NCVER

Approaches for sustaining and building management and leadership capability in VET providers

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NCVER

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Publisher's note

Additional information relating to this research is available in *Approaches for sustaining and building management and leadership capability in VET providers: Literature review on leadership and suggested reading list—Support document* and *A set of resources and tools for identifying, building and sustaining the learning and development needs of managers and leaders: Support document*. These can be accessed from NCVER's website <http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/1802.hmtl>.

Foreword

This research report is one of the products of a nationally based research consortium: Supporting vocational education and training providers in building capability for the future. This consortium's work forms part of the National Vocational Education and Training Research and Evaluation Program managed by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) and funded by the Department of Education, Science and Training on behalf of the Australian Government and state and territory governments.

The consortium draws on the expertise of a wide range of individuals and groups and involves nine interlinked research activities, focusing on the vocational education and training (VET) workforce and organisational capability issues. Its research program encompasses a broad range of issues, including teaching and learning, the career development of VET practitioners, the cultures and structures of VET providers, how well they support learning at work, the human research management practices they use, as well as their approaches to decision-making.

How effectively VET providers are managed and led clearly affects their current and potential capability. The report suggests that senior managers and leaders have embraced the concept of transformational leadership to deal with the challenges facing training organisations today. This style helps them to define organisational goals and desired outcomes and share the journey to achieving them by working collaboratively with others both within and outside their organisations. These goals and outcomes also often require structural and cultural change in their organisations—the topic of another report in this program of work.

The report also suggests the need for better and more focused development of the management and leadership talent within the sector, as well as for drawing in new talent and ideas when required. Time—and other appropriate in-kind and financial support—is required to help assure the successful development of this and the next generation of managers and leaders in the sector's providers.

Readers interested in teaching, learning and assessment issues are referred to other work the consortium is conducting. Work in progress can be accessed from the consortium's website at <http://www.consortiumresearchprogram.net.au>.

Other work published by NCVER on management and leadership in the sector can be found under the theme VET system: Management at <http://www.ncver.edu.au/vetsystem/21029.html>.

Tom Karmel
Managing Director, NCVER

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Key messages

This study examines the existing and potential strategies for sustaining and building greater levels of management and leadership capability in training organisations.

✧ *Vocational education and training (VET) providers are well aware of the urgent need to develop the leadership talent that presently exists to guarantee both the current and future success of their organisations.*

The good news is that the talent is seen to be there at various levels and, if not, it is being brought in mostly from private sector organisations, particularly to meet leadership needs at the executive level.

✧ *The programs and initiatives used to build the existing and future management and leadership talent are still in the very early development stages in most VET organisations.*

Most organisations are still working to reach agreement about the capabilities required for their managers and leaders. While the progress is slow, what is being done is being executed soundly. Appropriate financial and in-kind support—especially time—is required to help assure success.

✧ *Existing management and leadership development programs are often fragmentary and short-term, and not focused on longer-term corporate strategies and needs.*

Consequently, the needs of the majority of staff in leadership roles at various levels in the organisation are not being met. To reap better returns from their investments in leadership programs, training organisations need to make stronger links between their corporate strategy and objectives, and their training and development plans and initiatives.

✧ *VET organisations need to embrace the wide range of available approaches to develop their current and potential leaders and managers.*

More support is needed for learning on the job and action-learning projects that bring staff together from across the organisation, particularly in terms of developing both lower- and middle-level leadership talent. In addition, better use can be made of strategies such as coaching.

✧ *Currently, there is considerable duplication of effort in developing resources and tools for meeting managers' professional development needs across the sector.*

The sharing of these resources and the enhancement of support mechanisms at a national level is a more efficient way to build leadership and management capabilities in the VET sector.

Executive summary

This report addresses three research questions:

✧ What are the current understandings of leadership in the vocational education and training (VET) sector, and what types of management and leadership capabilities are required for the present and the future?

✧ What approaches to learning and management development are being used?

✧ What is successful and what approaches might be used more often in the future?

These research questions were addressed using the findings from interviews in 2006 with 125 individuals employed in 30 training organisations throughout Australia. In terms of the first question about the notions of leadership being advanced, those interviewed, especially at the higher levels of management, embraced the need for a more transformational style of leadership which could deal with the challenges facing training organisations today. This style allowed them to define organisational goals and desired outcomes that typically involved forms of structural and cultural change. They preferred to work with others through participative, collaborative or what were often called 'shared' styles of leading to develop strategies and plans to achieve those change goals. There was also a good level of awareness and understanding of the personal qualities required of effective managers and leaders. These qualities were largely based on the concept of emotional intelligence and included the need for vocational education and training managers and leaders to have skills in communication, to be self-aware, to show empathy, and to be tolerant of ambiguity and change.

In terms of the required management and leadership capabilities, most organisations were exploring or had defined what attributes they expected of their leaders at various levels. In the interviews, these capabilities were seen to differ, depending upon the level of management. However, the core capabilities include those related to the transformational qualities of being able to communicate a vision for the organisation, to build successful teams, and to inspire staff to make a commitment to change. These core capabilities also include sound strategic thinking and planning skills, and an ability to be business-like in approach.

What approaches to learning and management development are being used in the VET organisations which participated in this research? We found that management and leadership capabilities are being promoted and sustained in the current VET context by:

✧ establishing supportive models, structures and strategies to provide the foundation for the development of the initiatives being followed

✧ adopting management education that supported the development of leadership and management skills typically based on the principles of the transformational view of leadership

✧ encouraging specific leadership and management training designed to meet the needs of a particular VET organisation, and managing this through on-the-job learning and training.

In terms of supportive models, structures and strategies, a number of VET organisations showed quite advanced levels of strategic thinking and planning about staff development generally, and more specifically that required for developing and sustaining their leaders. We found many examples

of clear and strong statements by training organisations explaining their focus upon building and sustaining their leaders, whether in position statements, corporate strategy documents or staff development policies and plans. On the other hand, many other VET organisations were still at the early stages of developing a more strategic approach to their training and development initiatives.

A second major set of successful initiatives focused upon the use of management education to build management and leadership capabilities. There are examples of formal qualifications in leadership at the certificate, diploma and masters degree levels. Across our interviews we found a variety of approaches to the use of formal management development programs, including allowing managers to access external, often cross-industry programs, the use of internal programs designed by the organisation, and partnerships across organisations that supported access to management development.

Although learning on the job through both formal and informal programs is a major tool for developing and sustaining leaders, it is one that is still emerging and needs to be given more opportunity to develop. Many managers reported valuable learning on the job through action-learning projects that typically used a team approach to managing and leading a change initiative, although the budget allocation was typically very small. Furthermore, the use of coaching, with internal or external coaches, is an emerging strategy being used in VET organisations for the development of leaders and managers in the senior executive. Coaching was viewed very positively as a tool that matched the needs of VET managers, offering practical support and advice from experienced, current or ex-managers.

However, to make coaching work better than it currently does, organisations need to consider developing clearer policies about the use of budgets to pay for external coaching and the processes for identifying and training internal coaches, and communicating the role and availability of coaches to staff. Staff rotation is also being used as another on-the-job strategy, although its use is often more reactive than proactive. The practice also seems to meet the needs of staff new to management and leadership roles who want to have practical and wide experience of the businesses within their institutions.

What is successful in terms of developing management and leadership talent in VET organisations and what approaches might be used more often in the future? Under successes, we list examples of management development programs, coaching, and small groups of newer managers working on action-learning projects. In terms of approaches that should be used more often in the future, VET organisations need to:

✧ adopt a more systematic approach to leadership and management development, one that makes use of training needs analysis, gap analysis, strategy planning and implementation, evaluation and review, and revision

✧ follow a capability framework that provides a unifying influence across an organisation, in terms of understanding the current and required capability among managers

✧ link management development needs to the organisation's strategic plan and business plans

✧ promote efforts by staff to seek external funding to support their development. Success in winning such funding sends important messages through the organisation about rewarding the efforts of those individuals and also about the teams who are committed to developing their capabilities

✧ provide toolkits to enable managers to access and organise their professional development plans more efficiently. Importantly, this process may be more effective if managed as a system-wide initiative rather than being undertaken on an individual provider basis. Considerable duplication of effort already occurs across the sector in the development of capability frameworks, resources and related materials. By adapting these more system-wide approaches, registered training organisations can meet their particular needs rather than duplicating existing effort

◇ identify and support key leadership development programs for the senior levels of managers

◇ use coaching programs with a mix of internal and external coaches

◇ use action-based learning to develop both lower- and middle-level VET managers.

Finally, and in support of the eight points raised above, this project provides two supporting documents. The first is a literature review and a set of selected readings on leadership. The second provides a set of guidelines and tools for improved approaches to coaching. This resource also includes a set of capability frameworks related to management and leadership that can be used to build a more strategic and systematic approach to leadership development in VET organisations. These resources can be accessed at <http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/1802.html>.

Aims, research questions and outputs

The VET workforce of the future

Many reports have detailed the drivers for change in the vocational education and training (VET) sector and, in turn, the challenges facing VET leaders, managers, teachers, support and other staff (Chappell et al. 2003; Dickie et al. 2004; Guthrie 2004; Mitchell et al. 2005). In summary, these drivers for change include:

✧ national and state governments demanding actions that respond more effectively to current skills shortages and the need for the continued improvement of skills and qualifications profiles, more recognition of prior learning, and the continued removal of barriers to skills acquisition and up-skilling

✧ the necessity for VET organisations better understanding and responding to major trends in the marketplace, including the increasing group of part-time, casual and seasonal teachers and trainers. Demographic changes are also making an impact, including the ageing of the VET workforce and the need to attract and retain Generation X and Y employees in a highly competitive job market

✧ a more diverse customer base demanding products and services that call for a re-thinking of positions adopted in the past of the appropriate levels of service delivery, flexibility and customisation

✧ the emergence of a more competitive training market, with the increasing impact of private training providers and new funding arrangements like User Choice and fee-for-service

✧ evidence that developments in VET practice—more flexibility, customisation and larger partnerships—are evolving too rapidly for current industrial agreements, jobs design, existing human resources practices and the current capabilities of staff.

As all of these reports highlight, VET leaders, managers, teachers and support staff are increasingly confronted by the interplay of competing priorities and tensions. Mulcahy (2003), for example, describes these broad tensions as choices between business strategy and education, national policy and local reality, entrepreneurship and accountability, and managerialism and professionalism. Mitchell and his colleagues (2003) refer to these competing tensions between staff and corporate needs and social policy imperatives and the need to operate in a competitive training market. In response to these drivers for change, those who lead and manage VET workforces, especially at the managerial and supervisory levels, require an extensive range of management and leadership capabilities, as well as professional and additional generic skills, to meet the continued challenges for change and innovation.

This current project examining management and leadership capability in VET providers is one of several research projects that are part of a research program funded through a consortium model titled Supporting VET providers in building capability for the future, funded through the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER). The funding supported a number of researchers from across Australia to examine the wide range of challenges associated with developing and sustaining a workforce with the capacity to respond to the progressively more complex and changing demands of VET clients. The research program of the consortium partners

looked at three areas of development which, together, have the potential to build capability in VET organisations: developing people, developing cultures and developing practices.

The research program provides new insights into the evolving dynamics of the VET workforce beyond groups such as teachers and trainers who have tended to be the major focus of research interest to date. The broad objectives of the program are to:

1   develop a clearer understanding of the dynamics of the changing VET workplace and the capacity of registered training organisations to respond to the increasingly complex and changing demands of clients

2   analyse key management, leadership, human resources and industrial relations practices and their applicability for VET providers

3   investigate cutting-edge practices in VET that support increased quality, agility and responsiveness

4   examine the inter-relationships between the development of people, practices and cultures and their impact on the capability of registered training organisations

5   generate a diverse range of products and services that can be disseminated widely and be used to conduct workforce development workshops at the local level in order to promote individual and organisational capability.

Research questions

Within the research consortium program, this current project addresses the question of how to build organisational capability by enhancing the abilities of those people who manage and lead staff. This project is focused mostly upon objectives 2, 4 and 5 of the consortium's program of research. Towards achieving these outcomes, the current project addressed the following research questions:

◇ What are the notions about leadership in the VET sector, and what types of management and leadership capabilities are required for the present and the future?

◇ What approaches to learning and management development are being used?

◇ What is successful and what approaches might be used more often in the future?

Outputs

Outputs from this project include a variety of materials in two supporting documents, which are a major adjunct to this report. These outputs respond to various needs reported by the VET organisations participating in the research. In particular, individuals or their organisations were interested in accessing tools that might assist their efforts to identify and build in staff capability, including inventories, self-assessment tools and guidelines, especially those related to coaching.

More specifically, the first support document, *Literature review on leadership and suggested reading list* provides:

◇ a literature review on recent research on leadership and management, and how to build staff capability

◇ a set of readings on leadership, change management and managing people.

The second support document, entitled *A set of resources and tools for identifying, building and sustaining the learning and development needs of managers and leaders* provides the following resources.

◇ A set of ideas designed to guide organisations in their initial deliberations on how to identify the development needs of their staff is given. Resource 1 provides a learning and development needs analysis inventory to assist staff to report on the development needs associated with

management and leadership capabilities. A set of strategies for leadership and management development is also included.

✧ This support document also provides access to tools developed by Victor Callan in association with a colleague (Greg Latemore, Latemore and Associates, <www.latemoreandassociates.com.au>). This provides a coaching needs assessment agreement, a coaching competency tool and a coaching inventory that examines the existence of various coaching styles (resource 2).

✧ Resource 3 comprises a set of staff capability frameworks that have emerged from this project and other work by Victor Callan that identifies core capabilities, as well as role-specific capabilities for the executive leader and for managers (educational and non-educational). As this report notes, many VET organisations are using staff capability frameworks to organise and direct their efforts in developing their managers and leaders at all levels of the organisation. Our research indicated that organisations wanted access to the latest research on such frameworks. Organisations may use the full frameworks as presented, or select from what is on offer when defining the capabilities they require for their staff in various roles.

Both these resources can be accessed on NCVER's website at <http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/1802.html>.

Contemporary views about leadership

Defining leadership

The literature review, which forms a major part of one of the supporting documents of this report, provides a more detailed overview of the key elements that make up our current understanding of the capabilities required of leaders. This literature review also provides a guiding framework for this research, especially in relation to the definition of leadership, the identification of leadership and management capabilities, and approaches to leadership development.

To begin, there is a long history of debate about what is encompassed by the concept of leadership. There are possibly more models dedicated to explaining leadership than any other area in the social and behavioural sciences. In addition, there are many definitions of leadership supporting these models. Today leadership is regarded as a 'mature field' of research and understanding (Hunt 2004), although clearly there exist many different and very useful views about the personality and behaviours of leaders.

Using the Australian research by Edwards and her colleagues (2003), we define leadership as:

> The capacity at both the individual and institutional levels to: identify and define organisational goals and desired outcomes; develop strategies and plans to achieve those goals and deliver those outcomes; guide the organisation and motivate people in reaching those goals and outcomes. To do this requires energy, commitment, persistence, integrity, intelligence, and a capacity to inspire from the leader and the encouragement of these attributes from the organisation.

In management writings today, the dominant school of thought about leadership is the transformational model, with its focus upon change and the leader's direct impact upon the motivation and performance of individual employees. While never put forward as a complete theory of leadership, the transformational approach is emerging as a preferred model, as it focuses upon the significant role that leaders play in promoting both personal and organisational change, and the role they play in assisting employees to meet and exceed expectations about performance (Avolio 2005; Hunt 2005). It is a most appropriate model for training organisations, and the one that is frequently articulated by their managers today.

The focus of the current project is not upon educational leadership, but upon the broader concept of the management and leadership capabilities of those who assume roles that involve giving leadership and direction to those who see themselves as followers or subordinates. It is generally agreed that transformational leadership is comprised of at least four interrelated behaviours or sets of actions. These leaders engage in (Avolio 2005; Luthans & Avolio 2003):

✧ inspirational maturation—articulating an appealing and evocative vision about what the organisation wants to become, and how it wants to serve its customers and related stakeholders

✧ intellectual stimulation—promoting opportunities and organisational cultures that encourage creativity and innovation among staff

✧ idealised influence—providing a role model for staff at all levels

✧ individualised consideration—engaging in coaching and mentoring roles that empower staff.

Theory and research into transformational leadership have identified the following features of this style of leadership (Avolio 2005).

✧ Subordinates judge leaders as more effective when they engage in transformational behaviours.

✧ Transformational leaders exist at all levels of organisations.

✧ The more transformational the leadership is at higher levels in the organisation, the more it is found at lower levels, including in its teams.

Effective transformational leaders build positive psychological states and emotional capital among their employees (for example, self-esteem, hope, optimism and personal expressiveness [Seligman 2002]). More emotionally intelligent leaders and managers (Goleman 1995, 1998, 2000) who are transformational in their style are more able to switch styles (that is, authoritative, democratic, affiliative, coaching) as a result of their higher levels of self-awareness, their ability to read a situation, and their adaptability. While there is continued controversy about definitions of emotional intelligence, possibly the best known writings are by Goleman. According to Goleman, emotionally intelligent leaders manage themselves and their relationships effectively. In particular, they display sets of transformational behaviours that demonstrate:

✧ self-awareness (that is, self-confidence, realistic evaluations of their strengths and weaknesses)

✧ self-management (that is, self-control, trustworthiness, conscientiousness, adaptability, initiative)

✧ social awareness (that is, empathy, ability to build networks and to navigate politics)

✧ social skills (that is, visionary leadership, developing others, communication, change catalyst, teamwork, conflict management).

Goleman (2000) argues that leaders need many different styles of leading, and the more styles a leader exhibits, the better. As noted above, more emotionally intelligent leaders are more able to switch styles. Transformational leaders in particular establish more intellectually stimulating workplaces, which in turn foster more openness, creativity and a willingness by their employees to challenge the status quo. Indeed, Goffee and Jones (2006) in *Why should anyone be led by you?* argue that transformational leaders typically demonstrate emotional intelligence that allows them to engage in 'artful authenticity', involving deliberate acts that leverage their personality to build a deeper relationship with their employees. Authentic leaders are:

✧ not interested in faking their leadership, in that they are true to themselves rather than conforming to the expectations of others

✧ motivated by personal convictions rather than by gaining status, rewards or personal benefits

✧ not imitators of others' leadership styles but lead from their own personal point of view

✧ guided by personal values and convictions

✧ motivated to excite people to higher performance.

Developing leaders

Why invest in leadership development? Management and leadership development is a deliberate and planned activity driven by strategic and organisational objectives. Management and leadership development has a substantial and positive impact on organisational performance when there is a fit between management development and the organisation's business strategy (Mabey & Ramirez 2004). Organisations that invest in the training and development of their managers and leaders experience a range of organisational benefits, employee benefits and wider community benefits (see the review by Blanchard & Thacker 2007).

Good developmental opportunities are learning opportunities that not only give managers the knowledge and skills to help the organisation achieve its strategic intentions, but enhanced capability and learning facilitates positive change and innovation. Capable managers are more confident and effective in dealing with their often complex and demanding jobs. They display higher levels of job satisfaction, commitment and engagement. Organisations with a strong commitment to management and leadership development find that the returns are positive and high, in terms of organisational productivity, organisational learning, continuous improvement and quality, and customer service. In addition, management and leadership development has benefits that extend beyond the organisation and into the broader community.

What leadership capabilities are required in training organisations?

While competency is the ability to demonstrate the knowledge and skills already gained, capability is concerned as much with future knowledge and skill requirements as with immediate requirements (Finch-Lees, Mabey & Liefooghe 2005). According to Stephenson (1992), individual capability is an integration of knowledge, skills, personal qualities and understanding, such that they are used appropriately and effectively by individuals to perform various roles in the workplace. Capability refers not only to current knowledge, skills, qualities and understanding, but also to an individual's potential in each of these areas. Individual capability creates organisational capability.

A number of previous reports have proposed typologies and capability parameters for the VET manager and leader, and the current project builds upon this earlier work. In particular, it explores in more depth the strategies and tools being used to develop this capability, as well as other options for consideration. The capabilities required of VET leaders and managers are many and varied, and currently the typologies include the following.

◇ Mitchell and his colleagues (for example, Mitchell 2002a, 2003, 2004; Mitchell & Young 2002; Mitchell et al. 2003) propose that leaders and managers require skills in traditional management, change management and strategic management. VET managers have primarily focused on traditional management (for example, controlling, budgeting) but have not focused sufficiently on change management (for example, forming a coalition of supporters of change) or strategic management (for example, developing strategy in response to unexpected developments).

◇ Mulcahy (2003) identified seven domains of activity for VET leaders and managers: business management (for example, project management, planning and budgets, setting targets and goals, using new technology); business development (for example, sales, marketing, identifying new business opportunities); strategic leadership (for example, future-casting, setting corporate directions, promoting a shared vision, strategic thinking); change leadership (for example, creating a vision for change, building new cultures); people-centred management/human resource development (for example, communication, consulting with staff and clients, mentoring, coaching, building and supporting teams); education management (for example, coordinating and scheduling teaching teams, coordinating courses and staff meetings); and boundary spanning (for example, forming productive alliances, liaising with industry, public relations).

◇ Callan's (2001, 2005) reports identify leadership capabilities in the areas of: corporate vision and direction (for example, promoting and communicating a clear vision for the organisation, building a successful corporate team, inspiring people to make a commitment); strategic thinking and planning (for example, undertaking effective strategic analysis, advocating strategic initiatives to keep the organisation ahead of its competitors); change leadership (for example, inspiring alignment of vision, values and behaviours, fostering and supporting individual change agents); communication that influences (for example, negotiating persuasively, encouraging debate); business and entrepreneurial skills (for example, managing risk, knowing how to close a deal); and advancement of the interests of VET (for example, able to position the institution to respond successfully to changes to policy issues and funding).

✧ Finally, Guthrie and his colleagues (Guthrie, Perkins & Nguyen 2006) provide a recent review of these and other capability frameworks, and their applications to assist the development of leaders and managers in VET organisations.

The research: Method and findings

Method

The major methodological component of this project involved the completion of interviews with 125 individuals across 30 public and private sector training organisations in all Australian states and territories. The majority of organisations were public providers, with two private providers and two community-based. Therefore, we acknowledge that the sample is biased in favour of the views and experiences of the manager and leader in public training organisations.

In addition, six focus groups were held with managers in four organisations. A list of all organisations participating in the research is presented in appendix A. Most interviews were face to face, but a few involved telephone interviews. Those interviewed were identified as having a stake in the nature and form of leadership and management development occurring within their institutions. Individuals who were interviewed included chief executive officers and their deputies, members of the senior executive, other senior managers, human resource managers, managers of learning and development, and a variety of educational and non-educational managers and supervisors who were recipients of management and leadership development. Interviews were completed by all authors of this report, with assistance in a few cases from senior research assistants.

Procedure

Participants were contacted by each of the investigators to seek their support and involvement in the project. Participants were located through a variety of methods including: being known to one of the investigators through previous VET research; through expressions of interest in response to presentations on various aspects of the consortium at various national and state conferences; as a result of investigators approaching organisations with reputations for leadership and management development initiatives; and through referrals by those who were interviewed. A semi-structured questionnaire was developed and piloted, and redrafted to a final stage based upon input from the pilot and feedback from each of the investigators. A copy of the questionnaire is provided in appendix B.

Findings

Leadership and management issues facing training providers

Managing complexity and change as transformational leaders

The challenges listed by our respondents closely parallel those described in previous reports (Dickie et al. 2004; Mitchell et al. 2003). An overarching challenge is getting individuals to cope with change and the increasing complexity of their working environments. Respondents perceived the role of leaders to be about giving a sense of direction to the organisation, setting an appealing vision for the future, getting staff on board about the need for change and rewarding staff as the changes occurred.

The demands associated with change or further change were difficult ones for managers, and often occurred in difficult circumstances. Some training providers reported the need for change resulting from severe cut-backs in funding and budgets, along with the introduction of shared services for

whole-of-government responses. Managers talked of the challenges in balancing large workloads in uncertain times. In some cases they experienced a lack of clarity about the future of their organisations and for the staff within it. Senior staff such as chief executive officers and their deputies talked about 'asking our managers to step into very complex roles', about the desire 'to create dramatic and swift cultural shift', and the need 'to develop new types of teaching team leaders'. A senior executive in a regional community college spoke of 'getting the right people with the right attitude. It is not a qualifications thing, but an attitude thing'. This broad capability, described by a senior manager as managing positively in difficult times, requires:

> Maintaining a demeanour that is needed to generate a sense of trust and confidence. I need to lead by example, be caring, listening and trying to educate at the same time. From a leadership point of view, I need to pick and choose what I put my energies into, knowing full well that some things will not be dealt with.

A major factor driving this increasing complexity is the wide range of client groups expecting more flexibility, customisation and variety in the delivery and assessment of their training. A special target of these demands is teaching staff who are now being expected by their managers and institutions to maintain industry currency and closer links with a diversity of organisations and their workforces. In turn, the challenge for managers, as one team leader of a large public training organisation described it, is:

> We need to maintain closer links with our enterprises to find out what they need. The challenge I face is to encourage, coach and to support teachers to deliver more flexibility and to support the teachers to transpose from their old teacher-centred style to a new style of learner-centred that is really more appropriate for these types of students.

Developing a sense of shared leadership

Another major challenge, according to senior and middle managers, is creating a culture of shared leadership. The good news, as many managers described it, is that there is a depth of management and leadership talent in their organisations, especially at the levels below the executive. On the other hand, the greater challenges were perceived to be with existing managers. The task is to change the mindsets of individuals who currently see themselves to be only operational managers, attending to their day-to-day activities and roles in their particular area of responsibility. They now need to be more engaged with bigger questions about the organisation and its longer-term future and objectives.

Many senior managers talked about a philosophy of shared leadership in VET organisations. Essentially, leadership responsibility was to be shared across all levels of the organisation, typically through the application of quite participative and collaborative models of leading. A senior member of a metropolitan TAFE described his challenge in attempting to alter the mental models of his traditional managers from being 'instrumentalist and operational' to being focused upon 'the future, strategies and sound business planning where we are all engaged in leading this organisation'. A head of department in a metropolitan technical and further education (TAFE) institute summarised her position as follows:

> We have so much potential in our organisation and in the community. All of the staff must accept the responsibility of leading the organisation forward. They need to be more open to the educational possibilities and be prepared to do things differently.

A number of respondents discussed the need to have managers who acted more courageously. Interestingly, this same concept is defined as a key attribute in some models of transformational leadership (for example, Kouzes & Posner 2003). Linked to this attribute is the perception of managers in public training organisations as being too risk-averse. Interviewees labelled some VET managers as 'lacking courage', 'too concerned about taking risks and accepting responsibility', 'lacking guts', and being too willing to accept that 'well, we have always done it like this'. A feature of this risk aversion was a reluctance to bring in people from outside the VET system to operate in high-profile roles. As a director of a regional TAFE reported:

> I am passionate about getting people with the right skills, pushing the boundaries about what is possible in terms of recruitment. Otherwise, with those managers I currently have, there will not be much chance of real change around this place.

However, a number of respondents from mostly smaller, private sector enterprises commented upon the challenge of finding the right people to invest in as future managers and leaders. A tradition of academic leadership or educational leadership is being replaced by a need for managers and leaders with industry knowledge and broader management skills, as well as traditional vocational competence and pedagogical knowledge. A country TAFE institute director labelled the understanding of leadership among his staff as 'poor', and another reported 'a lack of people with general leadership capacity'. Another in a country TAFE institute described his talent pool as 'dry and barren'. A parallel challenge for some regional institutes is rethinking the nature of their business, from being small vocationally focused training providers to being medium-sized businesses that require managers who have strong strategic thinking skills, and who have track records of facilitating business growth and in building sound management systems and policies to support this growth. A director of a private registered training organisation explained as follows:

> The big challenges for us are the risks as a smaller enterprise when our managers reach their potential. You know it when the innovation and responsiveness to the market peters off. Should we invest in them still, and the costs for a smaller organisation can be large, or do we bring in new people?

Many larger public training organisations voiced similar concerns about moving current managers away from an operational management focus to being more concerned with leadership. The TAFE system was described as dictated by centrally driven policies and procedures that, as a manager of teaching staff put it, 'usurp good management and constrain genuine leadership'. A general theme to emerge in the interviews was the perception that a considerable amount of management activity was targeted towards meeting compliance needs.

A major aspiration of many human resource managers was to design management and leadership development activities that were more planned, regular and strategic in focus. Good management development is linked to sound strategic and business planning. We found that the larger training organisations were much more strategic in how they approached the training and development of their managers at all levels. They have more resources and more experienced staff in the areas of designing and planning leadership and management development. However, many larger institutions reported that they still conducted ad hoc development programs that were 'not embedded in our strategy and so pushed aside by busy people'. Many smaller organisations were trying to put in place sound strategic links between their management development and business planning and strategy. Meanwhile, the bulk of their efforts were piecemeal, using what was available locally as a development initiative (for example, short courses) or what could be supported by funding from a national program (for example, action-learning projects, coaching).

Business acumen and partnerships

Senior managers in our interviews repeatedly reported on their low levels of confidence about the business acumen of many of their managers and team leaders. There was a very thin market in many parts of their organisation in terms of budding entrepreneurs. Again, Callan (2004) has mentioned the scarcity of true entrepreneurs in the VET sector, the lack of support and rewards they often feel for their efforts and, ultimately, their sense of burnout.

A major business activity involved building stronger and more financially viable business partnerships. Many senior managers talked about wanting to destroy forever the myth among their staff that partnerships could be seen as 'loss leaders', 'break-even efforts' or 'good learning experiences even though we lost money'. Partnerships must be run along strict business principles, although with latitude in the key performance indicators, so that broad outcomes were achievable, in contrast to a focus only upon financial indicators.

Specific areas for leadership and management development

Capabilities required for senior executives

It was not difficult for our respondents to agree on the major areas of professional development for senior leaders and managers in the VET sector. A predominant issue was change management, and the knowledge and skills to be able to successfully plan, then implement to completion, all of the change initiatives. There were numerous accounts of managers being good at the visioning and planning of change, but poor in the actual execution and follow-through. Many reasons were given for this. Factors included frequent changes in strategy and little time to complete existing change plans; high levels of resistance among some groups of staff; evidence of failed change in the past; poor skills among VET managers in being able to engage employees in the need for change; and a lack of effort by the managers themselves to stick with it.

As a senior manager at a large metropolitan TAFE reported:

> Change leadership is a required skill, including the ability to sustain it, as it is such an extremely draining experience emotionally. They just get worn out by the levels of resistance and their failure to really create urgency for change among some groups of staff.

Another senior executive described the issues of failed change as follows:

> My senior executives are technically capable people. But we also need behaviourally capable managers. By that I mean, they are gifted in people skills, in motivating staff around a compelling view or vision about what we can become.

Another major theme was the need to have managers in the senior executive team, but also at other levels, who could think and plan more strategically. Much of this strategic thinking had to be concerned with the re-positioning of organisations so that they had more sustainable futures. In Victoria, TAFE institutes operate in a model that supports considerable autonomy. The view is that institutes can often stand alone in terms of determining their strategic futures. While this is true to varying degrees in other contexts, the strategic futures of institutes are being more strongly aligned through forced strategic partnerships based on the lead institute concept, such as in Queensland. In addition, few VET organisations are looking just locally for new business, with training relationships being set up across national and international borders. A TAFE director of a large city campus described the situation as follows:

> Our challenges and capabilities are around strategic thinking. Our challenge is to move from one of the largest institutes that is positioned as a trade-oriented service provider into a position of being a highly competitive strategically positioned provider in a global environment.

Capabilities required of managers (educational and non-educational)

Those interviewed believed that VET managers need to understand the educational and business challenges attached to the changes now being implemented (for example, training packages, changing industry demands). They need to focus more on targets, budgets and the needs of enterprises more than ever before. Operational issues like timetabling, finding space and staff, and the logistics of working with industry, were also important. For non-educational managers, the focus is on service and support. It was reported that those managers need to be more aware that teaching and learning must be seen as the core business. As one manager said:

> It is not our finance system that is the most important in our organisation, but [what matters is] how our systems enable our teaching teams to [teach]. Non-educational managers need to ask how can we better support delivery teams, what can we do to make life easier, what can we do to support the complexity of the job in front of them, how we can make it easier for them to develop relationships with industry, how can we make it easier for them to get out and do delivery and assessment in the workplace. It's a shift to know they can't exist in isolation from that part of the business.

Those interviewed frequently mentioned the need for educational managers to pursue the key objectives related to the corporate plan (for example, enterprise-driven training and industry-aligned careers), as well as the dual identity of being team leaders who are the key managers in their educational field. Therefore, they need to be very focused on developing a range of products and services, knowing intimately the businesses and the industries they are servicing, and being able to develop models that respond to the individual needs of those businesses or industries. This included supporting their teachers to develop WebCT and online delivery, supporting teachers to develop methodologies for getting out into workplaces, and working with employers to understand their needs. On the other hand, this group of managers was seen to be the most stressed and challenged by the pressures for change. A senior manager at a metropolitan TAFE summarised his views in the following way:

> Our middle level educational managers are overwhelmed, even swamped. They need more time to reflect. I've got autonomous work teams—I'm not allowed to have them—but I have. My program manager has fantastic skills, so I don't want her bogged down. There is a disconnect and a chasm between the educational and non-educational managers. The non-academic needs to be more responsive and needs to be more collaborative than at present, at least in our organisation.

Capabilities required of managers of teaching and support staff

In our interviews, the managers of VET teachers and support staff believed that the greatest factors impacting on their work in the next five years will be new technology, more competitive training environments, further changes to funding, and the changing roles and work of teachers and trainers. Teachers are not just teaching, but they are also undertaking administrative and support work. They were described more than once in our interviews as needing to be 'mini-managers of the area they teach in'. They need to plan, taking account of current problems in accessing skilled teaching staff. The ageing of the VET workforce is making succession planning and effective recruitment of new staff an even larger priority. Managers need to work with their teaching and support staff to assist them to recognise and respond to changes in the expectations of employers about the nature of training, and the requirements for more flexibility, customisation and 'customer of one' approaches to products and services.

It was felt by our interviewees that managers of teachers and trainers need to offer more support to their teaching staff, as they learn and apply, with the assistance of support staff, new information and communication technologies to enhance the delivery of their learning and training solutions. There is an increasing use of electronic technology to provide not only online learning, but also a range of other services for students, such as enrolment and information services, as well as online marketing. These new practices are indicators of the growing convergence between e-business and online learning in VET. Managing this convergence of e-business and online learning creates opportunities for VET, but also requires many new skills for the managers of teaching staff, as well as their staff. These same issues are highlighted in a variety of past reports into the demands upon teaching staff in VET (for example, Dickie et al. 2004; Mitchell et al. 2005; Schofield & McDonald 2004).

Achieving these outcomes requires managers of teaching and support staff who are more business-focused, willing to engage at a more strategic level with their teaching staff and their superiors, and who are innovative in their application of high-quality approaches to teaching, learning and assessment. They will need to be able to motivate their staff to new levels of creativity and to show professional judgement in implementing training packages, leading to the enhancement of teaching, learning and assessment. These issues were described by two respondents as follows:

> Our head teachers are working with their staff to help get a bigger picture for their program, and a good sense of trying to be more in touch with industry. They are making progress but still have a long away to go in thinking strategically and in applying new approaches.

> … A key focus is managing the complexity—a huge issue for teachers, especially those who have been around for a while, particularly managing the implementation of training packages,

keeping up to date with reviews and new resources. Teachers can no longer sit back and think they can have a filing cabinet of paper they can trot out at the right week. That ethos is gone. They now might find they are teaching an OHS unit that might have changed a couple of times as the training package has been reviewed, and it might be offered in three different formats to 20 different groups or individuals. Managing record keeping and keeping up with AQTF [Australian Quality Training Framework] requirements add to this complexity.

Developing and sustaining management and leadership capabilities

Management development consists of three sets of activities (see Werner & De Simone 2006):

✧ management education that uses a classroom setting to provide certificates, diplomas or degrees to facilitate the acquisition of a broad range of conceptual knowledge and applied skills

✧ management training that attends to more specific, often operational knowledge and skills, which are immediately applied within the organisation or to a specific role

✧ on-the-job experiences where there are planned or unplanned events for a manager to develop self-knowledge and to practise or enhance their capabilities.

What also needs to be recognised is the range of supporting frameworks, models and tools that ensures implementation of the strategies and their efficient operation. These devices include: strategic plans; frameworks that identify required capabilities and how to build them; and sound procedures and policies that guide decisions about accessing and supporting management and leadership development. In the light of the above, the following sections on how management and leadership capabilities can be promoted and sustained in the current VET context are provided in the following sections and structured around four issues:

✧ supportive models, structures and strategies

✧ examples of interesting uses of management education to support the development of VET leadership

✧ leadership and management training

✧ on-the-job learning and training.

Supportive models, structures and strategies

Having integrative models and philosophies of professional development

From our interviews some excellent examples of integrated approaches to staff development in VET emerged and, within these larger strategies, how organisations are attending to building leadership and management at various levels. At a state level, for example, the Western Australian Department of Education and Training (2005) has proposed a Professional Development Framework 2005–06 for Vocational Education and Training. This framework describes a systematic approach to professional development, covering the well-known stages—training needs analysis, gap analysis, planning of strategies, implementation of strategies, evaluation and review, and revision. This useful framework defines overarching priorities, professional development strategies and key skills across a continuum—from leaders, to senior managers, to middle managers and to practitioners. For TAFE WA leaders, such strategies include funding for innovation through the Professional Development Support Program, Fresh Thinking forums (that is, short workshops with practitioners of innovation in VET), Learnscope, Reframing the Future projects, Regional Roadshows, innovation scholarships and seminars on leading change.

In addition, integrative models that guide the planning and delivery of professional development, and management and leadership development can be found in many training organisations involved in the interviews for this project. At institute level, using the Integrative Leadership System from the Australian Public Service, South Western Sydney Institute (TAFE NSW) has adopted a framework that describes required capabilities and professional development along a continuum,

from team leader to head teacher to senior manager. In a similar way, Hunter Institute of TAFE, through its program, Lighthouse Leadership: An Integrated Development Approach, is working across a variety of groups (that is, senior, middle and frontline managers) to target eight identified leadership capabilities.

As noted by Dickie and her associates (2004), many writers in the VET sector advocate the development of national programs for VET teachers, managers and leaders. They argue that a national approach offers opportunities: for teaching staff to share best practice; for benchmarking; and the potential for building national training alliances and partnerships. However, apart from the annual Reframing the Future sub-program on strategic management and change management, our interviews revealed few examples of cooperation across states in the development of leaders and managers in VET. Indeed, it is noteworthy that a first step in some states, including Queensland, is the building of better alliances between VET providers within the state. In Queensland, as noted in the 2006 Skills Plan and in the interviews completed as part of this report, it is expected that the current restructuring begun in mid-2006 will reduce unnecessary competition in product development and delivery between training organisations. These improved structures should facilitate better coordination of management and leadership training in the state, such that it is built upon a greater sharing of resources and knowledge across the state.

Organisational supports

We found a growing use of central bodies within states or within larger organisations to support the development of VET managers and leaders. The Victorian TAFE Development Centre was launched in July 2005. It was set up as a public company limited by guarantee, with the Victorian Minister for Education and Training as the sole member. The mission of the centre is to promote the professional development and standing of people working in Victorian TAFE institutes. Interviews with its managers indicate that, in these early days of its operation, the centre aims to foster recognition of the importance of continuing professional training, including support for the development of leadership and management capabilities in the TAFE sector. Its TAFE Leadership Scheme provides financial support for the planning, implementation and management of development programs for nominated staff. Competitive funding through a grant round is given to development programs for individuals or teams in executive, educational, developmental, specialist and technical roles. To date, grants up to the value of $8000 per institute have been available across the TAFE system. Our interviews with a large number of Victorian TAFE institutes indicated that these grants are providing a strong stimulus for leadership development activities in Victoria's 14 stand-alone TAFE institutes and the TAFE Divisions of Ballarat, RMIT, Swinburne and Victoria universities. Participants in this scheme provide input to educational events arranged by the TAFE Development Centre and contribute to the professional growth of others by sharing their learning in appropriate workshops, conferences and seminars in their own and other institutes.

In Western Australia, the Department of Education and Training has established a VET Programs and Development Branch as part of the VET Teaching and Learning Directorate. Its role is to enhance the quality of VET delivery and assessment practices through the provision of professional development strategies. Professional development through this branch is seen to be the first 'port of call' for professional development advice to the VET sector. It supports the implementation of sector-wide change management strategies, including those that build alliances within VET and the secondary education and higher education sectors.

Other examples of structures that support leadership and management development are those in organisations (for example, training and development units). Various professional associations also play an important role. One example of a supporting structure within an organisation is the new Staff College at RMIT University. It is an initiative established in 2005 and is linked to RMIT University's vision for staff development at all levels. The Staff College is also associated with initiatives linked to curriculum developments, e-learning and access to accredited and non-accredited programs. The college operates in a brokerage role to identify, define and disseminate

new models of learning and development, and to broker staff to share their expertise. The college reports that it is still developing its role, strategies and package of initiatives.

An example of the role being played currently by professional associations is the Victorian TAFE Association (VTA). Regular meetings and seminars are part of the Victorian TAFE Association's professional development program. The monthly Chief Executive Officer Council meetings in Victoria allow chief executive officers to meet to discuss and debate current TAFE issues. A series of human resource network meetings and a human resources conference provides opportunities for staff to meet and network. In recent years, the annual conference has examined topics like Victorian TAFE in the global economy, corporate governance, the learning organisation, and intelligent leadership.

The use of guiding capability frameworks

Another tool being used to provide a more systematic approach to leadership and management development within training organisations is the application of capability frameworks. Many of the capability frameworks described earlier in this report are being used to assist VET organisations to consider the capabilities required now and in the future for their educational leaders and managers. Among the more influential frameworks, as measured by their use across institutes or often by whole states, are those by Foley and Canole (2003) and Callan (2001). Western Australia has developed its own set of capabilities for senior and middle managers in its Professional Development Framework 2005–06 for Vocational Education and Training (Western Australia Department of Employment and Training 2005).

Strategic statements of intention

A large number of VET organisations involved in this research showed quite advanced levels of strategic thinking and planning in relation to staff development generally and, more specifically, to developing and sustaining their educational leaders. We found many examples of clear and strong statements by training organisations, detailing their focus upon building and sustaining leadership—in position statements, corporate strategy documents and staff development policies and plans. Overall, this was more generally true of larger TAFE institutes, and less so in smaller public and private training organisations. For example, in its Strategic Directions 2006–08 Statement, South Western Sydney Institute lists 'leadership is our strength' as the first of its six guiding principles. Those interviewed emphasised the view in this organisation that the role of the leader is no longer confined to the chief executive officer or institute director, but is now being extended to managers at all levels. Again, the earlier theme of shared leadership re-emerges. Team leaders, head teachers and institute managers are expected to play a key role in ensuring that the core functions of the various businesses are delivered effectively to customers, stakeholders and communities. At all levels, it is being promoted that leaders should accept that they have the power to influence others positively through their vision, integrity and effectiveness, and to exert a critical influence on the level and quality of performance of their staff.

The draft Staff Professional Development Strategy 2006–07 of Charles Darwin University aims to provide employees with opportunities to develop their leadership skills. A major tool, still in the planning stage, is its Leadership Development Program, which is being designed and may be implemented in a partnership with an interstate dual-sector university. In addition, special initiatives are planned to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people progressing through middle and senior levels with this university through professional development. Similarly, the University of Ballarat TAFE Division, in its Roadmap for Leadership into the Future as part of its strategic positioning for 2005–10, details intentions to promote more strongly leadership that provides direction that inspires and supports staff. In particular, the organisation is reviewing its efforts to build a highly skilled senior management team to improve strategic performance, to accelerate change and to break down cultural barriers in this multi-campus organisation. Finally, the Sunshine Coast TAFE has positioned its leadership and management development within a set of

guiding principles that focus on learning. These principles link leadership and management development to lifelong learning, performance learning and learning that is supported by its culture.

In a leadership and management framework that is part of its People and Organisational Development Staff Development Plan 2005–06, North Coast Institute of TAFE in New South Wales defines leadership development as a major objective. The objective is to build leadership and management capability across the institute to support cultural shifts in the institute environment, which is currently experiencing changes in political and community expectations. In turn, it expects managers to be skilled in financial management, performance management, project management, staff selection, planning and decision-making. Leaders are expected to be proficient in coaching, building external relationships, strategic planning, problem-solving, risk management and change management.

As with many other VET organisations, TAFE Tasmania has made clear its intention to develop its capabilities in management and leadership. It has targeted the six areas of people, business, market, information communications technology, service and facilities. The people capability, as capability one, is 'Our people: we will value and develop them'. TAFE Tasmania is investing an equivalent of two per cent of salaries for the direct costs of staff development towards realisation of this goal. A major tool being used in this institute and numerous others, and one that is discussed later is the use of coaching.

Management education

As argued earlier, management education is a major tool available to organisations for developing the skills of their staff. In our visits to various organisations, we found many examples of formal qualifications in leadership in various locations at the certificate, diploma and masters levels. For example, the Industry and Business Skills Council of Australia in 2005 commissioned research to scope and identify training needs within the education sector. The outcome was the recently launched Vocational Graduate Certificate in Educational Leadership. The focus of this qualification is upon education managers with direct responsibility for the strategic management of learning in their public or private training organisation. Interviewees described the responsibilities of education managers as being a blend of business and educational management, and includes stimulating a business and entrepreneurial culture and developing partnerships and alliances. The major career group being targeted for this qualification are executive managers, managers of registered training organisations, managers leading organisational learning and development functions, and human resources and human resources development operations managers.

In addition, a number of training organisations have developed alliances with the TAFE divisions or schools of education within universities. These partnerships are enabling access to a range of coursework masters degrees as a way of developing the formal leadership and management qualifications of their cohorts of senior executives and managers. In Queensland, for example, interviewees mentioned the masters level qualifications that have a strong orientation to VET at both Griffith University (Master of Adult and Vocational Education) and Queensland University of Technology (Master of Learning Innovation). The latter also offers a Graduate Certificate in Education (Learning Futures).

Other programs involve the completion of formal leadership and management programs, which are recognised for credit and articulation into degree programs. For example, the Leadership Development Program for Education and Training Managers in Victoria is nationally accredited as a Graduate Certificate in Leadership in Education and Training and is placed on the National Register of Courses and the State Register of Accredited Courses. Recognition and articulation negotiations have taken place with higher education institutions to have the program recognised within relevant postgraduate programs. For example, RMIT University has recognised the program as articulating into the Master of Education (Leadership and Management) qualification, with an exemption of two subjects of the masters degree.

Leadership and management training programs

Formal training programs

Across our interviews we found a variety of approaches to the use of formal management development programs, including allowing managers to access external and often cross-industry programs, the use of internal programs designed by the organisation, and partnerships across organisations that supported access to management development. One program being accessed by VET managers in Victoria, Canberra Institute of Technology and possibly in the future by VET managers in other states is the Leadership Development Program for Education and Training Managers. This Victorian-based program is jointly conducted through a partnership between Victoria University and the Chair Academy (United States). The program integrates skills-based leadership training and professional development. Senior managers who had participated in the program report that the focus is upon gaining the information, skills and the support they need to excel in their positions, and to lead their departments or divisions and their institutions. Participants in the program are involved in an introductory week-long residential component, comprising leadership development workshops; a two-semester structured workplace experience, which includes the development and implementation of an 'individualised professional development plan'; a mentoring program, together with reflective experience; and a concluding week-long residential component comprised of workshops.

Another example is the TAFE Leadership Program at RMIT University. The TAFE Leadership Program 2005 was developed to assist participants to develop their attitudes, skills and techniques to increase their leadership effectiveness within the RMIT University TAFE. It is developed and funded jointly between RMIT University TAFE and its People and Culture Unit as one of the projects of the TAFE Leadership Scheme Project facilitated by the TAFE Development Centre. The current program uses experiential learning principles, whereby participants are encouraged to challenge pre-existing ideas and norms. Interviewees reported that coaching sessions were not included in the first versions of the program, but may be in the future. In addition, it is planned to promote RMIT University's Graduate Diploma and Masters in Educational Leadership as a pathway for those participants who want to continue their leadership learning. Finally, there were examples of programs at an organisational level. At South Western Sydney Institute, all institute leaders have the opportunity to participate in their internal VET Leaders program, as well as in other leadership development programs offered by the Staff Training and Development Unit. Managers are encouraged to think more broadly about development opportunities and activities, and to develop their individual learning plan in consultation with their line manager.

Use of annual development and training calendars

The development calendar is a widespread strategy being used for staff development in the VET sector. Most calendars or development days are organised at an institute level. A notable exception is the Western Australian Department of Education and Training, which has held an annual training forum. This two-day forum provides professional development for practitioners of VET, including trainers, teachers, lecturers, assessors and other staff of registered training organisations. A second example at the state level is the Victorian TAFE Development Centre, which presents the Professional Learning Series. This comprises a TAFE Leader Series and a TAFE Educator Series. In 2006, events in the Leader Series included: the concept of developing people through coaching and mentoring; ethics and values; and creating agile and responsive TAFE learning organisations. At the institute level, almost all calendars examined devote sessions to cultural leadership and management skills. South Western Sydney Institute and Kangan Batman TAFE, for example, list in their 2006 short courses the topics of performance management, managing change, managing process improvement, ethics and values, targeted selection techniques and work–life balance.

Staff development events

Many organisations are using the developmental strategy of a one- or two-day staff development day or event (for example, Sunshine Coast TAFE, RMIT University's VIP Conference and University Leadership Forums, and the Central Gippsland Institute of TAFE event). At a basic level, such days are described by those interviewed as 'love-ins', 'really it is a lot of fun that at best builds a sense of team', and 'we get to hear about some interesting things that are happening in our organisation'. At their best, these events provide opportunities for considered, structured conversations about building and sustaining management skills. These events provide staff with the chance to engage in a series of professional conversations and offer an opportunity for understanding, appreciating and grappling with important ideas and issues affecting their organisation. The conversations provide a forum for exchanging opinions, knowledge and resource-sharing. Leadership and management themes include building effective learning organisations, the role of team leadership, and building partnerships.

It was clear, however, that some VET organisations were relying too much upon development days to achieve what they hoped would be meaningful development of the capabilities of their managerial and supervisory staff. This is not to deny their value when the days are used to bring together a variety of managers to publicly workshop key issues in the form of professional conversations, debates and presentations of exemplars of best practice. However, it was found in our interviews that only a minority of staff development days were being used to provide special opportunities for high-level debate or discourse among managers and leaders from across the various parts of their organisations.

Leadership self-assessment

Learning and development managers, as well as senior staff, were keen to access toolkits or related diagnostic measures that might facilitate their planning of development more generally, and, more specifically, would add to their ideas on leadership development. A number of training organisations have developed in-house self-assessment guides to assist their managers at various levels (for example, frontline, middle, senior executive) to assess their development needs and, subsequently, to plan developmental activities. Informing these inventories are a variety of capability frameworks, like those mentioned earlier, available for the sector. Sunshine Coast TAFE, for example, is piloting a self-assessment workbook, Advancing Criteria: Leadership. This workbook lists a variety of leadership elements (for example, 'stronger relationships have been established with industry and other stakeholders for mutual benefit'), rated from 'not in place' to 'fully in place'. The manager also reports evidence of the achievement of this element, if it is rated as 'in place'.

South Western Sydney Institute provides its managers with a Leadership Capability Self-Assessment Inventory that allows them to self-assess their current and required capability for the future. The key dimensions of leadership include capability in developing strategy and providing direction, communicating with influence, and demonstrating integrity, awareness and self-management. In addition, this exercise moves into the completion of an 'individual learning and development plan', which asks managers to reflect upon their achievements, required capabilities and development opportunities on or off the job. Finally, this institute, through another self-assessment device, the Breadth of a Leadership Role Continuum, defines the future focus, and breadth of contact, impact and responsibility of various leadership positions in the institute (that is, team leader/coordinator, head teacher/section leader, to senior manager). This continuum provides managers with an understanding of the breadth and depth of their current leadership role, but also shows how these change as roles become more senior.

Diagnostic instruments and tools are being used or planned for a number of other VET organisations, for example, the University of Ballarat's TAFE Division with its culture instrument. The North Coast Institute of TAFE has adapted Callan's (2001) capability framework to produce a Management and Leadership Capability Profile Self-Report Instrument.

Use of learning on the job

Formal projects with external funding

In addition to management education and training programs, the third and most widely used strategy for developing leaders and managers was the use of on-the-job learning. A dominant theme in our interviews was the experience of developing management and leadership capabilities through activities that occur on the job. In terms of more formal programs of on-the-job or action-based learning, special mention needs to be made of the role of Reframing the Future, and its initiative of the Strategic and Change Management for Improvement Projects. Around 20 to 22 such projects are funded by Reframing the Future each year. It also funds 10 to 15 individual managers annually to undertake a change-agency program which is designed to improve their skills in managing the change of their organisations to become more client-centred and demand-driven (Mitchell 2004).

Many managers reported valuable learning on the job through action-learning projects that typically used a team approach to managing and leading a change initiative. Managers at Sunshine Coast TAFE were using Reframing the Future funds to build enhanced capability in their educational leadership teams. Barrier Reef TAFE Institute managers were using funding to develop a partnership arrangement with Brisbane North Institute of TAFE that involves individual managers applying advanced skills in change leadership, strategic thinking and alliance building. In this case, Reframing the Future funds were supporting the use of an external facilitator to engage the senior managers of both of these organisations in open, frank and instructive discussion designed to lead to greater sharing of intellectual resources, knowledge and expertise. University of Ballarat managers were using Reframing the Future funding to pursue change projects which were more focused on developing their specialist skills. A regional community college had two Reframing the Future and two LearnScope projects, both of which were reported to be challenging managers' attitudes to being risk-averse, encouraging them to look more outside their organisation through benchmarking partnerships that aimed to improve systems and management perspectives.

Similarly, funds from the Victorian TAFE Development Centre were supporting a variety of initiatives promoting the development of leadership and management capabilities among various levels of TAFE staff. Funding was being used to access leadership programs, such as the Chair Program, and the development of coaches and coaching programs. TAFE institutes were also actively using the various resources and management and training programs, forums and workshops being promoted by the TAFE Development Centre.

Learning on the job: Other projects

The reality of VET is that there is not a large amount of external funding available to support management and leadership development, the largest amount of external funds reported in the interviews being around $25 000 for whole-of-organisation strategic-management programs within the Reframing the Future program. Institutes are seen to be very successful if they win one or two external funding allocations annually from programs such as Reframing the Future or Learnscope. Our interviewees revealed that, in addition to the small number of externally funded projects, the majority of on-the-job learning in terms of project or group-based learning was conducted through small teams of staff being given the time and resources to work on important operational issues.

These projects served multiple objectives. At both political and cultural levels, they often brought together individuals from different parts of an organisation, or different levels of management, to resolve often complex, systemic issues. Some of these projects take the form of consultative committees where managers are asked to cooperate across various distinct groups to identify shared areas of concern requiring change. In terms of individual development, the projects provide opportunities for: the development of leadership capabilities; the management of diversity; strategic thinking and planning; and access to best practice. Within the groups there was personal and interpersonal learning in the areas of communication skills, conflict resolution, time management and team-building. Projects in the organisations that we visited included: tackling workforce

planning; mapping the required management capabilities to inform future professional development; and planning and responding to an organisational restructure.

Coaching and mentoring

The use of coaching, by internal or external coaches, is an emerging strategy in VET organisations and is being used largely at the senior executive level. Associated elements to this strategy found in our interviews were policies on the use of budgets to pay for external coaching, processes for identifying and training internal coaches, and communications to staff on the role and availability of coaches. Of the sample of training organisations involved in this report, coaching was being used at North Coast Institute of TAFE, RMIT University, the Queensland Department of Employment and Training (Leadership Development Programs for A02 to A07 staff), South Western Sydney Institute, Kangan Batman TAFE, and the North Coast TAFE Institute (Management and Leadership Program), to name just a few. Many of these organisations have coaching agreements, templates for coaching contracts, a flowchart of processes, a coaching model, an intranet site to profile available coaches, learning set support available to coaches, and workbooks, such as the Leader as a Coach Workbook.

Coaching is being used in a variety of ways. In some cases it is a professional development intervention that aims to develop a stronger focus on developing business know-how and achieving improved business outcomes in the staff being coached. Other coaching strategies are concerned with fostering positive change through the personal development and growth of employees. Coaching is being used to develop the coaches themselves, and not just the coachees. The coaching experience is being used to develop managers to be coaches in their own teams. One example of this use of coaching is RMIT University's Senior Executive External Coaching on Request Program. Those interviewed report that it offers coaching in one-on-one individualised sessions that provide an opportunity for critical self-reflection and action. This program provides experienced external professionals with a proven track record in executive coaching. It normally involves an initial consultation plus five coaching sessions and is centrally funded. In addition, human resources managers are able to access coaching through a program conducted by the Victorian TAFE Association.

Formal mentoring programs, by contrast, are a less frequently used strategy. Indeed, as with many other sectors, it is more than likely that the informal mentoring relationships in VET far exceed formal mentoring programs. One example of a formal program is that offered through Charles Darwin University, which has linked mentoring into a future leadership development program. The Mentoring Program at RMIT University operates on request, with internal mentors who volunteer to share their own time, experience and skill. The program provides a Myer Briggs assessment and other tools to mentors and mentees to help identify and to meet their personal goals.

Staff rotation, shadowing and related activities

Rotation options offer management-development opportunities in a variety of roles, both upwards and sideways within the organisation, and through secondment to other organisations. Staff rotation is a frequently used activity for developing VET managers and leaders, although our interviewees described its use as often more reactive than proactive in its application. In an attempt to use staff rotation more strategically, Charles Darwin University is planning to design and implement a rotational system whereby staff gain experience in performing other duties within their own departments and within the organisation. This strategy will facilitate the expansion of the knowledge base of staff, creating more flexibility and sustainability for the organisation. Sunshine Coast TAFE is considering a form of leave whereby managers will be allocated six to ten weeks to activate professional development that could involve a study tour, a secondment to another organisation or a similar 'out of one's comfort zone' experience. In addition, the TAFE Division of Victoria University is planning to use shadowing in its Leadership Capacity Building Projects, giving teachers and managers experience of processes such as tendering, submission-writing and completing departmental audits.

Barriers to leadership and management development

Guthrie and his colleagues (2006) have recently examined both the facilitators and barriers to effective development of the VET professional. The same sets of enablers and barriers emerged in our interviews. The key enablers include the existence of a learning culture; the redesign of systems, structures and processes to support new ways of working; and involvement and ownership of professional development. In addition, as Callan (2004) also noted, our interviewees highlighted the opportunities afforded by existing strong networks and communities of practice that support the identification of professional development needs and the delivery of relevant professional development. In contrast, barriers in VET organisations to professional development included: non-supportive organisational climates with little access to development opportunities; workloads and responsibilities not easily transferred to others; and development being focused upon information-giving rather than allowing participants to work actively on issues and problems in their own contexts. For example, a manager talked about his situation as follows:

> Time and money for backfilling teachers (and me) to go to professional development is our biggest constraint. We are offered development, and those who arrange it are disappointed that only two to three people will turn up, but the sessions would be full if we had had access to time and money. It's a shame that it comes back to that, but it's very clearly that.

Other barriers relate to sectoral issues—when attention is focused on how things have been done in the past rather than on new skills and priorities. These factors include complex administrative systems, award conditions and funding models. As raised by a senior manager at a metropolitan TAFE:

> The biggest constraint is the lecturers' award, which sets out that a teacher can only teach for 21 hours per week. A core group of staff is very militant. We have an inability to think about doing new things and we're stymied about thinking about how we can get into the trades.

As noted in recent reports on the development of future leaders in VET, casual and part-time staff are very often excluded from such opportunities (see Guthrie et al. 2006). A number of organisations, however, are rethinking this situation. Charles Darwin University is currently developing systems to promote and foster the inclusion of casual and sessional staff in professional development activities and to recognise this group as a potential source of talent for recruitment of future managers and leaders.

Guidelines and tools

Guidelines

As a result of the findings from our visits and interviews as well as the literature review (see *Approaches for sustaining and building management and leadership capability in VET providers: Literature review on leadership and suggested reading list—Support document*), the following guidelines for developing and sustaining leadership and management in VET organisations are presented. These guidelines are not meant to be prescriptive, but it is hoped that they will inform and improve leadership development at the enterprise level.

Training organisations need to consider the following issues if they are to build stronger capabilities among their current and future leaders.

◇ Use a capability framework as a backdrop for the organisation's leadership and management development. The use of a capability framework provides a unifying influence across an organisation, in terms of understanding current and potential capability among managers. It provides a common language and a set of understandings about what staff need to know to be able to develop as leaders and managers at various levels, and informs a more strategic approach to identifying and designing professional development needs and activities for staff at various stages of their careers.

◇ Continue to promote efforts by staff to seek external funding to support their development, and to support any funds with generous top-ups and in-kind support in terms of time, administrative support and back-filling. Promote and reward the efforts of the individuals and the teams involved.

◇ Provide toolkits to assist staff to access their development needs; check gaps in capabilities against capability frameworks identified through self-assessment of their current and required capability for the future; and provide instruments that lead to an individual learning and development plan.

◇ For senior levels of managers, identify key leadership development programs to be targeted, sending managers where possible in small cohorts to programs with VET practitioners from other organisations or to non-VET organisations to broaden their strategic thinking. Organisations need to consider alliances that might result in partnerships with other VET organisations and which enable them to design and develop leadership programs or higher education qualifications for senior executives.

◇ For middle- and lower-level managers, a key strategy must be the use of coaching programs, using a mix of internal and external coaches. Coaching develops not only the coachee, but also the coach. Such initiatives need to be strongly supported by clear policies on the use of budgets to pay for external coaching, processes for identifying and training internal coaches, and communication procedures to inform staff about the role and availability of coaches.

◇ Action-based learning, either through formal programs or more informal arrangements, need to be strongly supported for developing lower-level and middle-level VET managers. Such initiatives benefit organisations by promoting cross-fertilisation of ideas and practices, lead to the building of informal networks and alliances among managers, and can be used to tackle often complex, systemic problems across an organisation. In terms of individual development, such projects

provide opportunities for the development of leadership and management capabilities in areas such as communication skills, conflict resolution, time management and team-building.

Tools

One of the outcomes of this project has been the identification of frameworks, guidelines or tools that can be used by VET managers and their organisations to develop their leaders and managers. This report has profiled many training organisations and what they are doing in terms of the four issues discussed: supporting frameworks and structures; management education; management training opportunities; and on-the-job learning. One outcome of this report will be that managers will be able to approach the organisations mentioned here to discuss what they are doing, with a possible view to accessing the materials, frameworks and toolkits that have been described.

As highlighted in this report, VET organisations do not have access to high levels of funding to develop leadership talent. Where funds are available, these are chiefly accessed through central or limited internal funds, often in reactive rather than strategic ways, and are used to run courses in institute calendars at the more senior levels; to support a handful of participants to attend management-development programs outside the organisation; or to access individual coaching sessions using external coaches. Where funding is more limited, as applies to almost all VET organisations, the major strategies adopted include the application of largely in-house coaching, as well as structured, or more often, less structured, and planned learning on the job, through the types of events that managers face every day (for example, taking on new roles, challenging assignments, acting in higher positions, dealing with crises, managing change). The source of coaching is often informal feedback from staff, supervisors and fellow managers. In a growing number of cases, there is facilitation of more active reflection through access to internal or external coaches. These activities are making a difference in building the pool of leadership talent and need to be supported.

Our report emphasised the importance of sharing materials to assist those wanting to develop as leaders and managers, and in this context we offer a number of tools developed by Victor Callan and a colleague (Greg Latemore, Latemore and Associates, Brisbane). These can serve as both self-diagnostics and supporting frameworks.

These tools are provided in the support document, *A set of resources and tools for identifying, building and sustaining the learning and development needs of managers and leaders*. These tools will assist organisations to: think more about how they identify the developmental needs of their managers and leaders; plan better use of coaching and coaching programs; and identify the capabilities required of their current and future managers and leaders. We believe that increased use of well-developed frameworks and tools will raise the performance of training organisations so that they more effectively meet the challenges of developing leadership and management at all levels. Given the levels of duplication across the VET sector in terms of available tools, frameworks and programs, a national or statewide approach is also warranted. This will enable the identification of the best available management-development materials, which can then be disseminated within and across states more successfully than at present.

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Support document details

Additional information relating to this research is available in *Approaches for sustaining and building management and leadership capability in VET providers: Literature review on leadership and suggested reading list—Support document* and *A set of resources and tools for identifying, building and sustaining the learning and development needs of managers and leaders: Support document.* These can be accessed from NCVER's website <http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/1802.hmtl>. The documents contain:

✧ Literature review on leadership and suggested reading list

✧ A set of resources and tools for identifying, building and sustaining the learning and development needs of managers and leaders

Appendix A
List of participating organisations

Public providers

Canberra Institute of Technology, Canberra
TAFE Tasmania
South West Regional College of TAFE, Bunbury, Western Australia
Central TAFE, Perth, Western Australia
Challenger TAFE, Fremantle, Western Australia
West Coast TAFE, Joondalup, Western Australia
Hunter Institute of TAFE, New South Wales
Sydney Institute of TAFE (St George), New South Wales
New England Institute of TAFE, New South Wales
South Western Sydney Institute, New South Wales
Wodonga Institute of TAFE, Victoria
Victoria University, Victoria
Cooloola TAFE, Queensland
Barrier Reef Institute of TAFE, Queensland
Tropical North Institute of TAFE, Queensland
University of Ballaratt, Victoria
Central Gippsland TAFE, Victoria
RMIT University, Victoria
Charles Darwin University, Northern Territory
Kangan Batman TAFE, Victoria
Box Hill Institute of TAFE,
East Gippsland TAFE, Victoria
Goulburn Ovens TAFE, Victoria
North Coast Institute of TAFE, New South Wales

Private registered training organisations

Charlton Brown Group
Australasian College of Natural Therapies

Community colleges

Southern Education College, New South Wales
Continuing Education Centre Limited, Albury-Wodonga, New South Wales

Others

TAFE Development Centre, Victoria
TAFE South Australia

Appendix B
Survey used for interviews

Leadership project – NCVER – Consortium 2

Investigators: Victor Callan, John Mitchell, Berwyn Clayton, Larry Smith

Preamble for the interview

This NCVER-funded research project is part of the Consortium 2 project that involves eight research studies into various aspects of VET organisations, their cultures, and human resource planning. The current research is one of those eight projects, and we are examining: the leadership and management development efforts that are being used or that are planned to be used for building and sustaining the capabilities of those VET staff who engage in managing and leading people as part of their role; the project is also looking at ideas about how to improve the sharing across VET of these ideas and developments about management and leadership development. Participating RTOs will benefit from this research by: being one of the case studies to be reported nationally; through obtaining ideas through this process and the final report to improve the development of its managers and leaders, including improved succession planning.

Methodology

- From April 2006 to June 2006, we are conducting interviews by face-to-face or telephone across Australia with VET staff at the levels of senior executive, manager, teacher, trainer and support staff

- and in these interviews we are examining how leadership development occurs within the specific structural, cultural and operational context of various training organisations.

Products for the project

- Possibly inform them about web site: 'Investigating approaches for sustaining and building educational leadership', a literature review on the Consortium web site: http://consortiumresearchprogram.net.au/html/images/stories/Documents/ra7_lit_review _1_nov_2005.pdf

Informed consent

The research team managing this project is following the ethical guidelines determined by AVETRA.
- No individuals will be identified in our report—your opinions will be incorporated under major themes to emerge from all interviews
- Organisations will only be identified as a case study if we have the verbal agreement of their chief executive officer
- All interview notes will be summarized and destroyed at the end of the project
- The results of the research will be published by NCVER and also presented on the Consortium web site and at conferences and open forums
- Any further details about the project are available from: Professor Victor Callan, Ph 3365 9009; Email: v.callan@business.uq.edu.au

Opening question

Q. As you look to the future in terms of the management and leadership talent required for this organisation to continue to be competitive and innovative in the VET sector, what are the three most pressing leadership and management issues that are facing your organisation

Specific areas for management and leadership development

Q. For the senior executives, your organisation is **most focused** about developing their management and leadership capabilities in the three areas of:

Q. For the managers (educational and non-educational), your organisation is **most focused** about developing their management and leadership capabilities in the three areas of:

Q. For the teaching staff who engage in management and leadership roles, your organisation is **most focused** about developing their management and leadership capabilities in the three areas of:

Q. For the administration and learning support staff who engage in management and leadership roles, your organisation is **most focused** about developing their management and leadership capabilities in three areas of:

Current or planned management and leadership development strategies

In terms of management and leadership development, what is occurring **at present, or what is planned?**

Prompt
1. special activities often off-the-job like development programs, mentoring, access to coaches, action-learning projects, access to communities of practice
2. on-the job activities like planning by the organisations to assign staff to challenging assignments, special roles, acting positions, start-ups, new ventures or partnerships

Among your senior executives, at present, what is occurring or planned to occur?

Your managers—educational and non-educational- occurring or planned

Your teaching staff involved in management and leadership roles—occurring or planned

Your administration and learning support staff involved in management and leadership roles—occurring or planned

Major achievements to date in management and leadership development

Q. What are you proud of, and can point to as a major achievement in leadership and management development, for one or more of these groups of staff in your organisation?

Q. Are you facing a generational change of management in your organisation in the next five years?

Yes_____No_____

If yes, how is your organizational planning to respond to such changes - including succession planning for various types of staff (that is, Executive team members, managers, teachers/support staff in management and leadership roles)

Q. Does your organisation have a human resource management plan, or a strategic plan, or a workforce development plan that describes in more detail the strategies it is using or plans to use to sustain across the organisation its management and leadership capabilities?

Yes_____No_____

If yes, how can we access a copy of this plan and its specific strategies?

Weighing up the best mix of management and leadership development strategies given the nature of your organisation

Q. At present, what are **the biggest constraints** that you need to deal with in building the management and leadership capability of your staff?

Given the nature of your organisation (its size, budget, what it has found works well), what advice would you give other VET organisations in terms of building and sustaining a core of management and leadership talent for the future

The improved methods for sharing these developments across VET

One of the goals of this project is to examine improved methods for sharing across VET the strategies and specific activities used to promote management and leadership development.

Q. How do you think we can better share across VET what we are learning as organisations about developing our VET managers and leaders?

Final questions

We have reached my final questions.

Q. Is there an issue that you would like to expand upon more? Or an issue about developing and sustaining management and leadership capability that you thought we would talk about, but did not? If so, please expand.

Additional notes

NCVER