NCVER enjoy many more!

Peter Kirby
Chair of the NCVER Board



20 years of the National Centre



*Mr Norman Fisher AM
arrives for the opening of
the new premises in
Leabrook in 1989.*

Opening for business

On 2 November 1981 the TAFE National Centre for Research and Development was formally opened. Its first home was an elegant, converted edwardian mansion in Payneham, South Australia.

By the end of the first year of operation, co-ordinator Graham Hermann headed a team of eleven staff, comprising four project officers, five support staff and a part-time education officer who maintained the National TAFE Clearinghouse (the predecessor of the current Clearinghouse Network and VOCED international research database).

In 2001, twenty years on and renamed the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), the Centre has a staff numbering about 70 in two locations in Adelaide, an office in Canberra and an outpost in country Victoria. Head office is a heritage-listed, former primary school in Leabrook, South Australia.

From small beginnings, NCVER has grown to be a national research agency, internationally known and recognised for its excellence, which not only conducts and manages research, but also gathers and analyses statistical and survey data and publishes this information widely within Australia and overseas.

“The TAFE Commission under Keith Coughlan as Chairman came up with the idea of a National TAFE Research Centre. The idea received strong support within the TAFE sector, and there was considerable lobbying to secure its location. In the first place it seemed unlikely that South Australia would get the nod.”
Lyll Fricker AM, KSJ, Director General of TAFE in 1981

above: The Payneham premises of the original Centre; right: Staff of the TAFE National Centre for R&D celebrating in 1981



Research and inquiry

The milestone report of the Kangan Committee in 1974 marked the beginning of the Centre. Kangan's recommendations set the horizons for vocational education in Australia and the Centre came on track following the Williams Committee of Inquiry into Education and Training five years later. Both committees recommended establishing a national centre for research and development in TAFE, to be employed in projects such as skills analysis for occupations, teaching resource development, use of technological aids in teaching, also developing self-paced resources and accrediting courses.

Kangan was critical that most research in 1974 was unpublished — still a valid criticism — but today far greater resources are directed to publishing and dissemination.

“It is considered essential,” said Kangan in 1975, in his second report, “that research, development, dissemination, and evaluation are viewed positively and are seen as being interrelated. Research is not an end in itself — it is important to ensure that the results of research work find practical application.”

Publishing and dissemination have been important ongoing functions at the Centre for twenty years — and will continue to be so.



Opening the new premises of the TAFE National Centre for R&D at Leabrook in 1989: [l-r] Dr W C Hall, executive director; the Hon Kim Mayes, MP, Labor Minister for VET; the Hon Greg Crafter, MLA SA; the Hon Lyn Arnold, Premier of South Australia; Norman Fisher, AM, chairman of the Board

The path of development

The company members included all the government ministers responsible for vocational education and training, from each state and territory as well as the federal minister and the Memorandum of Association outlined the path set out for the Centre.

The Centre was directed to carry out programs of research and development to support and satisfy the company members. It was given the task of analysing the skills required for various occupations. It was directed to research, design, review and evaluate training curricula and programs — in particular those with national significance. It was also required to investigate a range of topical issues and prepare reports and recommendations.

In addition the Memorandum directed the Centre to plan and develop learning materials, evaluate, develop and promote technological aids in education and develop an informed national awareness of vocational education research. It also stated the Centre should liaise with education and training authorities within and beyond Australia, in order to collect, assess and disseminate material relating to vocational education and training curricula and educational materials.

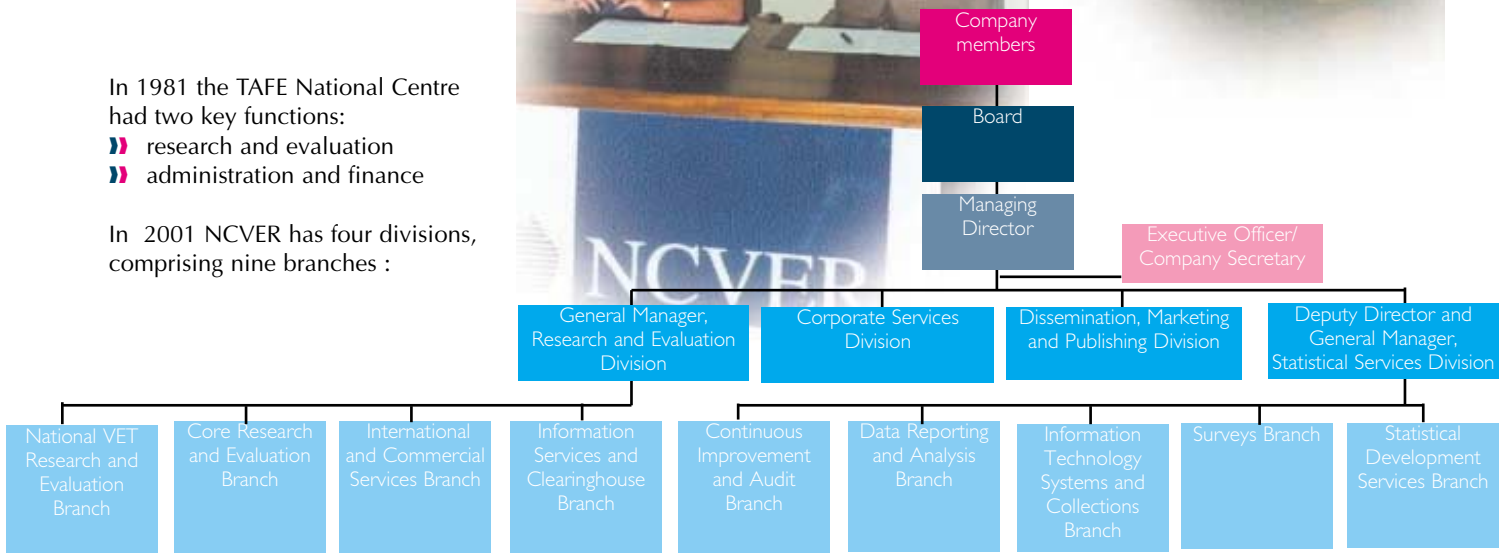
A further direction for the Centre was involvement with officers employed by TAFE and training organisations in Australia. It was also to operate the facility now known as the National Vocational Education and Training Clearinghouse



In 1981 the TAFE National Centre had two key functions:

- » research and evaluation
- » administration and finance

In 2001 NCVER has four divisions, comprising nine branches :



A great sense of direction

The first Board of the Centre had eight members: three drawn from the Conference of TAFE Directors, three actively engaged in commerce or industry, the chairman of the Technical and Further Education Council (TAFEC) and the Co-ordinator of the Centre, Graham Hermann.

The Board increased to 12 members, with the addition of a TAFE teacher and a TAFE college principal, a trade union nominee and a training authority nominee. By 1989 a Board of 14 members was possible, with membership drawn from the Conference of TAFE Directors, persons engaged in commerce and industry, a trade union nominee and other groups which reflected key stakeholders.

The large Board and the pressure of the members' other business meant that attendance was often difficult for them, and use of nominees was common. In 1995 the size of the Board was reduced back to the original number of eight and the membership was from a more senior level.

At present the Board comprises representatives of the Commonwealth, state and territory departments responsible for vocational education and training, the Australian Council of Trade Unions, a joint representative from the Business Council of Australia and the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, an independent chairperson, a director nominated by the chairperson and the managing director of the Centre. The managing director is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Company.

The former chairs of the Board, managing directors, Board members and the current staff are listed at the end of this history.

Twenty years of VET research

Since those early days the Centre's path has widened and NCVER has:

- » undertaken in-house and commissioned research and evaluation
- » managed a national research and evaluation program on behalf of the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA)
- » undertaken research, development and implementation activities on a commercial basis
- » compiled and collated national training statistics through surveys and data collections
- » compiled and distributed the NCVER's international vocational education and training research database (VOCED)
- » managed the national clearinghouse of research information
- » published reports in a diverse range of formats and styles for the vocational education and training sector
- » published the *Australian Training Review*, the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Vocational Education Research*, *Insight* and other reports, papers and periodicals
- » organised and conducted national conferences, workshops and forums
- » established and maintained international links to promote information sharing within vocational education and training, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region
- » maintained an up-to-date and informative electronic information presence, including a comprehensive web site



Setting the pace

From the first, the Centre was in the forefront of developing national core curricula, as well as focussing strongly on teaching and learning processes.

It also conducted and commissioned many and varied research projects, using 'core grant' funding from state and territory agencies and the Commonwealth. Commissions were given mainly to researchers in state or territory education or training departments. Universities and colleges of advanced education had little interest in the sector.

The number of staff gradually increased to keep pace with the levels of outside-funded research and development work. By early 1990s staff numbered more than 40.

Outside funds and a thriving consulting division made good use of Centre full-time staff, together with contractors and experts drawn from outside the organisation. Encouraged by the Centre's second director, Dr William Hall, earnings from commercial research and other projects had grown to over A\$1m by the mid-1980s, reaching a peak of A\$1.4m in the late 1980s.

'Seed' research — small scale projects conducted by outside organisations — came on track in 1985, funded through the Centre's core grant. Generally these were small-scale research projects within individual TAFE colleges and higher education institutions. In the latter, the research was concerned with the interface between TAFE and the higher education sector.

In 1992 the Centre began to wind down the number of commissioned projects. Increasingly the core funds supported the Centre's research program and staff.

Current research topics

- » lifelong learning and the social and community impact of VET
- » innovation and the changing skills of the Australian workforce
- » transitions from education to work
- » the vocational education and training provider
- » the quality of teaching and learning in VET
- » outcomes of vocational education and training
- » equity in vocational education and training
- » international comparisons of VET and
- » the future developments of the VET sector

“The genuine and ongoing support provided by NCVET staff from the earliest years has assisted us to develop and sustain a very healthy research culture in the Canberra Institute of Technology.”

Berwyn Clayton, Manager, Centre Undertaking Research in Vocational Education (CURVE) at Canberra Institute of Technology and President of the Australian VET Research Association (AVETRA).

Shortly after, a nationally funded research program joined the vocational education scene, supported through the ANTA Research Advisory Council (ANTARAC).

The Centre was selected to manage the ANTA funding program in 1996. In a parallel development, the Centre's research has particularly emphasised the effects of training on the Australian economy and Australian society. It has become more policy focussed, big picture and quantitative.

In 1997 the Centre produced the first national research and evaluation strategy for VET in Australia, covering the period 1997 to 2000. This strategy was revised in 2001 and is current until 2003. The present strategy is aligned to ANTA's national strategy. Australia is the only country to develop and implement such a strategy

Major areas of research

- » training needs analysis and curriculum development
- » student attrition
- » trade-based education and training
- » teaching and learning processes, and flexible and distance education
- » competency-based training
- » assessment
- » TAFE/industry relationships
- » skills and professional development arrangements for TAFE teachers and managers
- » program evaluation and performance indicators and, importantly
- » equity issues, including those related to women and Indigenous people



“I joined the TAFE National Centre in early 1987. Already it had established strong networks and support in the TAFE sector and I looked forward to the opportunity to play a part in building a better vocational education and training system in Australia.

I can look back with pride at many things the Centre has done over the years and the contribution it has made. Most of all, it has been filled with caring, wonderful and interesting work colleagues.”

Hugh Guthrie, long-serving staff member

Counting the numbers

In 1991 the Centre took on responsibility for collecting the annual TAFE statistical data collection from the Department of Employment, Education and Training. Since taking the baton it has run further and faster. In 1993 the Centre began to also collect apprentice and traineeship data. Improving data quality and comparability was a major hurdle to overcome and early efforts have been rewarded in recent times with the development of powerful analytical tools.

The Centre is today the authoritative source of statistics on the Australian vocational education and training system, reporting regularly on how students enrol, learn and participate in vocational education and training courses and how they use their new skills.

By developing powerful analytical tools, the Centre can now research into more complex features of the public vocational education and training system. With these tools the Centre’s statistical researchers track the participation of students over time, taking account of apprenticeship or traineeship activity. They then analyse the causes and effects — the patterns and outcomes — of the students’ participation.

For apprenticeships and traineeships, the Centre developed statistical estimation procedures that ensure up-to-date and accurate information on apprenticeships and traineeships is available for policy-makers and planners at all levels of government.

The Centre was heavily involved with early efforts to introduce national surveys as part of the suite of performance indicators for the sector. It also was involved in development and trial of a range of survey instruments and processes.

The surveys were overseen and managed by the NATMISS secretariat until 1997 when NCVET took over responsibility for managing them and reporting the findings.

Since 1997 the Centre has managed and undertaken a suite of surveys focussed on employers and students. Most recently it has co-ordinated the development of a do-it-yourself kit for conducting student outcomes surveys. This survey is available online and free of charge. Easy to use and aimed at providers, it was introduced in November 2001.



Early efforts at conducting a survey provided a challenge for NCVET staff

“I believe that NCVER has a crucial role to play in VET research, not only in Australia but also in the Pacific Rim and beyond. I believe that it is fulfilling this role admirably. When I go to VET conferences overseas, I am reminded of how strong the research climate and output are in this country — and the role played by NCVER in this state of affairs has been a very significant one indeed.”

Dr Roger Harris, director of CREW, University of South Australia.

Review of research issues

- » The internationalisation of vocational education and training
- » Generic skills for the new economy
- » Reviewing literacy and numeracy research in vocational education and training
- » The on-line experiences: The state of Australian on-line education and training practices
- » Globalisation and its impact on VET
- » VET for people from non-English-speaking backgrounds
- » Work placements in VET courses: Evidence from the cross-sectoral literature

Getting the message out

Getting the message out to those needing the information was a priority of the Centre from Day One. It produced reports, published a magazine, the *Australian Training Review*, produced an academic journal (as envisaged by Kangan), ran conferences and a lot of workshops, sponsored research fellowships and small seed projects for staff in TAFE providers and arranged the sponsorship of two travel awards for TAFE staff to attend conferences.

Publications were distributed free of charge to stakeholders and, increasingly, published and sold. Sales grew to very significant levels by the mid-1990s; however, the move to place most of what was published from the beginning of 2000 onwards on the Centre's web site dramatically affected sales revenue. The advantage has been to greatly increase the reach of the publications and improve the convenience for clients.

Consolidating and reporting the research has always set a challenge. Attempts to produce concise summaries of individual research reports were made in the 1980s, foreshadowing the current, highly successful 'At a glance' publications.

Disseminating research information is a constant challenge. Some individuals and groups are easy to access, others — particularly teachers and trainers and training staff in individual employers — much less so. Without distillation and synthesis of the key messages the research is less relevant for audiences.

The Centre regularly experiments with innovative approaches in publications and products, which have included both videos and CDs.



Workshops and seminars

Topics have included:

- » the changing nature of work
- » program evaluation
- » test construction and assessment design
- » curriculum research methods
- » conducting training needs analyses and skills audits
- » TAFE–industry liaison
- » competency-based training
- » marketing for TAFE institutes
- » open learning and instructional design processes
- » professional development for TAFE teachers and managers
- » return on investment in training
- » apprenticeship and traineeship research



In 1990 the Centre introduced the *Getting to grips with...* series, which aims to explain current teaching, learning and policy concepts clearly and in relatively simple terms. To date 19 titles have been published in this perennially popular series. Their success has been their practicality, underpinned by a strong base of good information.

In 1996 was published the first *At a glance* — a series of topical pamphlet-style publications covering both statistical and research issues. In eight or twelve pages they summarise the essential information on a particular topic and outline the implications for a range of VET stakeholder groups. *At a glance* summaries published so far, relate to the whole range of the Centre's statistical, surveys and research work.

Since 1997 the Centre has published a series of *Reviews of research*. The earliest of these were used to advise the first national VET research and evaluation strategy. Subsequently they consolidate and report both Australian and international research on a variety of topics.

In 2000 NCVER launched a free glossy newsletter *Insight*, published three times a year and distributed widely by mail and online. This has proved a popular way of disseminating findings from the Centre's statistical and research programs as it gives a succinct summary of the key points in the research. It also tells readers how to find more on a topic.

Face-to-face activities continue to be an important part of the Centre's work. Always involved in conferences, workshops, briefings and forums, the Centre works to develop the skills of practitioners.

NCVER has run research forums on competency-based training, the changing nature of work, apprenticeship and traineeship research and, most recently, return on investment in training.

It is also concerned to inform and support the work of federal agencies such as the Australian National Training

Authority and the Department of Employment Training and Youth Affairs, the State and Territory training authorities, industry associations and union bodies. Briefings are a vital feature of the Centre's recent face-to-face communication processes.

Staff from the Centre attend and run a wide range of conferences. Throughout its 20 years the Centre has been a highly visible part of the sector and recently a presence at many major conferences organised by the sector, ensuring that attendees are aware of the work the Centre is doing.

It has run ten 'no-frills' conferences for researchers since the first, held in July 1992 with the University of Technology Sydney, which was attended by 40 delegates. The most recent, held in Geelong, Victoria in collaboration with Gordon Institute of TAFE and Deakin University was attended by 137 delegates. Referred to as 'no frills' because no fees were charged and participants had to be largely self-sufficient, the conferences aimed to encourage university academics to undertake research into vocational education and training, prior to the ANTA Research Advisory Council's research program.

The conference grew in scope and popularity. More recently it has been focussed in encouraging researchers within the VET sector itself—in particular practitioner researchers. It has also moved from a capital city base to a regional focus with recent conferences being held in Coffs Harbour and Wagga Wagga.

Consolidation of functions in 1996 brought with them the critical resources needed and the opportunities to make significant and creative changes to provide a comprehensive research and information service for the sector. The journey towards more effective dissemination and providing information which is both timely and useful is one which continues to challenge the creativity of all Centre staff.



“I shall never regret having spent such a considerable portion of my life being part of the Centre. "Being part" was exactly that — a team together working towards a common goal of excellence, and producing resources that would actually be used and be useful by our stakeholders. How many organizations — or their people, can claim such an accomplishment? ”

*Marjolijn Haraghey, NCVER
Library and Clearinghouse
Manager 1985-96*

Clearinghouse and database

The National Vocational Education and Training Clearinghouse, now a feature of the Centre, was originally set up in 1978 by the Conference of TAFE Directors.

Designed to avoid duplication of effort in TAFE research and development by sharing information about research in the sector, the clearinghouse also gave TAFE staff, and others interested in TAFE, access to information and materials nationally. Clearinghouse offices were set up in each state and territory—generally in the departmental central library—with a national clearinghouse based initially in the South Australian Department of Further Education.

In 1980 the first booklet, *Initiatives in technical and further education*, was published—covering materials held in the clearinghouse collection. The network of state and territory clearinghouses still maintain today their distributed collection, creating the entries and providing access to the material.

While the clearinghouse network has developed over the years, especially in its product, the VOCED research database, the network itself is relatively unchanged. All states and territories have maintained clearinghouses and provided a clearinghouse officer, without a break for 23 years—a remarkable achievement and a great tribute to all involved.

The national clearinghouse has developed within the Centre. In 1997 VOCED achieved a world wide web interface. Now recording a hit rate of 800 searches a week in 2001, the database can be accessed by users all around the world. In 1998 a major project began to make the database international, as comprehensive as possible and focussed on the key strategic areas of VET research, policy, practice, systems and statistical information. Australian National Training Authority funding enabled the Information Services and Clearinghouse Branch at the Centre to upgrade retrospectively, using relevant material from 1995 onwards and to fill gaps in the collection. ANTA continues to significantly support the new international VOCED.



International activities

International work has also always been a small but significant component of the Centre's work. In the last few years, however, it has established deeper and more significant relationships with various organisations overseas, including joint research projects in China and Korea. NCVER currently has memoranda of understanding with eight overseas agencies, building on relationships established and nurtured over many years.

The Centre has often been approached for consultancy services in areas in which the staff have recognised expertise and has also prepared technical papers and reports on a variety of topics. The Centre continues its consultancy work in other countries in our region.

Examples of this work include two substantial survey projects for the Ministry of Education in Malaysia and involvement in a major Indonesian Skills Development Project. The Centre has also been working closely with the South African government to develop an integrated Further Education and Training management information system and the government of Papua New Guinea on a Trade Testing and Certification project.

In 2001 NCVER was recognised as a leading provider of VET information in partnership with Adelaide Institute of TAFE, through the formation of the second UNESCO Regional Centre of Excellence in Technical and Vocational Education and Training in the world. As a result, VOCED was endorsed as the UNESCO-NCVER international research database—a fitting recognition of NCVER's groundbreaking work on this free web-based database that includes Australian and international research and policy information. It is a recognition too of the work of all clearinghouse staff over twenty years of existence.



Chris Robinson and Dr Bernardo Adviso of the Colombo Plan Staff College for Technician Education, Manila at the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with NCVER, 1998



UNESCO director Dr Qian Tang; Chris Robinson, NCVER; Alison Raggatt, AIT Council and Hon Malcolm Buckby, State Minister for VET SA signing the memorandum for the partnership in the UNESCO Centre for Excellence.

“ When I think about the VET sector I entered in 1980, the phrase ‘evidence-free’ springs immediately to mind. The very idea that policy and practice should draw on research was alien. Concepts such as knowledge management and the information society were not yet invented. We have all travelled a long road since then and NCVER has been a wonderful companion on our journey. The high regard in which Australia’s VET sector is held nationally and internationally is due in no small measure to NCVER’s determination to build research capability within the sector.”

Kaye Schofield, former TAFE CEO and former member of NCVER’s Board of Directors.



Where is the Centre going now?

After 1996, when the collection and analysis of the VET statistical and surveys information and the management of the national program of VET research were consolidated at the Centre, real opportunities arose to address policy and practical issues comprehensively.

While commercial projects and the Centre’s core grant remain a significant source of income, by far the major source of revenue are the contracts to manage the statistical and research programs under contact from the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA). In earlier times the loss of a component of the core grant was threatened on a few occasions and, as one former Director General aptly put it, the vultures were sometimes circling.

In 1996 the Centre’s third managing director, Chris Robinson, was appointed. In the following five years, the major initiatives have been to develop a coherent and carefully targeted program of research.

There has been less focus on teaching and learning research issues, such as occupational analysis, competency-based training, development of competency standards and assessment issues. Now the Centre’s research is more policy focussed and quantitative, and addresses the broader impact that VET as a sector has on Australian society.

In addition the focus on the statistical information has shifted away from an earlier concentration on improving the quality of the available VET data and information to one which builds on the foundation of this earlier work.

Now the important and significant work of the Centre is directed at making the data and information more accessible and useful to the sector. The Centre is doing this by providing products, services and analytical tools which shed light on major issues confronting the sector, so they can be considered by policy makers and other key groups.

Increasingly this means bringing the full resources of the organisation to address the issues that concern the sector. This helps policy and practice to be earlier and better informed by the available research and statistical information. The Centre is also working increasingly closely with agencies at all levels and with other interest groups. This has included briefing them on significant findings drawn from the statistical and research programs.

The Centre serves on different bodies, such as the National Industry Skills Initiative of the Commonwealth government, in conjunction with industry, where the information it can gather and analyse adds value and informs their work.

The message is going out by more approaches than ever before. These include the new *Insight* newsletter, which has already established a key place in the range of VET information sources. The Centre also publishes an increasing number of *At a glance* publications and has established a fortnightly email newsletter to keep subscribers up to date with the latest information produced at the Centre.

New titles in the *Getting to grips with...* series and the *Review of research* series are published in print as well as online.

The Centre works actively to get stories about VET into both specialist and mainstream media. In particular the web site has grown and its services have significantly expanded, as ways are constantly explored to improve it. Recent additions to its services include key topics pages on numerous issues and the first of a series of new industry focus pages.

Full text of almost everything the Centre publishes can also be downloaded free of charge.

The VOCED research database has also moved to its own new home at www.voced.edu.au.

NCVER is building on its past and into the future to remain and grow as a vital and significant servant to vocational education and training in Australia.

Look how far we've come!

The Centre, over its 20 years, has taken on new roles, changed name and focus, and gained new and broader functions. Its adaptability has kept it a vibrant and relevant organisation throughout. How has NCVER changed? What did the organisation do, when did it start doing it and what does it do now? This chronology outlines some of the major activities and milestones from 1981 to 2001.

Measuring the milestones

Milestone #1 was the Centre's establishment in 1981.

Milestone #2 in the Centre's development was the review of the Centre which took place during the first few months of 1984. This thorough evaluation of the Centre's first four years of operation recommended that the Company should continue to operate 'on a permanent basis'. This recommendation was adopted in 1984.

Milestone #3 was the purchasing of the Centre's own accommodation in 1989, using a South Australian Government loan. The building now owned by NCVER is over 100 years old and is situated within easy reach of the Adelaide city centre.

Milestone #4 was the Centre's second review which led to a broadening of the Centre's responsibilities, a continuation of the core grant, and continuing growth funded from commercial activities. In 1992 the organisation's name was changed from the TAFE National Centre for Research and Development Ltd to the National Centre for Vocational Education Research Ltd.

Milestone #5 was the Centre taking responsibility for the National TAFE and later VET, statistical collections from the Department of Employment, Education and Training in 1991. To this initial function has been added responsibility for the apprentice and traineeship collection in 1993, an audit verification function in 1995 and the conduct of the national student, graduate and employer surveys in 1996. However, NCVER's role in co-ordinating such surveys had been proposed as early as the late 1980s. Since the mid 1980s a Centre staff member had been a member of the Joint Committee on TAFE Statistics, the predecessor to the current National Training Statistics Committee.

Milestone #6 was the ISO9001/AS3901-1987 quality accreditation which was successfully attained in 1994. NCVER was the first Australian educational research organisation to become a Quality Endorsed Company. This was achieved entirely from internal resources. The NCVER's concern for quality and customer service continues to be an important focus which guides all its work.

Milestone #7 was the reorganisation of the Board, reducing it in size from 14 to 8 members. This took place at the end of 1995.

Milestone #8 was at the end of 1996 with major changes made to the conduct of the national research and data gathering activities. At the beginning of November that year the ANTA Research Advisory Council (ANTARAC) was dissolved and ANTA appointed NCVER to take over the management of projects and other activities formerly administered by ANTARAC.

The three Research Centres based at Monash University, the University of Technology Sydney and the University of Tasmania established by ANTARAC were not, however, included in this arrangement. Their management became the responsibility of ANTA. National research and evaluation activities in the sector are overseen by the National Research and Evaluation Committee (NREC).

In a parallel move, ANTA also contracted NCVER to take over the statistics and data management functions that were previously the responsibility of the Australian Committee for Vocational Education and Training Statistics (ACVETS). Both ACVETS, which previously operated from the Canberra Institute of Technology, and the National Management Information and Statistical System (NATMISS), which was controlled from Perth, were made part of NCVER. All the national statistical work in VET is the responsibility of the National Training Statistics Committee for which NCVER provides the secretariat.

Milestone #9 has been NCVER's recognition in 2001 as a UNESCO Centre of Excellence in partnership with the Adelaide Institute of TAFE.

Milestone #10 is the 20th anniversary of the National Centre for Vocational Education Research Ltd, celebrated on 2 November 2001 and marked by a function on 5 December 2001.



Chronology

- 1974 • Kangan recommends setting up an 'Australian TAFE Technology Centre'.
- 1979 • Williams Enquiry recommends establishment of a National Centre for Research and Development in TAFE.
 - National TAFE Clearinghouse is established.
- 1981 • TAFE National Centre for Research and Development begins operations in November.
 - Graham Hermann is seconded from Macquarie University, Sydney to become the first director.
- 1984 • First review of the Centre recommends it continue to operate on a permanent basis
 - In November 1984 Graham Hermann leaves and returns to Macquarie University.
 - Dr William Hall becomes the TAFE National Centre for Research and Development's second director.
- 1985 • *Australian Journal of TAFE Research and Development* is launched.
- 1988 • External Consulting Division is formed.
- 1989 • International conference on national research and development in vocational education organised by the TAFE National Centre and held in Adelaide
 - Australian Conference of TAFE Directors initiates the TAFE National Centre's second review
 - TAFE National Centre for Research and Development purchases its own accommodation with the assistance of a South Australian Government loan. The new premises are officially opened on 15 June 1989 by Hon M K Mayes MP.
- 1990 • Assessment and standards in Vocational Education and Evaluation Conference and workshop is organised by the TAFE National Centre and held in Adelaide.
- 1991 • Statistics division is established and TAFE National Centre for Research and Development takes over responsibility for annual statistics collection under a contract from the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training.
 - Second review of the TAFE National Centre for Research and Development is completed.
- 1991 • 1st issue of the *Australian Training Review* was published.
- 1992 • TAFE National Centre for Research and Development changes its name to the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) as a result of the second review and to reflect the broadening of the sector and the Centre's role.
 - *What future for technical and vocational education and training* conference is organised by NCVER in Melbourne.
- 1993 • Journal published since 1985 changes name to *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Vocational Education Research*.
 - *No small change* report into VET research in Australia is published.
- 1994 • NCVER becomes the first educational research organisation to become endorsed to ISO 9001 quality accreditation.
 - ANTA Research Advisory Council (ANTARAC) is established.
- 1995 • NCVER Board size is reduced from 14 in number to 8 to sharpen and focus its role.
- 1996 • Conference entitled *Integrating assessment: Reviewing the on-the-job/off-the-job gap* is organised by NCVER in Perth.
 - Dr William Hall retires as managing director.
 - Mr Chris Robinson becomes the third managing director of NCVER.
 - NCVER takes over responsibility for national managed VET research and evaluation program from ANTARAC under contract from ANTA. In addition NCVER is contracted to take over the statistics and data management functions that had been the responsibility of other groups. This consolidates for the first time the gathering, analysis and reporting of the full spectrum of surveys, statistical and research information.
- 1997 • First *National research strategy for vocational education in Australia* is published covering the period 1997-2000.
 - *The Market for Vocational Education and Training (VET): Who pays and who profits?* conference is organised by NCVER and held in Adelaide.
- 1998 • *Industry Training Outlook* conference is organised by NCVER and held in Sydney.
- 2000 • 1st issue of *Insight* is published.
- 2001 • The second *National research and evaluation strategy for vocational education and training* covering the period 2001- 2003 is published.
 - NCVER is recognised as joint Regional Centre for Excellence in partnership with Adelaide Institute of TAFE designated by UNESCO in Technical and Vocational Education and Training.
 - Final issue of NCVER's successful magazine *Australian Training Review* is published.

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