RESEARCH REPORT

Continuity and change: employers' training practices and partnerships with training providers

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INFORMING POLICY AND PRACTICE IN AUSTRALIA'S TRAINING SYSTEM

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About the research

Continuity and change: employers' training practices and partnerships with training providers

Erica Smith, Andy Smith and Jacqueline Tuck, Federation University Australia, and Victor Callan, University of Queensland

A number of factors influence the motivations of employers to train their workforce and the ways in which they engage with the training system. This study combines a national survey and interviews with Australian employers and registered training organisations (RTOs) to provide a comprehensive picture of the way in which employers navigate the Australian training system and how partnerships with RTOs are established. The study also provides insight into how practices have evolved over the last 20 years.

Key messages

- Despite changes to the business and vocational training policy environments, the reasons why employers train their employees have altered only slightly over the past 20 years.
- There is an enhanced focus on quality and partnerships, with the following main changes:
  - The role of the training function and training staff in organisations seems to be more proactive than previously, with training staff now having direct relationships with external providers of training.
  - The take-up of nationally recognised training appears not to have increased substantially, but this type of training is being used in more diverse and flexible ways; for example, support for skill sets over national qualifications.
  - The nature of the partnerships between RTOs and employers has changed from a relationship based on provision of particular services to one based on long-term mutual collaboration.
- The main reasons why employers train their employees are: to improve the quality of goods and services because of new technology; as a business strategy; and to meet licensing and workplace health and safety requirements.
- Employers want to provide more training for their employees but are constrained by the time it takes and the financial resources required.
- Partnerships between industry and RTOs bring a range of benefits to both parties, but the financial benefits to RTOs are generally quite modest.
- Employers use both TAFE (technical and further education) and private RTOs as their main source of information about vocational education and training (VET) and increasingly use them as 'navigators' of the VET sector in collaborative partnerships.

The research clearly shows that nationally recognised training is valuable to employers and has many 'spin-off' effects. It confirmed recent directions by governments to encourage the use of such training. The redeveloped models described in this report may aid future planning and policy by governments in relation to employer training and partnerships between RTOs and industry.

Dr Craig Fowler
Managing Director, NCVER

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Executive summary

The reasons employers train their workforces have not changed appreciably over time, although quality is becoming increasingly important.

The aim of this project was to provide an up-to-date picture of the training practices of employers in Australia and their partnerships with registered training organisations (RTOs) in the provision of nationally recognised training. To assist in tracing developments over time, comparisons were made with the prior research conducted by the researchers involved in this project, which dates from between 20 and 13 years previously.

Methodology

Surveys of employers and of RTOs were undertaken. The RTO survey focused on partnerships with employers, while the employer survey investigated training practices in general, as well as partnerships with RTOs. Interviews were also undertaken with the employers and RTOs involved in partnerships to identify the features of successful partnerships. The interviews were 'paired', such that each partner was interviewed separately about the same partnership. The data from the surveys and interviews were analysed to provide a snapshot of current practices and then used to identify aspects of continuity and change over the past two decades.

Key findings

The reasons employers train their workforces have not changed appreciably over time, although quality is becoming increasingly important amongst the mix of major factors. The most important drivers to training for employers are the need to: constantly improve the quality of the product or service; adopt new technology; and meet the increasing regulatory requirements that impinge on their businesses. Most employers reported conducting more training compared with five years ago, with medium-sized companies most likely to report a substantial increase in training. Generally, the amount of training increases with employer size. Most employers want to provide more training for their employees, with the major barriers being the time it takes and the financial resources required.

Nearly half of the employers in this study reported providing some form of nationally recognised training to their workforces, a greater proportion than that reported in the literature. Our analysis showed that organisations using nationally recognised training tend to be more complex, to be multi-site, to experience greater advances in technology and to be expanding their operations. Nationally recognised training provides benefits in addressing these issues. The adoption of this training by employers conforms to a continuum, whereby the employer may initially engage on a small scale with a pilot adoption of training; following the success of the training, the employer may progress to extending the use of nationally recognised training to other groups of employees. At the final stage, advanced users of nationally recognised training make a commitment to the training being sustained, by building training into broader aspects of workforce development strategies.

A key element in the use of nationally recognised training by employers is the existence of a 'navigator', an organisation that can guide the employer through the complexities of the vocational education and training (VET) system. This navigator might well be someone

Nationally recognised training is being used more and in more diverse ways.

external to the organisation, such as an RTO or other partner. The navigator may not receive financial benefit from all interactions.

The availability of government funding remains a key reason for employers making use of nationally recognised training, and changes in funding over recent years at both Commonwealth and state levels have complicated the picture, with employers and RTOs being more preoccupied with recent funding cuts than with the additional funding opportunities provided in the slightly more distant past. RTOs remain the most important source, by far, of information for employers on nationally recognised training.

Almost half of the employers surveyed had partnerships with RTOs. The majority of employers in partnerships were generally satisfied; any dissatisfaction was related to an RTO's openness to experimentation and their willingness to make changes to the nature of the off-the-job training. TAFE (technical and further education) institutes had high levels of self-awareness of their own deficiencies in these areas and in the business matters associated with partnerships. Further detailed information about partnerships was gained from the in-depth interviews with the RTOs and employers who were in the partnership. Both parties reported major benefits from partnerships, with many reports of partnerships that were collaborative rather than transactional. Financial benefits were important for RTO viability but these were rarely large.

A number of 'success factors' characterise effective partnerships. These include the availability of government funding to underwrite the partnership; flexibility and willingness to innovate in delivery on the part of the RTO; RTO staff understanding of industry and business needs; and the establishment and maintenance of trust in the partnership between the employer and the RTO.

Based on these and other findings, the two models of employer training and one model of successful RTO—industry partnerships developed in earlier studies by the authors have been updated and reworked. A new typology of employer—RTO relationships has been developed, one that depicts a number of items in three general domains: the nature and depth of the relationship; the extent of coverage of employers' workforces; and the extent to which employers' premises and staff are used in training delivery.

Implications

The research shows clearly that nationally recognised training is valuable to employers and has many 'spin-off' effects. It confirmed recent directions by governments to encourage the use of such training. The redeveloped models may aid future planning and policy by governments in relation to employer training and to partnerships between RTOs and industry.

The research shows that employer training practices, when viewed through the lens of the last 20 years, are characterised by continuity and change. Although many aspects have remained the same over this period, employer training has undergone some degree of evolution.

Firstly, there appears to have been a change in the role of the training function and training staff in organisations. They seem to be more proactive than previously and play a direct role in relationships with external providers of training and in reacting to external change.

Secondly, while the take-up of nationally recognised training by employers has not increased substantially, this type of training is being used in different ways. Rather than organising the delivery of full qualifications to large groups of workers, employers are now using nationally recognised training in more diverse ways, such as delivering training in skill sets for many different groups of workers and being aware of what is available and how it can best be used.

Finally, the nature of the partnerships between RTOs and employers has changed from a relationship based on provision of particular services to one based on long-term mutual collaboration. RTOs appear to be working with employers across a range of business needs and providing expert guidance to the employer in undertaking and navigating the VET system.

Introduction

This report sets out to update our understanding of why and how Australian employers train their workers. The research project examined employers' total training effort and training structures, as well as the ways in which employers partner with training providers (TAFE and private RTOs) to provide nationally accredited training to their workers.

The research was carried out through two major surveys, one of employers and the other of RTOs, and through paired interviews with the employers and RTOs who were in partnership. It built upon three earlier research projects, each of which was managed by members of this research team. The following are the titles of the publications ensuing from these earlier projects:

- *Enterprise training: the factors that affect demand* (Smith, A, Hayton et al. 1995)
- *Working together: industry and VET provider training partnerships* (Callan & Ashworth 2004)
- *Enterprises' commitment to nationally recognised training for existing workers* (Smith, E, Pickersgill et al. 2005).

The data for these projects were gathered in 1994, 2002 and 2003 respectively, while the main data for the current project were collected in 2015, thus providing a snapshot of change over a period of 20 years.

The research questions for the project were:

- Why do employers train their workers and what factors affect the extent of training?
- What are the choices that employers make about training methods and sources of training?
- What is the nature of the training partnerships between employers and registered training organisations? What factors create and sustain these partnerships?
- What have been the key changes in employer training and in partnerships with RTOs over the past 20 years?

Research method

The research project used mixed methods: two online surveys, one of employers and the other of RTOs; and semi-structured interviews, with nine employers and nine RTOs who were in partnership with each other. The employer survey set out to establish a picture of the current training practices in Australian organisations, including their partnerships with RTOs; the RTO survey focused only on the nature of RTO partnerships with industry. Copies of the survey instruments used in the study are available at appendices A and B. Both surveys included questions utilised in the projects outlined above, enabling comparisons to be made.

The employer sample was obtained through a professional survey company, which accessed respondents with responsibility for the training function. The sample was national and was stratified by employer size, to align with the 2005 project on nationally recognised training for existing workers, and responses were requested from the person with responsibility for training. In the RTO survey, responses were requested from the person with responsibility for industry partnerships. All TAFE institutes were invited to respond, with 20 responding (a 40% response rate). To obtain the non-TAFE sample, a spreadsheet of the total RTO population was obtained from the Commonwealth Government. TAFE, schools and enterprise RTOs were then excluded. Total numbers of respondents to the surveys were 173 for the employer survey and 107 for the RTO survey. These numbers enabled comparability with the earlier research projects.

The 18 interviews examined nine training partnerships, with the relevant managers in the enterprises and their RTO partner organisation being interviewed separately about the same training partnership. The questions for both parties explored employers' motivations for training; the types of training and the employee groups being trained in the partnership; the benefits to both parties; and a series of questions about the partnership processes. The interview protocol was adapted from the protocol used in the earlier Callan and Ashworth (2004) study, and is available at appendix C.

The project was guided by a reference group of 12 representatives of key stakeholder groups (see Acknowledgments) and recommended experts in the area. The group advised the research team at key points in the project, including commenting on the employer and RTO survey instruments and on the data collected. Members of the group also apprised the researchers of relevant VET and industry developments with the potential to affect the project as it developed.

In the first stage of the analyses for each survey, frequency tables with percentages and sample sizes were generated for the quantitative responses. These are provided in appendices D and E. Next, additional analyses were completed by categories of respondents. For the RTO survey data, these cross-tabulations were undertaken by organisational type (TAFE, for-profit private and non-profit private), see appendix F. The employer survey data were analysed by firm size and by whether the employers used nationally recognised training or not. The interviews were analysed thematically and focused on the nature of the partnerships, the benefits for each party, success factors and challenges. For each survey and for the interviews, the findings were then compared with those from the mid-2000 research projects.

Limitations

There were some limitations to the project method: 173 employers is a very small proportion of the total number of employers in Australia; and 107 is a small proportion of the total RTO population, which was 4601 in 2014 (Robinson 2016). However, the distribution of responses by industry sector to the employer survey corresponds closely with Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data on the distribution of employment across the economy. The comparisons across time generated additional limitations. The industry areas for employer survey responses varied somewhat from 2003 to 2015; and, for the RTO survey, the 2002 responses were almost all from TAFE personnel, sometimes several respondents within an institute, while the 2015 survey involved only one respondent per institution, and over 80% of responses were from private RTOs.

Background and literature review

Most employers provide some training for their workers. The national Survey of Employer Use and Views (for example, NCVER 2013) asks about both formal and informal training. In 2013, 52% of responding employers engaged with the VET system in some way (including recruiting graduates of the system) and 78% said they provided informal training. Thus training is an important activity, and this section provides insights from the literature into the nature and extent of that activity.

Why do employers train their workers and what factors affect the extent of training?

Understanding the factors that influence and motivate training decisions in organisations remains to some extent a 'black box' for researchers and policy-makers, as Smith, Oczkowski and Hill (2009) note.[1] Some general drivers for training have been agreed upon and include the rate of organisational change, increased globalisation and competition, and, in response, the need for organisations to improve the overall capability of their workforce. Training increases firms' performance (Saks & Burke-Smalley 2014); and it also increases workers' commitment to an organisation (Salas et al. 2012). A number of studies have identified specific drivers for compliance reasons, such as changes to external regulations and legislative or licensing requirements (for example, Smith & Hayton 1999; Smith, E, Pickersgill et al. 2005; Smith, A, Burke et al. 2008).

Organisational characteristics affect training and these include: organisational size; the industry in which the organisation operates and its traditions associated with training; and organisational structure and location (Smith & Hayton 1999). There is consistent evidence that small organisations provide proportionately less training than large organisations (Freyens 2006; Smith 2003). McGraw (2014) attributes this to three factors: that larger companies benefit from economies of scale in training delivery; that larger companies contain proportionately more employees who work in more highly skilled jobs; and that small companies are less likely to make long-term investments due to market uncertainty and lower profit margins. Also, larger organisations are more likely to actively engage in branding strategies that position them more favourably in a competitive marketplace and which also attract the best employees (Wallance et al. 2014). Smaller firms are less likely to have training infrastructure (Storey & Greene 2010; Storey & Westhead 1997). There are significant differences among industry areas in the provision of training (Lindorff 2011; Cully 2005). Cully (2005), using ABS data, found large industry variations in the use of structured training, from 34% of employers (retail and manufacturing) to 88% (government administration and defence) of employers.

The barriers to training, according to employers, include the difficulty of accommodating training around work demands and other constraints internal to the firm; insufficient government incentives; and issues with the training system, including a lack of flexibility and the unavailability of relevant training (Allen Consulting Group 2006). The formal VET system is often seen as too complex for employers (Cully 2005) and may also be seen as providing training that is too general (Simons & Harris 2014).

1 For more information regarding the costs and benefits of vocational education and training refer to Griffin (2016).

In the literature there is less focus on the facilitators of training than on the barriers to training. Mawer and Jackson (2005) found that organisations with a designated manager or supervisor with training qualifications had a greater understanding of the VET system and the available training options and therefore facilitated the provision of training. The availability of external funding has been shown to be important; this includes the range of financial incentives for employers of apprentices and, to a lesser extent, trainees (Australian Apprenticeships 2014a, 2014b). Employers also benefit from state and territory government provision of funding to training providers.

Training methods and sources of training

Employers make choices about whether to provide accredited or non-accredited training for their employees. There are no definitive figures about the use of accredited (or 'nationally recognised') training. In 2013 the Survey of Employer Use and Views (NCVER 2013) found that 27% of employers reported having employees undertaking apprenticeships and traineeships, and 20% reported the use of nationally recognised training outside these programs, but it is not clear what total proportion of employers provided either one or the other form of nationally recognised training. Cully (2005) found that 41% of Australian employers provided structured training in 2003, which however included both nationally recognised and unaccredited structured training. Interestingly, the Survey of Employer Use and Views (NCVER 2013) reported a decrease of three percentage points in employers using apprenticeships and traineeships and of three percentage points in other uses of nationally recognised training over the five-year period from 2005.

Research has found that the reasons for employers using nationally recognised training include: meeting external regulations such as legislative or licensing requirements; fulfilling the provisions of industrial agreements, awards or enterprise agreements; and providing specific job- or business-related skills for their organisations (Smith, Oczkowski & Hill 2009). In addition, many employers expect that nationally recognised training will enhance their competitiveness by improving quality and by responding to the demands of new technology. Enterprises gain significant benefits from providing such training. These include the ability to attract high-quality staff (that is, as 'employer of choice'), accessing government funding to defray the costs of training provision, the possibility of integrating training with everyday work, and the confidence that workers are trained to a recognised standard (Smith, E, Pickersgill et al. 2005). Employers may themselves become RTOs; these are known as enterprise RTOs (Smith, E, Pickersgill et al. 2005; Smith, E, Smith, A et al. 2015).

However, the most common form of training provided by Australian employers is non-accredited training. Such training may include external formal training and can include mandatory training to meet regulatory requirements (Cooney & Bhatia 2006, p.102), although such training has become increasingly enveloped by the formal VET system. Companies may receive training from the vendors of the equipment, technology and products purchased by them (Lengermann 1996). In house, most employers offer some form of induction training to provide new employees with knowledge of the organisation, knowledge required for their effective functioning (Smith 1998, pp.166—8). Larger organisations often provide off-the-job training in a 'classroom' setting (Jacobs 2003). But ABS data show that individuals report on-the-job training as the most commonly occurring type of training (Richardson 2004). This training is tailored specifically to the skills and knowledge requirements of a job and is often carried out by co-workers (Jacobs 2003).

Informal learning is especially important in small businesses.

Informal learning can also be important (NCVER 2003). In the Survey of Employer Use and Views data (NCVER 2013), this was the only form of training reported to have increased between 2008 and 2013. Learning may develop through everyday work, often due to a trigger or stimulus such as a new type of problem to be solved (Marsick & Watkins 2001). Marsick and Watkins (2001) note that more needs to be known about how such learning interacts with the organisation as a whole and how it can be facilitated within organisations. Informal learning is especially important in small businesses (Dawe & Nguyen 2007). While informal learning by its nature is not managed, organisations can create 'affordances'; for example, ways of structuring work to provide more opportunities for learning (Billett 2001a).

Partnerships between employers and RTOs

Employers may engage with RTOs in a range of ways, from more intensive forms of engagement (exclusive partnerships with RTOs), to less intensive (where employers buy training from the general training market as they need it). The latter may include employing apprentices or trainees. Traineeships, which were established in the 1980s, have served as a major initiative for large-scale workforce development, with larger companies using traineeships for cohorts of workers (Karmel, Blomberg & Vnuk 2010; Smith, E, Comyn et al. 2009) and smaller firms using traineeships to support more individualised learning and development of employees (Smith, E, Comyn et al. 2011). In more intensive partnerships, RTOs work with employers over long periods of time to train multiple groups of workers. Establishing and maintaining such partnerships is not straightforward on either side and involves a degree of reputational risk for both parties (TVET Australia 2010; Hunter 2011).

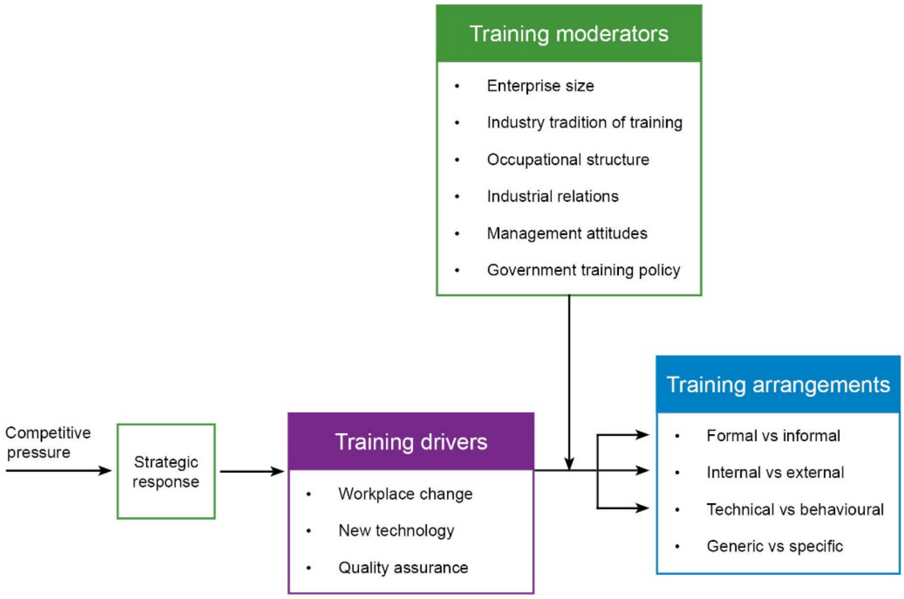
The three earlier studies

As noted earlier, the project set out to update the knowledge accumulated by three previous studies. These earlier reports generated explanatory models for employer training decisions and for employer—RTO partnerships, which are briefly outlined below.

Factors affecting demand for training

The project by A Smith, Hayton et al. (1995) investigated the factors in Australian firms that affected their decisions to invest in the training of their workers. The research involved 42 employer case studies, undertaken across a wide variety of industry areas, including the electronics, building and construction, food processing, finance and retail industries. The research showed that there was a diversity of training arrangements in the firms studied and that even firms operating in the same industry often supported quite different approaches to the training of their workers. A model was developed of how training decisions were taken in firms to explain the observed variety in training arrangements at the firm level (figure 1).

Figure 1 Model of enterprise training



Source: A Smith, Hayton et al. (1995).

The 'drivers' were factors that influenced firms' decisions to train in the first place. These factors were limited in number and applied across all industries. They were:

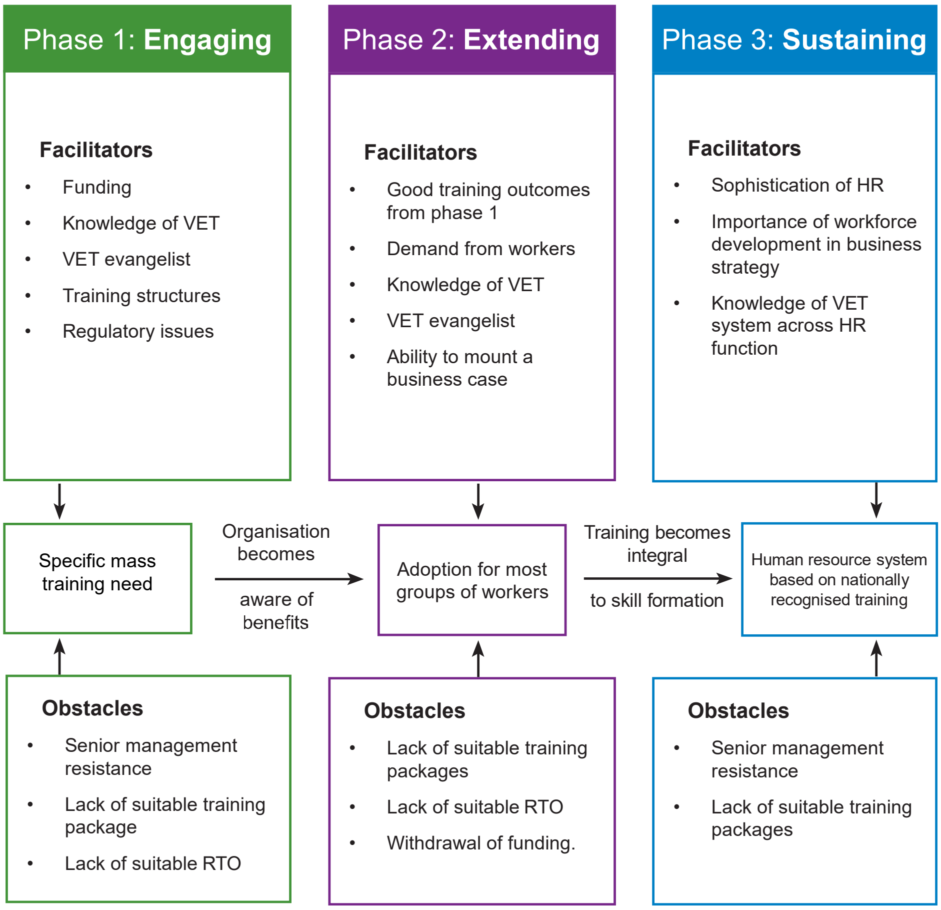
- implementation of workplace change
- new technology
- requirements of quality assurance processes.

However, the nature of the actual training arrangements in firms was determined by a more complex set of 'moderators', which were specific to individual firms and industry areas. Together, the interaction of training drivers and training moderators produced unique training arrangements at the level of the individual firm and accounted for the diversity of training observed in the research.

Nationally recognised training for existing workers

The research project undertaken by Erica Smith, Pickersgill et al. (2005) used a national survey of employers and 12 case studies in enterprises and examined the extent of provision of nationally recognised training in Australian enterprises and the factors that influenced them to provide this type of training. The research showed that for employers the benefits included the provision of a national quality benchmark for the skills of trained workers, while the attraction for workers was the provision of a qualification in tight labour market conditions. Some enterprises used the competency standards associated with the national qualifications internally for a number of human resource activities, including performance appraisals and recruitment. The project also found that the use of nationally recognised training tended to go hand in hand with an increase in training as a whole. The E Smith, Pickersgill et al. (2005) research charted a typical progression in the use of nationally recognised training in enterprises (figure 2).

Figure 2 Development of nationally recognised training in enterprises



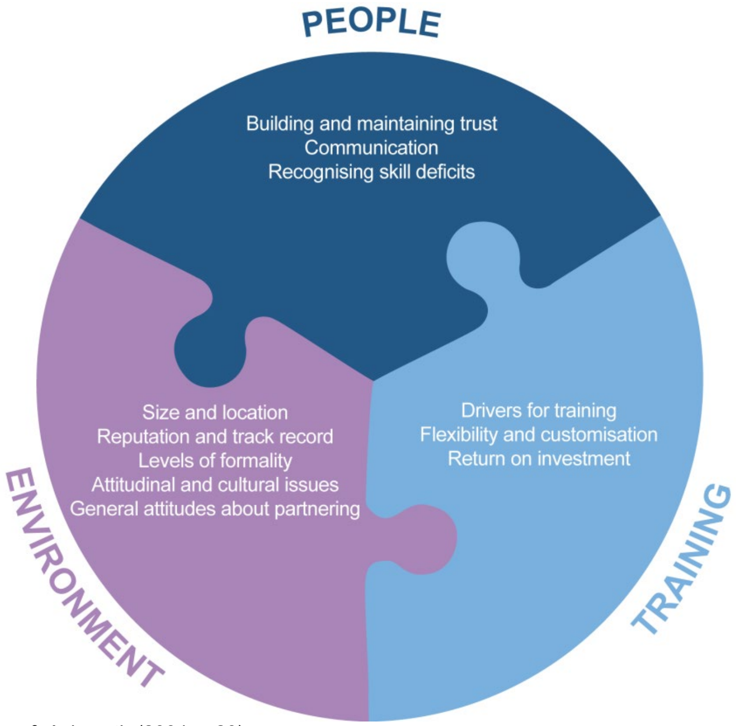
Source: E Smith, Pickersgill et al. (2005, p.50).

Enterprises often started by using nationally recognised training to meet a large-scale training need for a group of workers in the organisation, usually production workers, with the availability of government funding often playing a role in initial decisions to engage with nationally recognised training. Some organisations then progressed to an extension stage, in which they used nationally recognised training for training additional groups of workers. A small number of enterprises progressed to a final integration stage, where, not only did the enterprise use the training for multiple groups of workers, but it also built aspects of accredited training into its human resources and other systems.

Industry–RTO partnerships

Callan and Ashworth (2004) carried out a major empirical study on employer partnerships with RTOs, using survey and interview data. They found that training providers actively sought large partnerships, as these often generated substantial revenue over a number of years and had beneficial flow-on effects, such as building stronger links with industry and enhanced capabilities among their training staff, especially in relation to their entrepreneurial and commercial skills. However, it was also the case that most partnerships were quite small in financial terms. Employers appreciated partnerships because they freed them to focus on their core business and because they helped them to deal with key skills shortages. The project also identified some key barriers to partnering, mainly associated with issues of day-to-day management. The authors predicted that the number of partnerships would continue to increase. The key findings of the project are summarised in figure 3.

Figure 3 Partnerships: the optimum environment, training and people mix



Source: Callan & Ashworth (2004, p.20).

Key changes affecting employer training and partnerships with RTOs

There have been several key changes in the external environment and in the VET system over the past 20 years that might be expected to have affected employer training and the way in which employers interact with RTOs.

Major features of change in the external environment for Australian organisations include:

- *Changes in the structure of the economy*: global as well as local trends have affected the structure of the Australian economy and the nature of its workforce. The manufacturing sector has decreased its share of GDP, while the service sector has increased (Committee for Economic Development of Australia 2015), with 'health and social assistance' and retail now the first and second largest employing industries (Smith & Teicher 2016).
- *Changes in the Australian labour force*: Women's participation in the labour force has steadily increased, from 52% to 59% in 2012, while men's has remained fairly constant, at around 72% (ABS 2013). The proportion of part-time jobs in the economy has increased, from 24% in 1994 to nearly 30% in 2010, since which time it has levelled off. This is partly due to women's and students' participation in work — women being three times more likely to work part-time as men — and the structural changes noted above. The labour force has also become increasingly well educated (Committee for Economic Development of Australia 2015).
- *Technological change*: technological developments have affected all Australian industries in the past 20 years. These developments have ranged from digitisation of systems and communication, which affects all industries, to the early stages of profound changes, such as automation and robotics, in, for example, the

In light of the significant changes in the external environment for employers and in the training system, it was expected that the research would find altered priorities for employer training.

manufacturing, agricultural and medical sectors, or what is sometimes known as 'Industry 4.0' (Committee for Economic Development of Australia 2015).

- *Fluctuations in the economy*: the economic effects of the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) of the late-2000s, albeit minor compared with other countries, and the mining boom created disruptions to business operations and to labour flows in Australia. The 'two-speed' economy in Australia had impacts both during and after the mining boom, complicating the effects of the GFC (Perlich 2013). However, in other countries such as the United Kingdom the GFC has been shown to have had little effect on training in companies (Felstead & Jewson 2014).

At the same time as the changes detailed above were affecting employers in their decisions about training, there were also major changes in the ways by which Australian governments funded training. These have affected the provision of training, since (as shown in figure 2) funding has an important role in employers' decisions about training. The availability of funding is often used by RTOs in dialogue with employers.

From 2008 onwards, across Australia private RTOs were given access to the general stream of government VET funding, without caps in some jurisdictions, as a result of an agreement between the Commonwealth and state governments, which also mandated individual entitlement to funding. The result was an initial boom in VET enrolments, rapidly leading to overspending by state governments. A consequent funding contraction from 2012 onwards, and beginning in Victoria, was severe, particularly for qualifications in some industry areas, including the service sector (for example, Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood 2012; Guthrie et al. 2014; Smith & Teicher 2016). National consistency began to fragment and significant differences opened up between the various state-based VET systems in the country (Bowman & McKenna 2016). During this time, the numbers of participants in traineeships nationally fell precipitously, partly caused by the withdrawal of certain types of Commonwealth employment incentives (NCVER 2016).

There have been two major Australian Government funding schemes specifically for employer training during the past 10 years; the Productivity Places Program (Allen Consulting Group 2010), and the National Workforce Development Fund (NWDF).[2] The former program made 700 000 places available in 'priority areas' (IBSA/Industry Skills Councils 2010). The latter program, with $800 000 allocated over six years from 2011, required a co-contribution from employers and was managed through industry skills councils. In the first two years 30 000 people undertook training supported by the National Workforce Development Fund, completing qualifications or part-qualifications (skill sets). Such schemes have been developed internationally, although it has been claimed, based on European schemes (Müller & Behringer 2012), that subsidies act as 'deadweight', in that governments may only be paying firms to carry out training that firms would have provided in any case. But the provision of qualifications, it could be argued, engenders benefit beyond the individual company, as qualifications are transferable across the economy.

2 Subsequently re-branded as the Industry Skills Fund (ISF). In December 2016, the Australian Government announced the ISF would close to new applications from 31 December 2016.

Besides the funding changes, other changes have taken place in the Australian VET system, including reorganisation of most state/territory TAFE systems, changes to training packages, and the replacement of industry skill councils with skills service organisations. These changes were in process at the time of the research.

Summary

The literature provides a reasonably consistent story about employer training. Most employers provide training, and around one-quarter have some interaction with accredited training. However, the most common forms of training are non-accredited and informal training. Employers train for the following major reasons:

- to increase productivity and quality
- to respond to changes in their business environment
- to respond to regulatory requirements and changes in technology
- to increase their workers' commitment to the organisation.

Large companies tend to train more than smaller companies, and some industries have a stronger tradition of training than others. Financial and time constraints limit the training offered. Employers appreciate financial incentives for training, and the presence of training infrastructure and well-trained training staff in companies increases training. Nationally recognised training is seen to offer additional benefits to employers and to employees. Where such training is used, employers may enter into formal partnerships with RTOs; such partnerships involve considerable investment of time on both sides.

The three earlier projects all contributed to this literature and provided detailed evidence to help build the general picture outlined above. The current project was designed to present the current state of play and to identify changes that may have occurred. In the light of the significant changes in the external environment for employers and in the training system itself, it was expected that the research would find altered priorities, practices and experiences in employer training, and in the extent and nature of the partnerships between employers and RTOs.

Why and how employers train their workers

In this chapter, the overall results from the 2015 survey of employers are discussed, including an analysis by size of employer. The section concludes with a discussion of the variations between employers who were current users of nationally recognised training and those who were not. The overall findings from the survey can be found at appendix D and more detailed findings are provided in the support document.

Nature of the responding organisations

The employing organisations were of differing sizes, with the size distribution purposefully selected to match the survey administered in 2003 (Smith, E, Pickersgill et al. 2005). The distribution of employees was as follows:

- 29.2% (50): 1—49 employees ('micro')
- 10.5% (18): 50—99 employees ('small')
- 25.7% (44): 100—499 employees ('medium')
- 34.5% (59): 500 employees or more ('large').

Eleven of the large organisations had more than 3000 employees, with a small number employing in the tens of thousands. There was a good variety of firm structures, with just over one-third located at single sites, just over one-third having between two and nine sites, and one-quarter having 10 or more sites. Over two-thirds of employees across all organisations were permanent full-time, with a mean of 69.9% in this category, with 14.8% permanent part-time, 8.7% casual and 6.7% contractors. There was little difference in this distribution among organisations of different sizes. The distribution by industry aligns closely with the distribution of employment across the Australian economy in the 2011 census, as seen in table 1.

Table 1 Industry areas of survey respondents

	Industry area	Number	Per cent
1.	Primary (includes mining)	8	5.0
2.	Financial services	12	7.5
3.	Other services (includes hospitality)	16	10.0
4.	Communications & IT	8	5.0
5.	Transport and distribution	4	2.5
6.	Sales (wholesale and retail)	20	12.5
7.	Manufacturing	14	8.8
8.	Government/community/public utilities	33	20.6
9.	Construction and civil engineering	13	8.1
10.	Health	13	8.1
11.	Consultancy	5	3.1
12.	Education	14	8.8
	Total	160	100.0

Note: Industry categories originally devised from survey results in the earlier project (E Smith, Pickersgill et al. 2005). Category 8 appears large, but this consolidation of several sectors was used in the earlier project and was repeated for purposes of comparison.

In order to understand the environment in which the employers were operating, we asked a series of questions about their operations and the external environment over the past five years:

Nearly all of the responding organisations were affected by licensing or regulation.

- 47.9% of the organisations had expanded their operations, with 44.8% staying about the same.
- 49.4% had added new products or services, with 45.7% staying about the same.
- 37.8% had increased employee numbers, with 42.7% staying about the same.

Thus the vast majority of the companies were in a healthy state, either expanding or remaining about the same. While 19.5% of organisations reported a fall in employee numbers, some of this seemed to be simply a result of more efficient use of labour, especially among large companies.

Nearly all of the responding organisations (almost 90%) were affected by licensing or regulation, with large organisations (500+ employees) reporting a greater effect from these factors.

Table 2 shows the organisations' evaluation of the changes in technology, skill needs and the competitive environment over the previous five years. All factors had increased but the most rapid increase was in the competitive environment. Medium and large companies reported the greatest effects in all categories.

Table 2 Recent changes in operating environments, as reported by the employers (%)

	Use of technology in the industry	Skill needs of the industry	Skill needs of the organisation	Intensity of the competitive environment for the organisation
Increased rapidly	23.2	17.2	17.8	28.2
Increased steadily	62.2	57.1	60.7	45.4
Undergone no real change	14.0	24.5	20.2	24.5
Declined	0.6	1.2	1.2	1.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: This table reports on the answers to Q1.10, 1.11, 1.12 and 1.13 in appendix A.

Reasons for training

Respondents were provided with a list of 10 possible reasons for training and asked to evaluate each reason's importance for their organisation. Table 3 shows the reasons regarded as 'very important'.

Table 3 Relative importance of reasons for training: 'very important' reasons (%)

Proportion of respondents	
50 +	Quality
45–50	New technology; business strategy; licensing; workplace health and safety.
40–45	Non-licensing regulation; business/organisation change
30–40	Market pressures; skills not available on external labour market; demand from employees

Notes: 1. Table derived from Q2.3 in appendix A: In your business/organisation, how important are the following reasons for the training of your existing staff? (table D15, appendix D).
2. Within categories, factors are listed in descending order.

Most of the factors applied reasonably equally to companies of different sizes, with the following exceptions:

- Business strategy was more important in large employers (only 7% of the latter stated it was 'not important').
- Workplace health and safety were less important in driving training in micro and small employers.

Employers were then asked to select the *most important* reason for training. New technology and quality were equal first across all respondents, with 19.2% each, with new technology being selected more often by large companies (24%), and quality by small companies (35%).

Organisations' training structures and practices

Respondents were asked to self-evaluate whether they conducted the same amount of training as other similar organisations: one-third felt that they did more, one-half that they did about the same and only 16.6% saying they did less training. A greater proportion of large companies (43%) than the average thought they conducted more training. While 15.3% said that their provision of training had increased greatly over the past five years, 40.5% that it had increased somewhat, and 35% said it had remained about the same. Medium-sized companies were most likely to report a great increase in training and small employers were most likely to report only a moderate increase in training. Micro employers were most likely to report that they offered about the same amount of training as five years previously.

In terms of training structures, 50.6% had a dedicated training department or section, the likelihood, as might be expected, increasing with employer size. Most training departments were small, with 41.5% (of the 65 responding to this question) having five or fewer employees. However, over one-fifth (21.5%) had between 16 and 40 staff; but only 10% had more than 40 staff. The numbers of training staff in these latter departments were consistent with the size of the organisations.

Table 4 provides an overview of the training structures and evaluation processes in all of the organisations, not merely those with training departments. The responses are arranged in prevalence order, by the percentages of the respondents to each item.

Table 4 Employers' training structures and practices (5)

	Training structures	Processes to plan and evaluate training
Common	Workplace trainers/instructors 61.9	Evaluation of workers' satisfaction with training events 58.9
	Company training manuals 54.7	Formal development plans for staff 54.4
	Written training strategy 53.2	Evaluation of workers' learning outcomes 52.2
	Reimbursement of course fees 53.1	Evaluation of impact for the organisation 49.7
	Training manager 51.9	Training based on systematic needs analyses 47.5
	Training budget 51.6	
Less common	In-house online learning system 43.9	Evaluation of workers' changed behaviour after training 44.9
	Purchased online learning system 34.6	Training committee 28.3

Note: The table is derived from responses to Q2.6 in appendix A: Does you organisation have … [15 items provided]?

Responses to each item increased for each category of employer size. There was a fairly steady rate of increase up through the size categories, except in the following instances:

- Workplace instructors and formal development plans for staff were common for all except micro employers.
- Training committees were only common in medium and large employers.
- Evaluation of the impact of training for the business/organisations was almost as common in micro employers as for the other categories of employer size.

Medium-sized employers more frequently used nationally recognised training than large employers.

Respondents were asked what *type* of training they gave to their employees (either in-house or via another provider), from a provided list. In descending order, and with percentages which included those who stated 'some' or 'a great deal' (as opposed to 'none' or 'a little'), the responses varied only over 20 percentage points.

Table 5 Occurrence of training for various purposes

Mandatory training or training of necessity	Could be mandatory or 'optional'	'Optional' training
Induction training 67.1	Job-specific training 70.4	Supervisory training 54.3
OH&S training 66.4	Training in new technology 60.7	Management training 50.0
Training for licensing 59.6	Vendor training 51.3	

Note: The table is derived from responses to Q4.2 in appendix A: Which of the following types of training has you organisation provided to your employees since January 2014 (either yourselves or through an external provider)?

The table shows that, as might be expected, the respondents undertook more mandatory training than training that was to some extent optional. The prevalence of all types of training increased steadily through the employer size categories, with only one exception, which was training for licensing requirements.

Nationally recognised training

We now move on specifically to employers' use of nationally recognised training: 48.4% (n = 74) of employers had used this type of training for existing workers in the current and previous calendar year, and the proportion of employers in each size group that had used it were as follows:

- micro (1—49 employees): 32.6%
- small (50—99 employees): 37.5%
- medium (100—499 employees): 62.5%
- large (500+ employees): 54.0%.

It is interesting that medium-sized employers were more frequently users of nationally recognised training than large employers.

We asked all respondents about their sources of knowledge of nationally recognised training (whether they had recently used it or not). Just over one-fifth said they had no knowledge. The most common sources of knowledge (more than one answer was allowed) were:

- TAFE or other RTOs: 52.3%
- employer/industry association: 34.0%

Two-thirds said that their decision to use nationally recognised training was affected by the availability of government funding.

- Commonwealth Department of Education and Training: 26.8%
- state training authority or department: 21.6%
- group training organisation: 20.9%.

About 15% gained knowledge from industry skills councils and the various government websites (for example, <training.gov.au> or the Australian Apprenticeships site). Analysing by size (where numbers permitted), TAFE or other RTOs were more frequently the most useful source for micro and small employers, with large employers not far behind.

Three-quarters of those who used nationally recognised training said that this training was customised to the specific needs of their organisations, with 30.3% saying that it was customised to a great extent. An analysis by size suggested that larger companies were more likely to have their training customised to a great extent. Slightly over half of the users of nationally recognised training (51.3%) said that the total amount of training had increased since they had begun to use nationally recognised training. Just over half attributed this increase to the availability of nationally recognised training.

Two-thirds of the respondents who used nationally recognised training said that their decision to use such training was affected by the availability of government funding, with 36.8% saying it was very important and 31.6% 'of some importance' and only 13.2% reporting that it was of no importance. Larger companies were much more likely to say it was very important (51.9%).

Are there differences between employers who use nationally recognised training and those who do not?

In order to determine the differences between those employers who currently used nationally recognised training and those who did not, we undertook a cross-tabulation of a number of key questions against a question (Q4.7, appendix A) which asked whether the organisation had recently provided such training. The 153 respondents to this question were split almost 50—50; 74 had provided such training and 79 had not.

Users of nationally recognised training, compared with non-users, were more likely to:

- be organisations with multiple sites
- have a more diverse employment structure — a lower proportion of full-time permanent workers
- be affected by regulation or licensing
- have expanded their operations and employee numbers, and added new products or services
- be in industries where the use of technology and skill needs had increased rapidly.

There were also some clear differences in their answers about the training they offered. Users of nationally recognised training considered they trained more than similar organisations in their industry (47.8% as opposed to 22.8% among non-users) and were much more likely to say that the amount of training they offered to employees had increased *greatly* over the previous five years (28.4% as opposed to 3.8%). Table 6 indicates the key differences that emerged between users and non-users of nationally recognised training when employers were asked about the drivers of training.

Table 6 Training drivers: differences between users and non-users of nationally recognised training

Whether major or minor driver	Users of nationally recognised training more likely to report as being 'very important' (more than 5-percentage-point difference)	About the same percentage of 'very important' responses from users and non-users (within 5-percentage-point difference)
Major (over 45% of 'more likely' group stating 'very important')	- 'Other' (non-licensing) regulatory requirements - WH&S - Business strategy - Business/organisation change	- New technology - Licensing requirements - Quality
Minor (fewer than 45% stating 'very important')		- Market pressures - Demand from employees - Required skills not on the external labour market

Note: This table is derived from Q2.3 in appendix A: In your business how important are the following reasons for the training of your existing staff? (10 choices plus 'other' provided). Options were 'not important', 'of some importance' and 'very important'.

Interestingly, when respondents were asked to choose the *most important* driver, quality proved much more important for non-users of nationally recognised training than for users.

Recent users of nationally recognised training were much more likely to:

- have formal training structures
- plan and evaluate training
- purchase training from other sources, such as equipment suppliers and employer associations
- agree with the benefits of using external training
- provide informal training opportunities
- provide non-mandatory training activities such as induction and supervisory training.

Informal training

Informal training was an important part of overall training effort. For just over one-quarter (28.0%) of firms, informal training was very important (greater than formal training); and for just over half (54.8%), informal training was about half of the overall training effort. We wanted to find out what types of informal training were used. The list below indicates those forms of training (from a provided list) that were offered 'sometimes' or 'a great deal' (as opposed to 'none' or 'a little').

- supervision to ensure that employees were guided through their job role: 64.7%
- structured system for letting staff perform tasks that went beyond their strict job roles: 59.9%
- provided mentors or buddies: 59.4%
- structuring of work so that inexperienced people could progress to more complex activities: 58.3%
- opportunities for workers to spend time learning through watching others: 57.7%
- regular meetings (at least monthly) of groups of employees that incorporated learning: 53.2%

Most employers used a range of training providers, with TAFE and universities being least used.

- development activities for supervisors in how to train via informal training: 50.0%.

In terms of organisation size, each type of training was more commonly offered by large companies, with the number of types of training steadily increasing as the size of the employer increased, with some minor exceptions.

To gather a deeper understanding of informal training, we also asked respondents to nominate a specific job in the organisation and explain how informal training was used in that job. One hundred and twenty-four employers responded to both parts of that question. Table 7 provides the most common job roles and the methods of informal training utilised by each.

Table 7 Methods of informal training used for three commonly nominated job roles

Job	Methods of informal training
Administration	- Mentoring - Just trained by another staff member - Buddy system/observation and repeat - Promotional opportunities/acting in other capacities - Tutorial
Call centre operator	- Courses and in house - Trained by senior staff members - Initial six-week induction, on-the-job training and coaching, online modules and knowledge system - On-the-job training - Reading on Wikipedia - Seminar - Side-by-side coaching with a manager
Manual labourer	- On-the-job training - Books - Online - Site induction for hazards and industry 'white card', so they are informed of general expectations on different sites - Previous skills - Orientation

Notes: 1. The table provides selected responses to Q3.3. & 3.4 in appendix A: To help us find out more about informal training, please think about the most common job role in your organisation. What are the main methods of the informal training/learning (if any) that are used for people going into that job?

2. Job names varied somewhat, so generic titles were used; the very small number of responses that provided details of formal, not informal, training have been removed.

External provision of training

Before asking specifically about partnerships with RTOs (which are covered in a later chapter), we asked if employers purchased training from any of a range of outside sources.

Table 8 indicates that most employers were using a range of training providers, with TAFE and universities being least used. However, 28 employers, mostly micro employers, answered 'no' to all types of providers; that is, they did not purchase any external training. In interpreting the table it needs to be emphasised that this particular table does not assume that the training purchased is necessarily part of the formal VET system.

Table 8 Use of external training providers

	No		A little		Some		A great deal		N who purchased training from external providers	% of all respondents
	N	*%*	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*		
TAFE colleges	86	54.1	31	19.5	30	18.9	12	7.5	73	45.9
Universities	84	52.8	27	17.0	35	22.0	13	8.2	75	47.1
Private training providers	43	26.9	40	25.0	53	33.1	24	15.0	117	73.1
Equipment & product suppliers	59	36.9	35	21.9	43	26.9	23	14.4	101	63.1
Employer, industry or professional associations	62	38.8	31	19.4	42	26.3	25	15.6	98	61.2
Other			3	2.2	5	3.7	4	3.0	12	8.9

Note: The table provides the responses to Q2.7 in appendix A: Has your organisation purchased (using its own or government funds) training from any of the following external providers? Respondents were asked to include on-site and off-site training.

An analysis by employer size showed that the proportion of employers purchasing training increased steadily with employer size, except that large employers (500+ employees) purchased less from TAFE, from universities and from employer or professional associations than medium employers. Micro employers were most likely to use private RTOs and equipment and product suppliers.

The potential benefits of external training providers (from provided choices in Question 2.8) were clustered into two main groups, albeit with little difference between the frequencies:

- *Most commonly reported potential benefits*: opportunity for employees to have wider viewpoint, providers' content expertise and providers' training expertise (85% stated 'some benefit' or 'a great deal of benefit'). Of this group of reasons, gaining a wider viewpoint had more 'great deal of benefit' responses.
- *Commonly reported potential benefits*: availability of a range of qualifications, useful when only one or a few people require training, more resource-efficient than providing in-house (82%). Of this group of reasons, the availability of a range of qualifications had more 'great deal of benefit' responses.

The least-selected reason was 'opportunity for employees to have time away to think', but nevertheless 70% of all responding employers thought this was a benefit.

Satisfaction with providers

Respondents who used external training providers were asked whether they were satisfied with the training they purchased. Satisfaction with the providers was as follows:

- employer industry and professional associations: 83.6%
- universities: 82.0%
- equipment and product suppliers: 79.2%
- private training providers: 80.0%
- TAFE: 66.1%.

Sixty per cent of employers would have liked to have provided more training over the previous year than they did.

There is thus a large gap between satisfaction with most external sources of training and satisfaction with TAFE. Micro employers were more likely to be satisfied with TAFE (86.0%) and large employers were more likely to be satisfied with private training providers (87.1%)

We asked those who were dissatisfied to give reasons for their dissatisfaction. As some respondents had indicated multiple sources of dissatisfaction, it was not always possible to attribute their responses to a particular type of provider. Comments from respondents who indicated multiple issues of dissatisfaction included:

- 'Trainers have little work[ing] life experience so you only get what is in the manual.'
- 'I've yet to see a program that justifies the cost. No real standout yet, but still looking and researching.'
- 'Service.'
- 'Not qualified.'

Some respondents had indicated a single source of dissatisfaction but only TAFE had more than one unique comment, with the following comments recorded:

- 'The training provided by TAFE is often not of a high enough level'
- 'The teachers weren't of good quality, [and] weren't teaching the right thing'
- 'Not all the strategy could be achieved'.

Barriers to training

Sixty per cent of respondents said that they would have liked to have provided more training over the previous 12 months than they did. They were asked to evaluate the applicability of a range of suggested reasons for not providing more training (see table D46 in appendix D). When asked to select the *one* most important reason, the following emerged as the top three:

- Financial constraints: 38.0%
- Employees are generally too busy to be trained: 19.0%
- Managers do not have time to organise training: 13.9%.

The numbers were too small to draw firm conclusions about variations by employer size, except for a very clear finding that large and medium employers were more likely (41.9% and 55.6%) to cite lack of funds than smaller employers.

Summary

The survey findings confirm much of the existing literature on employer training, with the key points of confirmation and difference described below

The survey findings on the amount of training are roughly in line with existing data (NCVER 2103; Cully 2005), while the identified drivers for training are in line with the literature — external factors, including competitive business environment, performance and regulatory requirements — but quality emerged as clearly the most important driver, which is not highlighted in much of the literature.

Both formal and informal training increased with employer size, consistent with the literature, on almost all indicators. Training infrastructure also increased with employer size, although evaluation of training impact was similar across all sizes of employer. In informal training, ‘affordances’ (Billett 2001a) such as structuring work activities to facilitate learning or allowing staff to attempt tasks not within their job roles were as common as more conventional methods such as mentors or buddies. The qualitative responses on informal training mentioned methods beyond those commonly mentioned in the literature, such as ‘observation and repeat’ and ‘creation of teams inclusive of a range of experience and subject expertise’.

Nationally recognised training was used by almost half of the employers, with larger employers using it more than smaller employers.

Between half and three-quarters of employers purchased training from at least one type of external provider, with a greater proportion using non-specialist training providers (suppliers, industry associations) than specialist training providers. Satisfaction with external providers was very high — 80% or more — but less so for TAFE, at 66%.

Nationally recognised training was used by almost half of the employers, with larger employers using it more than smaller, although medium-sized employers were the biggest users. Employers who used nationally recognised training tended to be more diverse, to be in an environment of change and to operate on multiple sites. They also exhibited a greater training culture on a range of indicators. Funding for training was viewed as important, particularly by larger employers. Most employers found out information about nationally recognised training through TAFE and other RTOs, employer associations and government departments, with TAFE and other RTOs being most common among smaller employers.

The barriers for training were in line with the literature: financial constraints and scarce time resources for trainers and trainees alike.

Partnerships and relationships

This chapter explores the nature of the partnerships and relationships between RTOs and employers. The factors that create and sustain partnerships between RTOs and industry are examined using findings drawn from the RTO survey, selected sections of the employer survey on partnerships/relationships with training providers, and the paired RTO—industry partnership interviews.

RTO survey findings

Responses to the RTO survey were received from 107 RTOs: 20 TAFE institutes (a response rate of approximately 40%), 55 for-profit RTOs and 32 non-profit private RTOs. The overall findings from the survey can be found at appendix E and more detailed findings are provided in the support document. Appendix F provides some additional background tables.

The respondents were people who had set up and/or managed partnerships, and two-thirds described themselves as a senior manager. All states and territories were represented in the responses. About half of the respondents were from metropolitan-based RTOs, with a higher proportion of the for-profit RTOs being metropolitan-based than the TAFE institutes and non-profit RTOs.

The nature of partnerships – an RTO perspective

The size of the enterprises with which the TAFE institutes and the private RTOs partnered differed. TAFE institutes reported a fairly even mix of small, medium and large partners. But most private RTOs (65%) had partnerships mainly with small (up to 20 employees) or medium-size enterprises (21—200 employees). Only 5 of the RTOs (TAFE = 1, private RTOs = 4) said that they mainly partnered with large organisations (over 200 employees).

TAFE institutes tended to have partnerships outside as well as within their local region, with 80% involved in partnerships in other parts of their state and 60% in partnerships in other jurisdictions. But fewer than half of the private RTOs reported partnerships in other parts of their state or in other states.

Most of the RTOs' partnerships were fee-for-service (40%) and provision of government-subsidised training (29%). A smaller proportion was financed through mutual-service partnerships (15%) and joint ventures (9%). The variation across RTOs was extensive, with some RTOs identifying that their partnerships were either all fee-for-service, mutual-service partnerships or provision of government-subsidised training, but there was no particular differentiation between TAFE and non-TAFE RTOs.

Attitudes to partnerships

The vast majority of RTOs believed that they had a highly successful track record in partnering with industry (86%), especially in niche markets (89%); that their track record was partly what attracted industry to partner with them (86%); and that their organisational structure (79%) and culture (92%) were assets when partnering with industry (see appendix F, table F3 for further details).

All the TAFEs and 70% of the private RTOs believed there was strong support within their organisation for seeking industry partnerships, with the majority of RTOs indicating they aimed to increase the levels of profitable training partnerships (79%); that there was strong internal support for seeking profitable/high-profile training partnerships (76%); and that they had a clear strategy for building industry partnerships (72%). This focus by the majority of RTOs on profitability and partnership-building comes as no surprise, given that over 90% of the RTOs believed they were operating in a highly competitive training market.

The vast majority of TAFE institutes believed they had locational advantages (85%), while acknowledging they were still developing a track record in partnering (85%). In contrast, fewer than half of the private RTOs believed their location was a competitive advantage (42%). Similarly, the majority of TAFE institutes were operating as almost the only provider of certain types of industry training (60%); however, fewer than half of the private RTOs (for-profit 47% and non-profit 38%) believed they had a niche market advantage in this way.

Partnership drivers

Survey respondents were provided with a list of possible reasons for being involved in partnerships. For the private RTOs, the levels of agreement were lower than for TAFE, suggesting that there was a narrower range of drivers for each of these RTOs.

Table 9 Drivers for RTO involvement in industry partnerships

Per cent who agreed	TAFE	For-profit	Non-profit	All RTOs
To maintain relevance/alignment with industry needs/requirements	100.0	91.1	86.2	91.3
To keep up to date with industry needs/requirements	100.0	86.7	86.2	89.1
Industries/employers have requested that we assist them	94.4	77.7	82.8	82.6
To bring in additional revenue	100.0	77.7	65.5	78.3
To give staff stronger links with industry	88.9	75.5	75.9	78.3
To build extra capability within our staff	94.4	68.8	69.0	73.9
To find future employers for our students	88.9	55.5	69.0	66.3
If we did not get involved in the partnering, another organisation would have taken the opportunity	83.3	45.4	51.7	54.9

Notes: 1. Q11 in appendix B: What are the main drivers for your organisation's involvement in industry/employer partnerships?
2. Agreed: rated 4, 5 or 6 on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree).

A range of 'other' reasons for partnering were identified by the RTOs. These fell into the three main categories of 'growing the RTO/competitive edge', 'community and industry service' and 'training quality'. Examples by category are provided in table 10.

The benefits of partnerships identified by RTOs were both financial and non-financial.

Table 10 RTO 'other' reasons for partnering with industry

Growing RTO/competitive edge	Community/industry service	Training quality
• To gain access to state of the art equipment. Maintain our presence within the market force • To develop our reputation within industry as a valuable training partner that adds real value to industry's profitability • To increase customer loyalty and longevity • Provides professional development opportunities.	• To assist the community • To provide training for the rural and remote agricultural industries where access is extremely limited and no other opportunities for training services are offered • To support the economic development of this state and Australia overall • To assist the industry to maintain a pool of qualified staff for seasonal work.	• To keep our industry partners up to date with standards/WHS requirements • To deliver industry-relevant educational outcomes • Collaboration to influence design of new training and curriculum • To support employers to realise efficiencies and improvements through high-quality, well-designed training solutions.

Three-quarters of the RTOs indicated a desire to secure more partnerships, with fee-for-service partnerships being those most sought.

Characteristics of successful partnerships

A wide range of successful training partnerships[3] was identified by the RTOs, including pre-employment training, various employee training activities, licensing training, placement opportunities, group training and upskilling.

Examples of successful industry partnerships

What is the partnership about?	How did it come about?	What benefits does it bring to your RTO?	What benefits does it bring to the industry partner?
TAFE institute			
As always, meeting the training requirements of an employer aligned to their work environment and ensuring that they meet their statutory, compliance and WHS obligations	Employer dissatisfied with training outcomes from attendance at a campus	Access to equipment donations, premium client to assist with positioning in the marketplace, currency of teachers, increased number of apprentices, first option to any fee-for-service training	Training completely contextualised to the practices and equipment used in their workplace; less time away from the workplace; improved productivity; greater value for their training dollar by leveraging off government funding sources
For-profit RTO			
Training the whole workforce in safety	Approached by industry/employer	Ongoing/annual training provided and the company uses us for other training also	The learnings from this partnership also impact on the content of other training programs delivered to industry; content targets current needs/issues
Non-profit RTO			
To deliver timely and relevant training where gaps exist.	By direct approach to industry where partnership funding arose.	Keeping up to date with industry needs.	A better skilled and job-ready workforce.

These partnerships seemed to have evolved through a variety of means including: third party referral, professional and personal relationships/networks, direct contact by the

3 A number of exemplars of successful partnerships are provided in appendix F (table F5). The partnerships included were chosen to illustrate the diversity of the successful partnerships and their associated benefits to the RTO and the industry partner.

employer, RTO-initiated, through RTO reputation and building trust with industry, and formal tendering.

TAFE institutes were less satisfied than private RTOs with their partnership performance.

Most RTOs identified a number of benefits from partnerships, both financial and non-financial.

- The financial benefits included increased revenue, revenue stabilisation, repeat business, and associated indirect financial benefits such as reputation, credibility, brand recognition and awareness, all of which could be leveraged to attract other partners.
- The non-financial benefits tended to focus on RTO staff development, such as exposure to industry, industry experience and partnership management experience, access to equipment, student placement opportunities and job outcomes for graduates.

In addition to meeting workforce needs through training, the RTOs perceived a diversity of benefits to their partners. The benefits of the various partnerships included qualifications for staff, meeting compliance/licensing/registration requirements, being an employer of choice through investing in staff training, customised training and a customer-focused service. In addition, from a company/organisational perspective, the benefits included enhanced performance, productivity and profitability — value-adding for the organisation and for staff retention.

There were no obvious differences in the nature and benefits described for the successful partnerships between the different types of RTOs. However, there were considerable differences in the revenue reported. Of the TAFE institutes that responded, four reported revenue under $200 000 and two reported revenue over $1 million. Interestingly, of the for-profit RTOs who responded (n = 21), seven reported zero revenue or negligible profits for their successful partnerships. Of the remaining 14 for-profit RTOs, revenues varied from less than $10 000 to $300 000.

Partnership performance – an RTO view

Respondents were asked about their satisfaction with their own RTO's performance in aspects of partnering. The 17 items covered broad areas of relationship management, training delivery matters, financial returns and management, and flexibility. The RTOs were satisfied, on the whole, with their own performance in partnering, with 75% satisfied (scoring 4 or above on a scale of 1 to 6) with their own performance on all items except one. The one item where RTOs were less satisfied with their own performance was the level of financial returns.

However, TAFE institutes were less satisfied than private RTOs with their performance in a number of areas. They showed awareness of problem areas in their organisations as follows:

- *Satisfaction between 60 and 70%*: openness to experimentation (66.7%) and willingness to make changes to off-the-job training (66.7%); application of financial (66.7%) and non-financial (61.1%) measures to determine the success of the partnership.
- *Satisfaction less than 50%*: levels of flexibility with staffing arrangements (44.4% satisfaction) and administrative arrangements for managing partnerships (33.3%).

RTOs used a range of criteria to evaluate partnerships.

Non-TAFE RTOs were happy with their performance in these areas, particularly those relating to flexibility. However, TAFE respondents were more satisfied (72.2%), as were non-profit private RTOs (75%), with financial returns than were the for-profit private RTOs (65.9%)

In an open question RTOs were asked about the features of their organisations they considered made it attractive for industry to partner with them. The features most commonly identified by the RTOs (n = 82) were responsiveness, flexibility and adaptability (n = 43), reliability and quality of training (n = 27), and staff expertise and industry experience/relevance (n = 18).

They were also asked about areas for improvement. Six TAFE institutes identified flexibility as the key area, with flexible working arrangements and learning options particularly identified. The for-profit RTOs commonly identified marketing and communication as in need of improvement. For the non-profit RTOs, developing opportunities was a common theme, either by offering a wider range of training, better marketing or, as one respondent explained, 'adopting a more commercial mentality'.

Perceptions of industry partner's performance

In a series of questions which mirrored RTOs' satisfaction with their own performance, they were asked about their industry partners' performance in aspects of partnering. Overall, the RTOs were satisfied with their industry partners' performance (see appendix F, table F7), with 75% of all RTOs satisfied on all items. Interestingly, TAFE institutes were less satisfied than the average with the flexibility of their partners, especially with staffing arrangements and the level of partnership planning (both at 71%).

Factors affecting performance

TAFE institutes and private RTOs differed in the evaluation of the effectiveness of their organisational cultures in supporting partnerships (see appendix F, table F8). While the vast majority of the private RTOs agreed they had organisational cultures that supported partnerships (all items above 79%), the responses from the TAFE institutes revealed lower levels of agreement on all items. Although the majority of the TAFE institutes agreed that staff were comfortable sharing new ideas (83%) and that new ideas were welcomed by staff (72%), only a small minority (22%) believed that they communicated the learnings from partnerships well to staff. The TAFE institutes were also less likely to report an environment that was open to constructive feedback (61%) and where open discussion occurred about mistakes (50%).

RTOs used a range of criteria to evaluate partnerships. These included client and student satisfaction, judged by feedback and by repeat business; and training outcomes, such as enrolments, retention, completions and workforce development. Financial outcomes were also mentioned by the majority of the TAFE institutes, approximately a quarter of the for-profit RTOs and by some not for-profit RTOs. About half of all the RTO respondents had been involved in ending an industry partnership (n = 45). Just over half of these RTOs (n = 26) provided explanations, mentioning issues with the ex-partner around compliance, quality, lack of trust and poor communication.

RTOs were asked to rate their staff's effectiveness in tasks associated with industry partnering (see table 11). Three-quarters or more of for-profit RTOs said that their staff were effective in each of these aspects of partnering. TAFE institutes were less confident about their staff's effectiveness. Non-profit RTOs showed a higher level of confidence than for-profit RTOs in personal relationships and negotiation skills. Legal and contractual matters were acknowledged as weaker areas for all categories of RTO, especially for TAFE.

Table 11 RTOs' perceptions of staff effectiveness in industry partnering

Per cent agreeing that their own staff are effective in	TAFE	For-profit	Non-profit	All RTOs
Building personal relationships with the industry partner	100.0	95.6	100.0	97.7
Showing real interest in partners' proposals and concerns	94.4	100.0	91.3	96.5
Employer liaison	94.4	97.8	87.0	94.2
Doing training needs analyses	88.9	97.7	82.6	91.8
Setting shared goals with the industry partner	88.9	93.3	87.0	90.7
Negotiation skills	83.3	84.4	91.3	86.0
Identifying and managing risk in the partnership	77.8	88.6	82.6	84.7
Providing information and regular feedback to the organisation about the performance of partnerships that they manage	72.2	90.9	82.6	84.7
Winning the job	72.2	88.9	82.6	83.7
Marketing what we can do	66.7	86.7	78.3	80.2
Project management	66.7	79.5	78.3	76.5
Legal and contractual arrangements	44.4	77.8	69.6	68.6

Notes: 1. Q25 in appendix B: Please show how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Think about those staff who do industry partnering and the following aspects.
2. Agree: rated 4, 5 or 6 on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree).

While RTOs were able to identify many strengths in their staff, they also identified some staff development needs. These included financial, project management, marketing, negotiation and communication skills, and industry/VET knowledge. For the TAFE institutes the focus tended to be on improving commercial skills and in particular delivering training within a budget, business intelligence, project management and financial accountability. For-profit RTOs were more likely to identify a need for developing the marketing and negotiation skills of staff with the aim of growing business.

Government funding for partnerships

The final section of the RTO survey explored the importance of government funding for partnerships with industry and the impacts of changes to Commonwealth and state/territory funding on the amount and nature of training.

Government funding was identified as important or very important for partnerships with industry by three-quarters of all RTOs (n = 87). But there was significant variation across RTO types in the proportion of respondents who said it was very important, with nearly two-thirds of TAFE institutes (61%) and half of the non-profit RTOs identifying government funding as very important, compared with only a third of for-profit RTOs. Government funding for industry partnerships was identified as important to some extent (i.e. 'important' or 'very important') by all the TAFE institutes except one, compared with only just over half of for-profit RTOs (55%). Funding sources used for their partnerships included: user choice, traineeship funding, Victorian Training Guarantee, certificate III guarantee, Smart and Skilled (NSW) and User Choice (Queensland), as well as a range of specific programs (for example, WorkReady funding; language, literacy and numeracy funding; Jobs First; and motor vehicle transformation training). RTOs also mentioned other sources of non-VET government funding such as Centrelink and Indigenous Advancement

For RTOs the impacts of state funding changes were complex and burdensome.

Strategy funding. Some mentioned specific industry funding, such as Construction Skills Queensland and the Tasmanian Seafood Pledge.

Two-thirds (67%) of TAFEs and non-profit RTOs (67%) reported that Commonwealth funding changes had made an impact on their training activity. However, fewer than half (48%) of for-profit RTOs reported an impact. For those RTOs that stated that funding changes had made an impact, two-thirds said that Commonwealth funding changes had resulted in employers accessing less training from RTOs, with TAFE institutes and non-profit RTOs affected most. A small proportion (10%) of the RTOs said that employers were accessing more training from RTOs as a result of the changes.

TAFE institutes were affected slightly more by state/territory changes (78%) than by Commonwealth changes (66.7%) in their partnership arrangements with industry. Non-profit RTOs were less affected by state funding changes than by Commonwealth changes, while for-profit RTOS were equally affected (in total) by changes associated with each source of funding. The impacts of state changes were complex and burdensome, as highlighted by the examples of responses provided in table 12.

Table 12 'Other' impacts due to state/territory funding changes

- There is a mixture of results depending on the individual partner.
- Drop in funding has made the delivery of courses to the workplace financially unviable. With the course fee being increased, employers will not commit if they are not earning from it.
- Funding eligibility is seen as a complication, not a support mechanism for employers and stakeholders within the industry. In addition, complexities [are created by] funding change per state whereas industry is located nationally.
- In NSW funding is assigned to individuals as an 'entitlement'. [It is] complicated to reassign entitlement to employers or even to get them to become third party fee payers without some form of entitlement waiver.
- Employers won't take on a trainee unless the training is subsidised by WorkReady.
- State funding in most cases is a subsidy to the RTO only, and some employers are resistant to higher contributions.
- Low levels of funding based on completed units, and cumbersome administrative and reporting requirements make it almost impossible for a small RTO to do this and be financially viable. Add to this, a constant lack of engagement by learners and you see RTOs losing money rather than making a profit. Many RTOs are withdrawing from traineeships, which is something we are about to do.
- Changes to state funding have impacted on the mandated course fees.

An employer perspective on training providers

We now move on to the employer perspective. Just over 45% of the employers (45.1%) reported that they had an arrangement with an external RTO to provide nationally recognised training. Of these employers, 19% had formal partnerships with TAFE institutes and 14.4% with other RTOs. Slightly smaller numbers reported informal but ongoing partnerships and 20.3% of employers had ad hoc arrangements with RTOs. Ad hoc arrangements were the most common form of partnership arrangement with RTOs.

One hundred and twenty-six employers reported on the nature of training delivery in these arrangements. They were asked to select one choice from a provided list of modes of training. The responses were as follows:

- mostly at the RTO: 34.9%
- about half and half: 31.7%
- mostly on-site at the employer's premises delivered by the RTO: 17.5%
- mostly on-site delivered by 'our' (the employer's) trainers and moderated by the RTO: 15.9%.

In other words, around two-thirds of the employers sent employees to training at the RTO for some or all of their training, and around one-third received most or all of the training for their workers at their own premises. Large, medium and small employers were somewhat more likely to have training at their own premises, and micro employers were much more likely to have RTO-based training.

Large employers were much more likely to report satisfaction with RTOs than smaller employers.

Employers were on the whole satisfied with the training they received from their partner RTOs. While over 69% of employers were satisfied with the items relating to training delivery, detailed in table 13, the mean levels of satisfaction with these various items were not particularly high.

Table 13 Employer satisfaction with training delivery

	Mean satisfaction
Skill of the trainer delivering the qualification/skill set	4.19
Quality of feedback provided to the learner	4.17
Quality of resources provided	4.16
Efficient use of learning technologies	4.10
Qualification/skill set was assessed at the appropriate level	4.09
Currency of resources provided	4.10
Volume of learning received	4.02

Notes: 1. Q5.6 in appendix A: [Thinking about the training provider with which you have done most of your training business] please rate them on the following items regarding your satisfaction with the quality of their training.
2. Satisfied: rated 4, 5 or 6 on a scale of 1 (highly dissatisfied) to 6 (highly satisfied).

By employer size, the data show very clearly that satisfaction increased with the size of the employer on all items.

Satisfaction with providers

Employer satisfaction with the training provider with whom they did most of their business was quite high, with overall satisfaction at 67% or above for nearly all items detailed in table 14. The only items scoring lower than this were: the RTO’s openness to experimentation (60.5%) and the RTO’s willingness to make changes to the nature of the off-the-job training (63.3%).

Employers were less likely to report satisfaction with their training providers than RTOs were to report self-satisfaction with performance.

Table 14 Employer satisfaction with training provider performance (%)

Partnership ‘process’ items: satisfied	Partnership ‘operational’ items: satisfied
- Quality of RTO’s communication with us: 73.4	- RTO’s willingness to customise training to meet our needs: 72.2
- Commitment shown by RTO’s staff to make the partnership a success: 72.1	- RTO’s flexibility in providing different delivery modes for the training: 71.3
- The RTO’s willingness to adopt a long-term perspective in judging the success of the partnership: 71.8	- RTO’s willingness to make changes to the nature of the on-the-job training that they deliver: 69.7
- RTO’s ability to establish trust: 70.6	- RTO’s flexibility with staffing arrangements: 68.8
- RTO’s level of planning within the partnership: 70.4	- RTO’s success in customising the training: 67.5
- The administrative arrangements the RTO puts in place to manage the day-to-day issues arising in the partnership: 69.1.	- RTO’s willingness to make changes to the nature of the off-the-job training: 63.3
	- RTO’s openness to experimentation: 60.5.

Notes: 1. Q5.5 in appendix A: [Thinking about the training provider with which you have done most of your training business] please rate … your level of satisfaction with the performance of your training provider partner in the following aspects.
2. Satisfied: rated 4, 5 or 6 on a scale of 1 (highly dissatisfied) to 6 (highly satisfied).

Large employers were much more likely to report satisfaction than smaller employers, with differences of 20 percentage points or more compared with micro employers for some items: quality of communication with the employers, commitment of RTO’s staff to making the partnership a success, willingness to customise training, flexibility in modes of delivery, and the RTO’s level of planning within the partnership.

Employers were less likely to report satisfaction with their training provider’s partnering performance than RTOs were to report satisfaction with their performance; that is, employer satisfaction was lower by comparison with RTO self-satisfaction for all items in table 14. In particular, comparing Table 14 above (employer satisfaction with RTO performance) and Table F6 in the appendix (RTO satisfaction with their own performance) employer satisfaction was over 20 percentage points lower than RTO-reported self-satisfaction for six of the 13 items.[4] Interestingly, the TAFE institutes’ levels of self-satisfaction across the items more closely reflected the levels of employer satisfaction than did the private RTOs.

Partnerships in action

This phase of the project comprised ‘matched-pair’ interviews with employers and the RTOs with which they partnered. Nine paired interviews were undertaken with the main players in each of the employer—RTO partnerships. The interview questions are reproduced at appendix C and it will be seen that many of the same questions were asked of both parties. The support document provides a detailed overview of the findings.

Nature of the partnerships

A range of industry areas, locations and type of provider were investigated. In all cases, one qualification or skill set formed the main purpose of the partnership, and these, together with the main methods of delivery for each, and the main training driver are

3 Items where employer satisfaction was over 20 percentage points lower than RTO-reported self-satisfaction: RTO ability to establish trust, RTO willingness to customise training, RTO success in customising training, RTO staff commitment to partnership success, RTO openness to experimentation and RTO willingness to make changes to off-the-job training.

detailed in table 15. All of the interviews were with RTOs who were either the sole provider or the most important provider for the respective employers.

The establishment processes varied, including:

- revival of a previous partnership (two)
- employer's dissatisfaction with a previous partnership (two)
- a formal tender for a panel of trainers
- discussions about one apprentice led to the whole program being developed
- small provision of training that grew (two: one grew because of the availability of more state government funding).

Some employers had exclusive arrangements with their partnering RTO (for example, number 5), while others preferred to 'spread the risk' around several RTOs (for example, number 1).

Table 15 The nine partnerships

	Employer industry area	Main qualifications/skill sets	Delivery model	Drivers
1	Pulp and paper manufacturing	Emergency response training (skill set)	Face to face mainly in workplace but also at TAFE	Licensing requirements; previous provider was not specific enough, and too expensive
2	Agricultural services	Cert. IV in Agriculture	Three week-long workshops at TAFE & self-directed learning materials	Combining a broad knowledge of the agricultural business with company-specific procedures
3	Expedition support (Trades)	Units of competency containing licence	At TAFE or employer (block delivery)	Just-in-time training in specific skill sets for tradespeople going on Antarctic expeditions
4	Design and engineering production	Engineering apprenticeships in three trades	Primarily on TAFE premises; previously on site	Shift apprenticeship towards more off-the-job training, to access more variety of machines
5	Pathology labs – public system	Cert. IV and diploma from Lab Operations Training Package	Workplace-based with learning materials	A greater depth of knowledge, and a development pathway into a diploma and higher-level work
6	Home and community care	Cert. III Home and Community Care	On premises and 'homework'	Rising accreditation requirements in the industry, and qualify workers prior to a takeover
7	Hospitality chain	Cert. II Commercial Cookery and Patisserie	Workplace-based learning and at RTO	Wish to provide broad training for workers and to meet identified weaknesses
8	Wine production	Cert. II & III Wine Industry Operations	Face to face at RTO; classroom sessions at workplace	Developing a training culture, particularly around food safety and WH&S
9	Scientific research.	Dangerous Goods by Air certificate (CASA).	On site, face to face; online for a refresher course.	An accreditation requirement (CASA).

In some cases, partnerships were restricted to the delivery of single qualifications or skill sets to a defined group of employees, and in others the partnership had extended beyond the delivery of single qualifications to the provision of other nationally recognised training or to other non-accredited training.

Government funding was not a feature of all of the partnerships. In the cases where some or all of the training was for specific activities or licensing was involved (for example, number 2), the arrangements were purely commercial (fee-for-service). In general, employers accessed some government funding but also purchased fee-for-service training.

The RTOs operated as experts in the training system for their partner employers.

Standard 'traditional apprenticeship' funding formed part of the partnerships in 1, 4 and 7.

The seven partnerships for which government funding was a factor can be divided into those based on traineeships or apprenticeships and those based on other funding arrangements. The traineeship programs had been particularly affected by the progressive withdrawal of traineeship funding at both state and Commonwealth levels. The impact of funding cuts or the introduction of new funding systems was mentioned in two states. Funding cuts not only affected the employers and their purchase of training, but RTOs also reported that their own viability and staffing levels had been adversely affected (for example, the RTOs in partnerships 5 and 8).

Benefits of partnerships

The nine partnerships showed recurring themes in terms of the benefits to RTOs:

- *Realising financial benefits from their partnerships*: in most cases however the financial value of the partnership was not in fact very great.
- *Developing the skills of their teachers and trainers*: the teachers were able to enhance their industry currency and learn about various aspects of the business; the experience of customising training allowed the RTOs to change traditional staff attitudes towards training delivery.
- *Enhancing the reputation of the RTOs*: partnerships with large and well-known businesses (four of which were multi-site employers) raised the profile of the RTO in the industry and enabled the RTO to attract other business partnerships and claim expertise in an area of training delivery.

There were also several benefits for employers:

- the opportunity to upskill and develop their employees, sometimes beyond training that was strictly necessary
- development for trainers and managers
- the provision of flexible and customised training
- the capacity to rely and depend on the RTOs to deliver training that addressed the needs of the business, because of longevity, mutual trust and respect
- the expertise developed by the RTO staff over a period of time
- the RTO acting as a navigator for the company around the VET system, providing advice and alerting the company to possibilities for government funding.

Success factors for partnerships

The interviews highlighted a number of factors typifying successful RTO—employer partnerships. Some of the factors were specific to the delivery of training, while many characterised successful business relationships more generally.

Partnership success factors

Values alignment: the RTO and the employer shared a set of values, which enabled the parties to communicate well and understand each other's expectations.

Trust: trust was typically built up over a long period of time and was particularly a characteristic of long-term partnerships.

Personal connections: the establishment of trust in the partnership was often the result of the personal connections between the key players in the partnership.

Communication: a key element in many of the cases was regular communication between the RTO and the employer. This communication did not generally need to be formalised (but occasionally was).

Single point of contact: it was critical that there were clear channels of communication between the two players and that, preferably, a single major point of contact was established by each partner.

Flexibility: this referred to the willingness of the RTO to alter delivery methods and to customise content to suit the specific needs of the employer.

Understanding of business needs: RTO staff knew about the employer's industry and wanted to learn more about the business. Improving understanding of the business was also considered by many RTOs to be an invaluable source of development for training staff at the RTO.

Government funding: funding facilitated partnerships in the initial stages. However, it seemed to become less important over time. In many cases, for example, partnerships 5 and 6, this was a necessity, as funding had been reduced. Generally, employers affected by funding reductions tried to maintain the partnership through self-funding, but sometimes this proved difficult (for example, 6).

Partnership challenges

The challenges to partnerships identified by employers varied considerably across the partnerships. All employers identified at least one challenge, with the exception of one partnership (2), where no challenges were identified by either partner. The timing and scheduling of training was a challenge for both providers and employers, in particular, finding a suitable day and/or time for training (5, 9), ensuring staff were available to attend training (8), minimising disruption to work schedules, and meeting deadlines for training/minimising training days (3).

TAFE institutes faced considerable challenges around staff flexibility, compliance and meeting their partners' training requirements. One TAFE identified that its partnerships

The partnerships and relationships between RTOs and employers were complex and diverse.

required flexibility and this had required a culture shift within the organisation. The challenge lay in balancing being a government provider, with its attendant industrial relations limitations, while providing training for an employer who had demands in terms of training needs, delivery site, delivery times and short timeframes.

Organisational culture was also identified as an issue from an employer perspective. Two of the employers specifically identified the reluctance in their organisations to recognise the value of training (4) and the need for change (1). Another employer (8) had faced resistance from employees to embracing training and assessment as part of their roles, whereas for other employers a training culture was already embedded in their organisations.

One employer (1) suggested the challenge was to not become too reliant on a single provider even if the relationship was good, 'because then you end up over a barrel'. This challenge had become a reality for another employer (7), whose preferred provider, a small private RTO, had grown over the time of the partnership and was no longer as flexible as in the past.

Other challenges revolved around communication between the partners. In particular, two providers identified the challenge of ensuring the employer kept them updated regarding changes in company policies and procedures (1) and about the recruitment of new trainees (5).

For these relatively successful ongoing partnerships, it is not surprising that only limited challenges were identified. However, in the case of a partnership (1) that had been recently revived, the initial challenges of building a partnership were clearly evident. Reviving an earlier partnership that had broken down required a rebuilding of trust between the two organisations. The effort required to develop a good relationship in this instance was evident and provides an insight into the work required to develop and maintain long-term partnerships.

Evaluation of the partnership

Generally, the partnerships were viewed as successful. However, the extent of evaluation of the partnerships varied considerably. Generally, the continuation of each of the partnerships was identified as an indicator of success. Informal types of evaluation, in various combinations, were frequently reported by both the RTOs and the enterprises. These included informal feedback from participants to the enterprise and/or trainer; feedback between partners; limited numbers of complaints from participants; high levels of completion; training running smoothly; meeting training requirements; and training participation success as judged by the trainer. Formal evaluation was reported in two of the partnerships. In one instance (6) the enterprise had reporting requirements regarding the success of the training and the partnership, and the RTO utilised the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) evaluation form for that purpose. In another case (5), feedback from trainees was gained via evaluation surveys provided by the RTO and the enterprise formally tracking the progress of trainees.

Summary

Values alignment, trust, personal connections, communication, flexibility and understanding business needs were key to the success of partnerships.

The findings of the RTO survey, the employer survey and the RTO—industry partner interviews illustrate the complex and diverse nature of the partnerships and relationships between RTOs and employers.

The RTO—industry partner interviews provided insights into developing and sustaining successful partnerships and identified the potential benefits and challenges of partnerships to both employers and RTOs. Importantly:

- Values alignment, trust, personal connections, communication, flexibility and understanding of business needs were identified as key to the success of partnerships by employers and RTOs.
- Building or rebuilding trust in partnerships was identified as challenging and taking time, providing an insight into the groundwork previously undertaken in successful partnerships.

A strong divergence emerged between employers' satisfaction with the performance of training providers and the RTOs' self-reported satisfaction with their performance; however, the TAFE institutes appeared to be more realistic in their self-appraisal than the private RTOs.

The three main benefits of partnerships identified by RTOs were financial benefits, reputational benefits and skills development, whereas the benefits identified by employers were diverse and included upskilling staff, customisation of training, flexibility of delivery and curriculum, certainty afforded by longevity of partnership, and access to RTO funding expertise.

Differences in the partnership landscape for the three types of training providers were also identified. Importantly:

- TAFE institutes had more partnerships with employers, across more training areas and locations than private RTOs.
- Private RTOs partnered mainly with small or medium employers, whereas TAFE institutes had an even mix of small, medium and large partners.
- Many TAFE institutes, unlike private RTOs, believed they had a niche market advantage.
- Government funding was more important to TAFE and non-profit RTO partnerships than for for-profit RTOs.

Quality has become the pre-eminent reason for training.

Continuity and change

In this section the findings of the project are integrated to identify continuities and changes in employer training and in training partnerships.

Why do employers train and what factors affect the extent of training? How have these attributes changed?

The results from the research are very clear about the major reasons for employers offering training to their employees. The top five factors are in order:

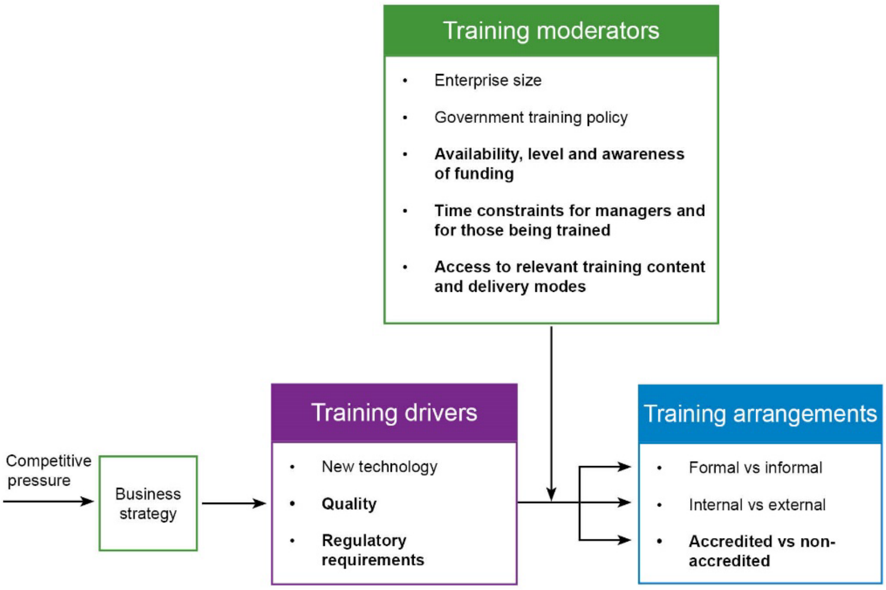
- improvement in the quality of goods and services
- new technology
- business strategy
- licensing requirements
- workplace health and safety requirements.

The research has confirmed the basic findings from much previous research on why employers train, suggesting that the reasons have remained similar over time, despite changes to the business and policy environment in which employers make their decisions. But a change is that quality has become the pre-eminent reason for training.

The amount of training offered is consistent with earlier studies (for example, NCVER 2013). The employer survey administered for this project listed eight common types of training, such as induction training, management training and training in new technology. Over three-quarters of employers reported at least some provision of each of the types of training listed. The size of the organisation remains critical to the extent of training offered, with larger employers providing more training (McGraw 2014; Freyens 2006). Over 60% of employers stated that in an ideal world they would have provided more training to their employees, indicating that they understood the importance of training. The major barriers to providing training relate to organisational resources — either lack of funding or lack of time. The time constraint applies both to those potentially planning and delivering the training and to those receiving it.

While the drivers for training remain fairly constant, the ways in which these translate into training delivery have changed. This is evident in figure 4, which updates the model from the 1995 study (Smith, A, Hayton et al. 1995). In the figure, items in bold font indicate that they have been added, while a number of items have been removed.

Figure 4 Revised model of enterprise training



Source: updated from A Smith, Hayton et al. (1995).

Training to cope with change is an ongoing necessity rather than a specific response to a one-off program of change.

The elements of the model remain the same; however, there are several changes by comparison with the 1995 model (Smith, Hayton et al. 1995). 'Strategic response' as a key driver is replaced by 'Business strategy', implying a less reactive strategic direction. The deleted items are:

- Training drivers: workplace change
- Training moderators: industry training traditions, occupational structure, industrial relations, management attitudes
- Training arrangements: technical vs behavioural, generic vs specific.

The changes indicate shifts in workplaces and in VET policy and practice alike. Workplace change, of itself, no longer appears to be a key driver for training, as was depicted in the original model. Rather, continuous workplace change has simply become part of the routine in Australian firms in recent years in response to the ever-increasing competiveness of the business environment. As a result, training to cope with change is an ongoing necessity rather than a specific response to a one-off program of change. Regulatory requirements are becoming more important. The new model also shows that the nature and content of training is of more direct interest and importance to employers, as are funding issues, with employers' knowledge of VET increasing, assisted by RTOs. The preoccupation in the 1990s with generic skills appears to have passed.

What are the choices employers make about training methods and sources of training? How have these choices changed?

Employers were asked about the amount of training they considered they undertook compared with similar organisations. The self-reported provision of training compared with other employers seemed to have fallen somewhat since the employer survey in 2003 (E Smith, Pickersgill et al. 2005). Also, compared with the previous survey, fewer employers reported an increase in the volume of training over the previous five years. These findings are in line with other literature (for example, NCVER 2013) showing a slight drop in training. Nevertheless, just over half of the employers still said that they conducted more training than five years ago. Also, nearly half reported the recent use of nationally recognised training. This is a greater proportion than is suggested in the literature. Far more employers considered that the reason for the increase in their total training activity was connected to their use of nationally recognised training than did the employers surveyed in 2003. Two conclusions emerge from these data. It appears that, over the 12-year period, employers may have increased the amount of training they do; and that the use of nationally recognised training may have become an increased driver for an overall increase in training activity. The research provides some new data about informal training practices in organisations, which have rarely been researched from the employer point of view. Informal training was found to be more widely used and more systematised in large companies.

Organisations which choose to make nationally recognised training part of their training repertoire display particular features. They tend: to have more sites than other companies; to have a more diverse employment structure; to be more affected by regulation and licensing; to be expanding their operations; and to be in industries where technology use is increasing rapidly. Nationally recognised training offers clear benefits in these areas: it allows systematisation across sites and employees; it offers assurance about quality; and it provides upskilling and multiskilling for expansion. These features are all mentioned in the literature on the advantages of nationally recognised training (for example, Smith, Oczkowski & Hill 2009). The project confirmed the literature about employers' perceptions of the complexity in the VET system and the need to have assistance to navigate it. The interviews showed that partner RTOs in some of the strong partnerships fulfilled this role well. Government funding remains just as important in the initial adoption of nationally recognised training, at 78%, exactly the same as in the earlier survey of 2003.[5]

The model showing the development of nationally recognised training in enterprises developed for the Erica Smith, Pickersgill et al. (2005) study has been updated (figure 5) for the current study and has undergone some major changes. In 2005 the model showed a final phase of integration with human resources systems. This process no longer seemed to apply for the current study and the third phase has therefore become 'sustaining' the use of nationally recognised training. The titles of the first two phases have been changed to verbs rather than nouns to indicate processes rather than events.

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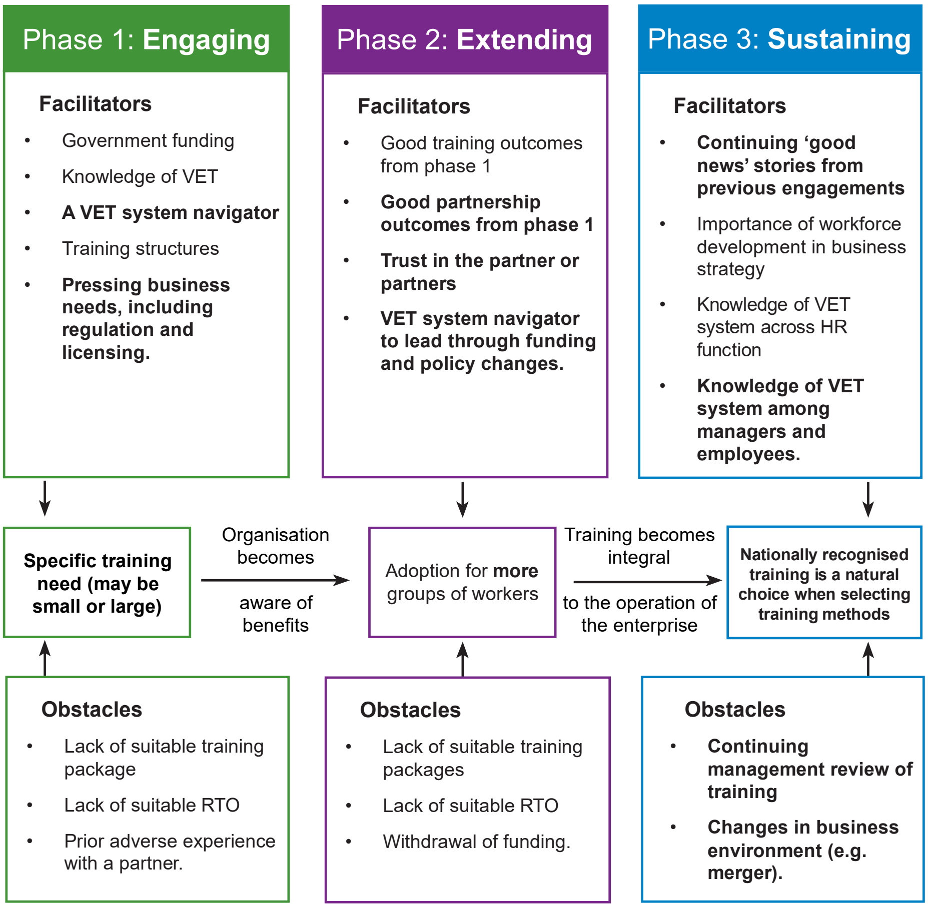
5 The 2003 figures exclude the enterprise RTOs in that sample, who ascribed a lesser importance to government funding than other employers.

Figure 5 The progressive development of nationally recognised training in enterprises



Source: adapted from E Smith, Pickersgill et al. (2005).

It is obvious that the model has changed considerably from the version presented in the Introduction to this report (figure 2). The internal 'VET evangelist' has been replaced by the 'VET system navigator', who is likely to be external to the employer. Trust in the VET partner has become more important; and VET system knowledge is more widely distributed within the organisation. The revisions to the model have drawn upon much of the data this project has collected about partnerships, because most of the nationally recognised training undertaken in enterprises is through external RTOs. The revised model indicates a more dynamic process, whereby RTOs work with employers to plan training strategy to meet ever-changing business needs and where employers are constantly reviewing the nationally recognised training arrangements and training delivery.

What is the nature of training partnerships between employers and training providers?

In today's highly competitive training market RTOs are constantly seeking more training partnerships. In financial terms, the concern is not so much about profit from the partnerships but with income to support RTO viability. RTOs also report many non-financial benefits to be gained from partnerships. Compared with the earlier study (Callan & Ashworth 2004), RTOs reported increased demand from employers; that is, 'employer push'. The impetus did not come from the RTO side alone.

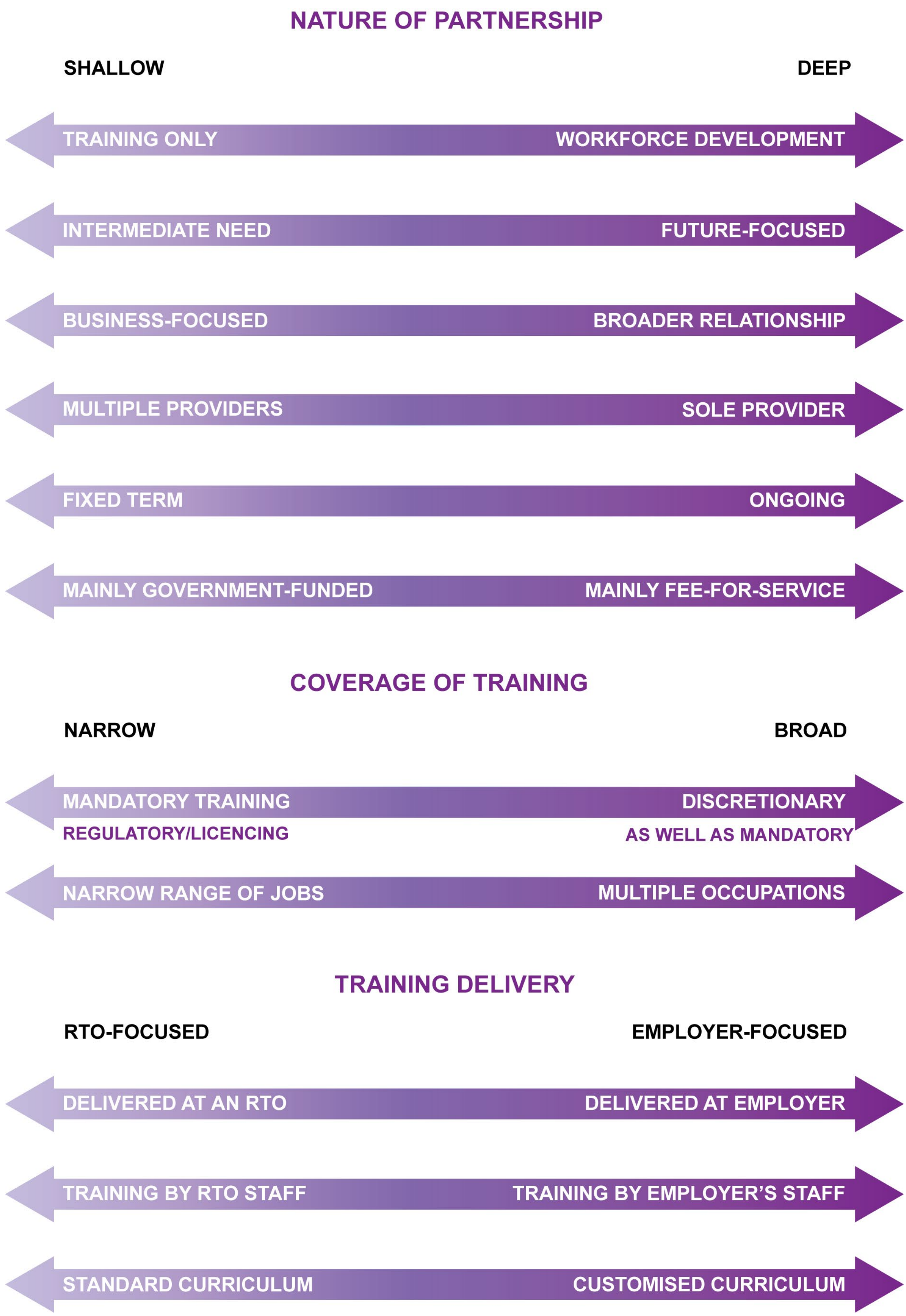
The research has therefore developed a new model to explain the diversity of partnerships. Partnerships can be classified according to three main domains: nature of

In today's highly competitive training market RTOs are constantly seeking more training partnerships.

the partnership; coverage of training; and training delivery (figure 6). For each item within each domain, a more 'traditional' partnership is signified by its proximity to the left-hand side of each continuum, and a more innovative partnership by its proximity to the right-hand side of each continuum.

The findings, from the interviews and the examples of successful partnerships from the RTO survey, indicate that both 'traditional' and innovative types of partnerships may be successful. Partnership success is determined by whether the nature of the partnership and the training delivery are fit for purpose and meet employer expectations.

Figure 6 Nature of training partnerships between employers and RTOs



Partnerships need to be flexible and agile to meet the needs of employers.

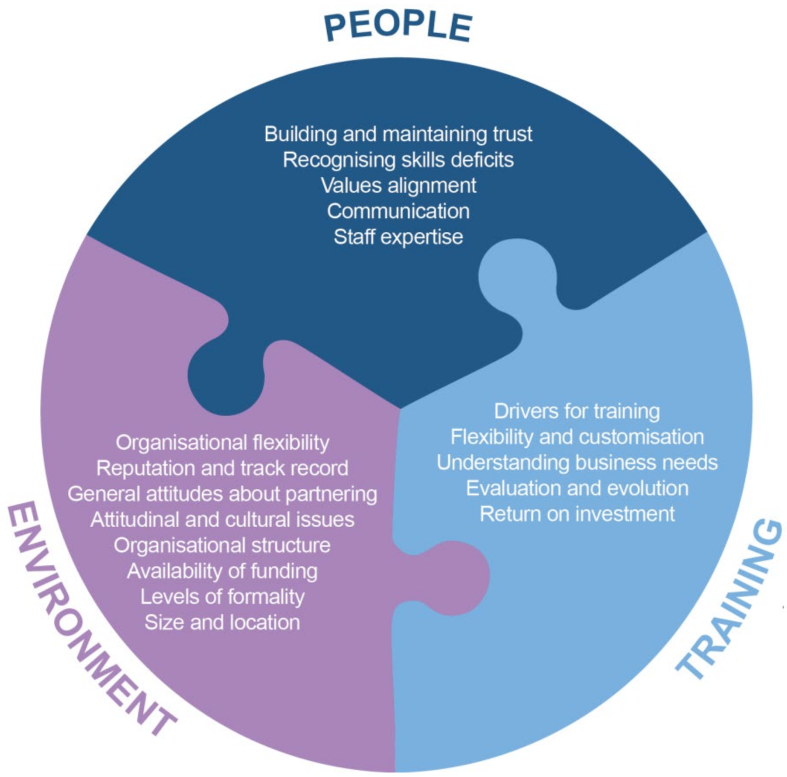
Government funding is key to the creation and sustainability of many partnerships.

What factors create and sustain these partnerships?

The VET partnership model proposed by Callan and Ashworth (2004, p.22) and given in the introduction (figure 3) identified the three key elements that determined the development and success of partnerships: environment, training and people.

Figure 7 updates this model, showing that the factors identified in the earlier model are confirmed and there are several new features. These to some extent mirror the additions to figure 5.

Figure 7 Partnerships: the environment, training and people mix



Source: adapted from Callan & Ashworth (2004).

Partnerships need to be flexible and agile to meet the needs of employers. Employers are less satisfied with TAFE institutes than with other RTOs. TAFE is well aware of the problem, particularly with regard to flexibility and business processes, yet there had been no improvement, according to the self-reports by TAFE, since the earlier survey. In general, private RTOs had the advantage of being smaller organisations, in that those working with employers were able to liaise directly with support staff in the RTO. Yet the interviews showed that TAFE institutes were, in some cases, capable of providing the flexibility that employers need.

The research showed clearly that government funding is a key feature in the creation and sustainability of many partnerships, particularly for TAFE and not-for-profit private RTOs. The interviews with RTOs highlighted the administrative processes necessary for employers, as well as for RTOs, to enable the delivery of nationally recognised training, and these processes have resource implications. A key issue since the earlier studies is the radical and turbulent nature of changes to the funding systems at both state and Commonwealth levels. RTOs and employers reported that the changes in funding were affecting the training that could be offered. The frequency of the changes caused special difficulties for partnerships, as was seen in some of the comments provided earlier in the report. In some cases, we found that RTOs became unviable, and this meant that employers lost their RTO partner. This finding is in line with research in Victoria by Guthrie et al. (2014). The constant changes in funding arrangements make employers especially reliant upon RTOs to interpret the system to them and make them aware of alternative funding opportunities.

Conclusion

Continuity or change?

The previous section analysed the major continuities and changes in training in Australian enterprises and in their partnerships with RTOs over a 20-year period, drawing on previous research data. In the introduction we identified key changes in the economic and VET environments during those 20 years. The changes in the economy did not appear to have had major impacts. The effects of the Global Financial Crisis and the mining boom and its aftermath were not specifically mentioned by any respondent. The increasingly competitive business environment and events such as mergers and restructures, which were reflected in the surveys and in interviews, may or may not have been consequences of these major changes in the Australian economy.

The survey data indicate that, when compared with the previous survey, the provision of training may have fallen slightly. This is consistent with the Survey of Employer Use and Views data, which show a slight drop in employer training between 2008 and 2013 (NCVER 2013). These indications are not, however, clear enough to rely upon, as they conflict to some extent with some of the self-reports by the employers in the current survey. In general, the amount of overall training has remained more or less the same. Thus the Australian situation seems to align with the British (UK Commission for Employment and Skills 2011): that the recession has had little effect on the amount of training conducted.

The changes in the VET environment were, by contrast, far more prominent in the research. The interviews with RTO and industry partners provided most insight into the nature and effects of these changes, particularly the funding cuts and adjustments since 2012, and the prior expansion of funding opportunities.

An evolution in training

There were clear changes in the nature and provision of training and training partnerships, as outlined in the previous section. These do not directly link to changes in the external environment and may be characterised therefore as endogenous rather than exogenous. It appears that the training system currently operating in Australian organisations may have evolved over the 20-year period.

There seem to have been three major changes:

- *A more direct and dynamic link between training within enterprises and the external environment: autonomy rather than subservience*

The analysis suggests that the training function in organisations is interacting more closely with business imperatives than was previously the case. Human resource development (HRD) staff are becoming empowered rather than taking directives from the organisation. While their work is mediated through other parts of the organisation, HRD staff are creating strategies for developing employees and working directly with external providers of training, where appropriate, to meet changes in the business environment. This process is constant, dynamic and iterative.

- *An increasing and changing use of nationally recognised training: diversity rather than mass production*

Nationally recognised training is being used in more diverse ways. It is no longer used only for complete qualifications or for large groups of shop-floor workers. HRD staff are seeing opportunities to use it in varied ways and for varied purposes. They are becoming more aware of what is available and how it can be used.

- *A maturing of the nature of employer partnerships with RTOs: collaboration rather than service provision*

For employers, RTOs remain the major source of knowledge about nationally recognised training, but their role has shifted to that of 'navigator' rather than merely 'informant'. Rather than selling products to employers, RTOs are working collaboratively to identify the employer's needs and to suggest ways of meeting them, which may not necessarily lead to immediate business for the RTO but may help both parties to develop and grow. Similarly, employers are educating RTOs about their industry.

More research is needed to test these propositions as they had not been anticipated at the beginning of this research, and therefore have not explicitly been tested.

Matters for consideration in policy and practice

Employers have good intentions about training but time constraints mean they are not always able to implement these. What, therefore, might be most useful for employers is assistance in streamlining the planning and provision of training. While this may have been the intent behind some government initiatives, such as the National Workforce Development Fund, more direct and practical help might be of more use and be characterised as a particular type of 'workplace curriculum' (Billett 2001b).

The role of HRD staff in organisations requires attention. Their roles are increasingly complex because of the difficulties associated with inserting training time into busy workplaces, but they also appear to be undertaking an expanded and more proactive role. The occupational preparation of people in these roles has been relatively neglected.

Nationally recognised training is viewed as a public good by most employers and offers many advantages for employers. It continues to lead to an increase in overall (non-funded) training in organisations and therefore it seems appropriate that its use by companies should continue to be supported and encouraged by governments.

The main source of knowledge for employers of nationally recognised training remains TAFE and other RTOs. While it is not suggested that Commonwealth and state efforts in information provision should be scaled back, RTOs could be encouraged, and better trained, to do more of this navigation work, via funding schemes or other initiatives.

Overall, employers are happy with the RTOs with whom they transact training business, but many had some reservations or discussed partnerships that had failed. These matters indicate a need for more consistent development of all RTO staff — particularly in TAFE — in working with industry.

Finally, the new typology of partnerships would prove a useful tool for all employers and RTOs involved in partnerships, specifically in assisting in the evaluation of partnerships and planning future directions.

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Appendix A – Copy of questionnaire: employer survey

Do you currently work in a senior position (or have done so in the recent past) that gives you a good working knowledge of training or learning and development in the organisation?

☐ Yes
☐ No

If you consent to participating in this research study, please select the 'Yes' button and commence.

☐ Yes, I consent to participating
☐ No, I do not consent to participating

Section 1. About your business/organisation and its staff

Q1.1 **What is your job title?** *(It will help us to know the positions of those who completed the survey)*

____

Q1.2 **How many employees approximately are in your entire business/organisation in Australia?** *(Total number)*

____

Q1.3 **We would like to know how many sites you have. Is your business/organisation:** *(Please select one)*

☐ 1. Located at a single site
☐ 2. Multi-site (up to 9 branches)
☐ 3. Multiple sites (10+ branches)
☐ 4. Other (please state):

____

Q1.4 **Please estimate the percentage of employees in the following classifications:** *(The total score should add up to 100%)*

1. Full-time permanent	0	%
2. Part-time permanent	0	%
3. Casual (either full-time or part-time)	0	%
4. Contractors	0	%
Total	0	%

Q1.5 **In what industry sector is your business/organisation (e.g. retail, mining, local government)?** *(Please state)*

____

Q1.6 To what extent does government regulation or licensing affect the market for the sales and/or services of your business/organisation?

☐ 1. A great deal
☐ 2. Somewhat
☐ 3. Not at all

Q1.7 Over the last five years, has *your business/organisation*:

☐ 1. Expanded its operations
☐ 2. Stayed about the same
☐ 3. Reduced its operations

Q1.8 Over the last five years, has *your business/organisation*:

☐ 1. Added new products and services
☐ 2. Stayed about the same
☐ 3. Reduced its range of products and services

Q1.9 Over the last five years has the total number of employees in *your business/organisation*:

☐ 1. Increased
☐ 2. Stayed about the same
☐ 3. Declined

Q1.10 Over the last five years, in your opinion, has the use of technology in *your industry*?

☐ 1. Increased rapidly
☐ 2. Increased steadily
☐ 3. Undergone no real change
☐ 4. Declined

Q1.11 Over the last five years, in your opinion, have the skill needs of *your industry*:

☐ 1. Increased rapidly
☐ 2. Increased steadily
☐ 3. Undergone no real change
☐ 4. Declined

Q1.12 Over the last five years, in your opinion, have the skill needs of *your business/organisation*:

☐ 1. Increased rapidly
☐ 2. Increased steadily
☐ 3. Undergone no real change
☐ 4. Declined

Q1.13 Over the last five years, in your opinion, has the environment for *your business/organisation*:

☐ 1. Become much more competitive
☐ 2. Become somewhat more competitive

☐ 3. Undergone no real change
☐ 4. Become less competitive

Section 2. About your business/organisation's training structures and practices

In this section, by *'training'* we mean all forms of learning experiences that your business or organisation provides or purchases for employees. For some questions we ask specifically about nationally accredited training; formal or structured training that is not nationally accredited; or informal training. In these cases we provide definitions. Otherwise please respond for 'training' as a whole.

Q2.1 Compared with similar businesses/organisations in your industry, do you think you do:

☐ 1. More training
☐ 2. About the same amount of training
☐ 3. Less training

Q2.2 Over the last five years, in your opinion, has the amount of training that *your business/organisation has provided to its employees*:

☐ 1. Increased greatly
☐ 2. Increased somewhat
☐ 3. Stayed about the same
☐ 4. Decreased

Q2.3 In your business/organisation, how important are the following reasons for the training of your existing staff? *(Please select one option on each line)*

	Not important 1	Of some importance 2	Very important 3
1. New technology	☐	☐	☐
2. WH&S requirements	☐	☐	☐
3. Licensing requirements	☐	☐	☐
4. Other regulatory requirements	☐	☐	☐
5. Market pressures	☐	☐	☐
6. Quality	☐	☐	☐
7. Business strategy	☐	☐	☐
8. Demand from employees	☐	☐	☐
9. Business/organisation change	☐	☐	☐
10. Required skills are not available on the external labour market	☐	☐	☐
11. Other, *please specify OR select the 'Not important' button: (Please restrict your response to one 'other' only)* ________________	☐	☐	☐

Q2.4 **Please nominate, from the list above (i.e., from Q2.3), the number that represents the most important driver for training?** *(Please insert your choice of number from 1 to 11 from the list above)*

____

Q2.5 **Does your business/organisation have a dedicated training department or section?**

☐ Yes
☐ No

Q2.5b **How many employees approximately are employed *solely* in the training department or section?**

____

Q2.6 **Does your business/organisation have?** *(Please select one option on each line)*

	Yes 1	No 2	Don't know 3
1. A written training strategy or implementation plan	☐	☐	☐
2. A training manager	☐	☐	☐
3. Workplace trainers/instructors, part of whose job is to train or assess	☐	☐	☐
4. A separate training budget	☐	☐	☐
5. A scheme to reimburse employees for course fees for external courses (please exclude apprentices or trainees)	☐	☐	☐
6. Training based on systematic training needs analyses	☐	☐	☐
7. A training committee	☐	☐	☐
8. Its own training manuals developed for the company	☐	☐	☐
9. An in-house online learning system	☐	☐	☐
10. A purchased online learning system	☐	☐	☐
11. Formal development plans for staff	☐	☐	☐
12. Evaluation of workers' satisfaction with training events	☐	☐	☐
13. Evaluation of learning outcomes for workers from training events	☐	☐	☐
14. Evaluation of workers' changes in behaviour or skills post-training	☐	☐	☐
15. Evaluation of impact for the business/organisation (e.g. fewer quality problems or fewer accidents)	☐	☐	☐

Q2.7 **Since January 2014 has your business/organisation purchased (using its own funds or government/other official funds) training for your employees from any of the following external providers? Please include cases where the provider comes on-site and also where your staff attend the provider or study by distance.** *(Please select one option on each line)*

	No 1	A little 2	Some 3	A great deal 4
1. TAFE colleges	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Universities	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Private training providers	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Equipment & product suppliers	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Employer, industry or professional associations	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Other, *please specify OR select the 'No' button: (Please restrict yourself to one 'other' only)* ________________________	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q2.8 How useful for your business/organisation are the following potential features of using external training providers? *(Please select one option on each line)*

	No real benefits 1	Some benefits 2	A great deal of benefit 3
1. Their specific content expertise	☐	☐	☐
2. Their training expertise	☐	☐	☐
3. Availability of a range of qualifications	☐	☐	☐
4. Opportunities for employees to gain a wider viewpoint	☐	☐	☐
5. Opportunities for employees to have time away to think	☐	☐	☐
6. Useful when only one or a few employees require training	☐	☐	☐
7. More resource-efficient than providing in-house	☐	☐	☐
8. Other, *please specify OR select the 'No real benefits' button*: ________________________	☐	☐	☐

Q2.9 What is your general level of satisfaction with each of these sources of training? *(Please select one option on each line)*

	Not applicable 0	Highly dissatisfied 1	2	3	4	Highly satisfied 5
1. TAFE colleges	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Universities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Private training providers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Equipment & product suppliers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Employer, industry or professional associations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Other, *please specify OR select the 'Not applicable' button: (Please restrict yourself to one 'other' only)* ________________________	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q2.10 If you selected 'highly dissatisfied' or 'somewhat dissatisfied' for any items in Q2.9 please say what were the main reasons for dissatisfaction: *(Please specify)*

____

____

____

____

Section 3. Informal training in your business/organisation

Q3.1 Thinking about your organisation as a whole (and excluding management and professional workers who receive their vocational preparation at university) what is the relative importance of informal training as a component of overall training?

- **Informal training** means training which is not structured into events or a formal program, is not directly related to a qualification or licence, and the provision of which is normally closely linked to carrying out workplace duties.

☐ 1. Not important (there is very little informal training)
☐ 2. Somewhat important (about half of our overall training)
☐ 3. Very important (greater than the formal training provided)

Q3.2 Has your business/organisation provided any of the following informal training to aid the development of your employees since January 2014? *(Please select one option on each line)*

	None 1	A little 2	Some 3	A Great deal 4
1. Provided supervision by a manager or supervisor to ensure that employees are guided through their job role	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Provided a mentor or buddy to ensure that employees are guided through their job role	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Provided opportunities to spend time learning through watching others perform their jobs	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Allowed staff to perform tasks that go beyond their strict job roles, in a structured manner	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. We have structured work so that inexperienced people can progressively undertake more complex activities	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. We have regular meetings (at least monthly) of groups of employee groups that incorporate a sharing of lessons learned	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Provided development activities for supervisors in how to train via informal training	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Other, *please specify OR select the 'None" button*: ______________________	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q3.3 To help us find out more about informal training, please think about the most common job role in your organisation. (e.g. 'manual labourer', 'call centre operator') *(Please state what that job is)*

____

Q3.4 What are the main methods of the informal training/learning (if any) that are used for people going into that job? *(Please answer in your own words)*

____

____

____

____

Section 4. Formal and accredited training in your organisation

Q4.1 Please estimate the percentage of your employees that have been involved in the following types of training since January 2014 (either provided in-house or by an external provider).

- **Nationally accredited training** means training that results in a qualification or accredited skill set (Statement of Attainment).

- **Formal or structured training** means off-the-job courses or on-the-job training carried out according to a written plan.

  | 0 | % 1. Nationally accredited training |

  | 0 | % 2. Other formal or structured training |

Q4.2 Which of the following *types* of training has your business/organisation provided for your employees since January 2014? (Either yourselves or through an external provider) *(Please select one option on each line)*

	None 1	A little 2	Some 3	A Great deal 4
1. Induction training	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. OH&S training (including first aid)	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Training for licensing requirements	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Job specific training	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Supervisory training	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Management training	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Training in new technology	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Vendor training (new products or equipment)	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. Any other types, *please specify OR select the 'None' button:* ______________________	☐	☐	☐	☐

Now we are going on to look in more detail at nationally accredited training.

Nationally accredited training means training that results in a qualification or accredited skill set. It is based on competency standards which are found in Training Packages.

Q4.3 What are the sources of your knowledge about nationally accredited training? *(Please select all that apply)*

☐ 1. Have no knowledge
☐ 2. TAFE or other registered training organisation
☐ 3. Commonwealth Department of Education and Training
☐ 4. State training authority or department
☐ 5. Employer/industry association
☐ 6. Trade unions
☐ 7. Australian Apprenticeship Centre
☐ 8. National Industry Skills Council
☐ 9. State industry training advisory body if still present in your state/territory
☐ 10. Group training organisation
☐ 11. Training.gov .au website, My Skills website or Australian Apprenticeships website
☐ 12. Skills@Work eNewsletter
☐ 13. Other, please specify:

____

Q4.4 Please nominate, from the list above (i.e., from Q4.3), the number that represents the source of information that is the most useful? *(Please insert your choice of number from 2 to 13 from the list above)*

____

Q4.5 Do you use nationally accredited qualifications or skill sets for existing workers in your business/organisation? *(Please indicate as many as apply)*

☐ 1. No
☐ 2. Yes - and the qualification or skill set is awarded
☐ 3. Yes - but no qualification or skill set is awarded
☐ 4. Don't know

Q4.5a Did you include qualifications for apprentices or trainees in your answer?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Q4.5b Did you include apprentices?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Q4.5c If so, were they recruited from outside or were they existing workers?

☐ From outside
☐ Existing workers
☐ Some from each group

Q4.5d Did you include trainees?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Q4.5e Were they recruited from outside or were they existing workers?

☐ From outside
☐ Existing workers
☐ Some from each group

Q4.6 Do you use competency standards as the basis for any of the following other activities? *(Please indicate as many as apply)*

☐ 0. Do not use
☐ 1. In writing job descriptions
☐ 2. In job evaluation/classification
☐ 3. In performance management
☐ 4. In recruitment and selection
☐ 5. In non-accredited training
☐ 6. Other, *please specify*:

____

Q4.7 Has your business/organisation provided or purchased (using its own funds or government/other official funds) nationally accredited training for any existing workers since January 2014?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Q4.7a Is there any particular reason why you do not use nationally accredited training? *(Please answer in your own words)*

____
____
____
____

Q4.8 For what *occupations/jobs* within your business/organisation do you provide or purchase nationally accredited training (e.g. machine operators, supervisors)? *(Please list up to three, in approximate order of number of employees involved OR insert 'Not applicable' in the text box)*

1. (Largest number of employees)

____
____
____

2.

____
____
____

3.

____
____
____

Q4.9 Starting with the most important, list in order of importance up to three reasons why your business/organisation decided to provide or purchase nationally accredited training: *(Please list up to three OR insert 'Not applicable' in the text box)*

1. (Most important reason)

____
____
____

2.

____
____
____

3.

____

____

____

Q4.10 Are complete qualifications or just skill sets (Statements of Attainment) issued to your existing workers?

☐ 1. Statements of Attainment only
☐ 2. Qualifications only
☐ 3. Some of each

Q4.11 How important was the availability (or non-availability) of government funding in your business/organisation's decision to use nationally accredited training?

☐ 1. Very important
☐ 2. Of some importance
☐ 3. Not important
☐ 4 . No funding available, to my knowledge
☐ 5. Don't know

Q4.12 Please state what sources (if any) of government funding for training that you have accessed since January 2014, and make any comments that you would like about government funding for training: *(Please specify)*

____

____

____

____

Q4.13 Is the nationally accredited training you provide to, or purchase for, your employees customised to the specific needs of your business/organisation?

☐ 1. Customised to a great extent
☐ 2. Customised somewhat
☐ 3. Not customised or customised in very minor ways

Q4.14 Since your business or organisation has been using nationally accredited training, has the total amount of *all* training in your business/organisation:

☐ 1. Increased considerably
☐ 2. Increased somewhat
☐ 3. Stayed about the same
☐ 4. Decreased
☐ 5. Don't know

Q4.15 If the total amount of *all* training has increased, do you think this is attributable to:

☐ 1. The availability of nationally accredited training
☐ 2. Some other reason, please specify:

____

☐ 3. Don't know

Section 5. Partnerships with external registered training organisations

*Please remember that **nationally accredited training** means training that leads to a formal qualification or statement of attainment which must be awarded by an RTO. An RTO is a registered training organisation nationally accredited by the Australian Skills Quality Authority (or state/territory authority) to award VET qualifications.*

Q5.1 What arrangement(s), if any, do you have with an external RTO or RTOs for the purpose of providing nationally accredited training? *(Please indicate as many as apply)*

☐ 1. No arrangements at all
☐ 2. A formal partnership with a TAFE(s)
☐ 3. A formal partnership with a non-TAFE RTO(s)
☐ 4. An informal but on-going partnership with a TAFE(s)
☐ 5. An informal but on-going partnership with a non-TAFE RTO(s)
☐ 6. Ad hoc arrangements with training provider(s) as necessary
☐ 7. We are an enterprise RTO but also have arrangements with other RTOs
☐ 8. We are an enterprise RTO and have no arrangements with other RTOs

Q5.2 Please nominate, from the list above (i.e., from Q5.1), the number that represents the most important arrangement that you currently have in place with an external RTO: *(Please insert your choice of number from 2 to 8 from the list above)*

____

Q5.3 Why is this arrangement the most important to your organisation? *(Please specify)*

____
____
____
____

Q5.4 In general, is the nationally accredited training/assessment provided by the external training provider(s) to your workers:

☐ 1. Mostly at the training provider's premises
☐ 2. About half and half
☐ 3. Mostly on-site by the training provider(s)
☐ 4. Mostly on-site delivered by our trainers and moderated by the training provider(s)
☐ 5. Other, *please specify*:

____

Q5.5 Thinking about the training provider with which you have done most of your training business, please rate along the scale from *'Highly dissatisfied'* to *'Highly satisfied'* your level of satisfaction with the performance of your training provider partner in the following aspects:

	Not applicable 0	Highly dissatisfied 1	2	3	4	5	Highly satisfied 6
1. The training provider's ability to establish trust	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. The quality of the training provider's communication with us	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. The commitment shown by the training provider's staff to make the partnership(s) a success	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. The training provider's willingness to customise training to meet our needs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. The training provider's success in customising the training	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. The training provider's openness to experimentation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. The training provider's flexibility with staffing arrangements	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. The training provider's flexibility in providing different delivery modes for the training	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. The training provider's level of planning within the partnership	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. The training provider's willingness to adopt a long-term perspective in judging the success of the partnership	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. The training provider's willingness to make changes to the nature of the off-the-job training	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. The training provider's willingness to make changes to the nature of the on-the-job training that they deliver	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. The administrative arrangements the training provider puts in place to manage the day-to-day issues arising in such partnerships	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q5.6 Continuing to think about the same training provider partner, please rate them on the following items regarding your satisfaction with the quality of their training:

	Not applicable 0	Highly dissatisfied 1	2	3	4	5	Highly satisfied 6
1. Skill of the trainer delivering the qualification/skill set	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Volume of learning received	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Not applicable 0	Highly dissatisfied 1	2	3	4	5	Highly satisfied 6
3. Quality of resources provided	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Currency of resources provided	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Efficient use of learning technologies	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Qualification or skill set was assessed at the appropriate level	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Quality of the feedback provided to the learner	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section 6. Barriers and facilitators for more training

Q6.1 In an ideal world, over the last 12 months, would you have provided more training for your staff than you were able to do?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Q6.2 How applicable are the following reasons for not providing as much training as you would have liked? *(Please rate the option on each line)*

	Not applicable 1	Somewhat applicable 2	Very applicable 3
1. Insufficient money available for training	☐	☐	☐
2. Managers have lacked sufficient time to organise training	☐	☐	☐
3. Employees are generally too busy to give training to others	☐	☐	☐
4. Employees are generally too busy to undertake training and development	☐	☐	☐
5. Training is not considered to be a high priority establishment, by senior management	☐	☐	☐
6. All our staff are proficient no pressing business need for a great deal of training	☐	☐	☐
7. More highly trained staff may be poached by other employers	☐	☐	☐
8. No particular reason	☐	☐	☐
9. Other, *please specify OR select the 'Not applicable' button*: ______________________	☐	☐	☐

Q6.3 From the list in the previous question (i.e., Q6.2) what is the most important reason for not providing more training? *(Please insert your choice of number from 1 to 9 from the list above)*

____

Q6.4 Finally, what would facilitate the offering of more training in your organisation? *(Please provide any ideas)*

End of survey

Thank you very much for your participation in this survey. Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

If you have any queries about the survey please contact Erica Smith on (03) 5327 9665 or at <e.smith@federation.edu.au>.

You can see more about the project at: <https://federation.edu.au/facul ties-and-schools/faculty-of-education- and-arts/research/fea-research-groups/rave-researching-adult-and-vocational-education/current-research>.

Appendix B – copy of questionnaire: RTO survey

Q1. If you consent to participating in the above research study please click on the following link.

☐ Yes
☐ No

Section 1. These first questions examine the nature of your organisation, your role, and the type of partnering arrangements

Q2. What is your title? *(Please select one)*

☐ 1. Chief Executive Officer/Director/Managing Director
☐ 2. Other Senior Manager
☐ 3. Head of School/Department
☐ 4. Program Co-ordinator
☐ 5. Teacher
☐ 6. Business Development Manager/Partnership Management Coordinator
☐ 7. Other (*please specify*):

____

Q3. How would you classify your organisation? *(Please select one)*

☐ 1. TAFE
☐ 2. For-profit private provider
☐ 3. Non-profit private provider
☐ 4. High school
☐ 5. Industry provider
☐ 6. Other (*please specify*):

____

Q4. How would you classify the location and type of your organisation? *(Please select one)*

☐ 1. Metropolitan-based, public provider
☐ 2. Metropolitan-based, private provider
☐ 3. Regional, public provider
☐ 4. Regional, private provider
☐ 5. Other (*please specify*):

____

Q5. What state/territory is your organisation (head office) based in? *(Please select one)*

☐ 1. New South Wales
☐ 2. Victoria
☐ 3. Queensland

☐ 4. South Australia
☐ 5. Western Australia
☐ 6. Tasmania
☐ 7. Northern Territory
☐ 8. ACT

Q6. What is your level of involvement in VET industry-provider partnerships? *(Please select one)*

☐ 1. I set up these partnerships
☐ 2. I manage such partnerships
☐ 3. I set up and continue to manage such partnerships
☐ 4. Those managing key partnerships report to me
☐ 5. Other (*please specify*):

____

Q7. In which of the following locations does your organisation have VET industry-provider partnerships? *(Please select one or more options)*

☐ 1. Your local region
☐ 2. Other parts of your state
☐ 3. In other Australian states
☐ 4. In overseas countries (*if so, please name them*):

____

Q8. What do you understand by the term 'VET industry-provider partnerships'? *(Think about the range and type of partnerships that you are involved with e.g. a formal or informal training relationship, in one or several locations, about making money now or realistically in the longer term, less about money and more about other outcomes, specific outcomes are expected and so on.)*

____
____
____
____
____

Section 2. Attitudes about partnering

Q9. Please select a number from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 6 (Strongly agree) to show how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree 1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree 6
1. There is strong support in our organisation for seeking industry training partnerships that will be profitable and high profile	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. We are operating in a highly competitive training market	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Increasing the levels of profitable training partnerships is a major goal of our organisation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4. We operate almost as the only provider of certain types of industry training	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. We have a highly successful track record in partnering with industry	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Our geographical location gives us competitive advantages in gaining access to certain key industry partners	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Our organisation manages partnerships interstate	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Our organisation has a clear strategy about how it will build its level of industry partnering	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. Industry is attracted by our track record as a successful partner	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. We see ourselves being successful in particular niche markets of industry training	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. We are still developing a track record as a good training partner	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. Our organisational culture (e.g. our values, how we relate to people) is proving to be an asset in our partnering with industry	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. Our organisational structure (e.g. level of hierarchy, control systems) is proving to be an asset in our partnering with industry	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. We are the ‘partner of choice’ for a number of industries	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q10. What percentage of your training partnerships with industry falls under each of the following categories? *(The total score should add up to 100%)*

1. Mutual service partnerships where we pool resources with the industry partner to gain access to equipment or resources that aid training	0	%
2. Joint ventures where we pursue a training opportunity together by combining our capabilities and sharing the business risk	0	%
3. We provide fee-for-service contracted services to client organisations	0	%
4. We cooperate with an industry partner to provide training that is wholly or largely government-subsidised	0	%
5. Other (*please write in*): ________________________________	0	%
Total	0	%

Q11. Please select a number from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 6 (Strongly agree) to show how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

What are the main drivers for your organisation’s involvement in industry/employer partnerships?

	Strongly disagree 1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree 6
1. To bring in additional revenue	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. To copy what other organisations are doing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. To give staff stronger links with industry	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Our motivations are not really clear	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Industries/employers have requested that we assist them	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. If we did not get involved in the partnering, another organisation would have taken the opportunity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. To find future employers for our students	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. To build extra capability within our staff	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. To keep up to date with industry needs/requirements	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. To maintain relevance/alignment with industry needs/requirements	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. Other (*write in and rate*): ______ ______ ______	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. Other (*write in and rate*): ______ ______ ______	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. Other (*write in and rate*) ______ ______ ______	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q12. What are the types of partnerships that you want to get more of?
(Either use the terms earlier e.g. mutual service partnerships, joint ventures, fee-for-service or put in your own words what types of partnering you are really keen to build upon with industry and employers.)

____
____
____
____
____

Q13. Think about one successful partnership between your RTO and industry that you are familiar with. Please detail:

1. What it is about?

____
____
____
___

2. How did it come about?

____
____
____
___

3. What benefits does it bring to your organisation?

4. What benefits does it bring to the industry partner/employer?

5. (Optional) What revenue does this partnership bring in to your organisation in an average year?

Q14. **What training (industry/occupational area) is your organisation best known for in terms of currently successful training partnerships with industry (e.g. training in aquaculture, laboratory operations)?** *(Please list up to three)*

Q15. **Please indicate whether your partnerships are mainly with small, medium or large enterprises.** *(Please select one)*

☐ 1. Mainly small or medium (up to 200 employees)
☐ 2. Mainly large
☐ 3. A fairly equal mixture of small, medium and large

Q16. **As you indicated that your partnerships are mainly with small or medium enterprises (up to 200 employees), please indicate which predominates.** *(Please select one)*

☐ 1. Small – up to 20 employees
☐ 2. Medium – 21 to 200 employees

Q17. **Please select a number from 1 (Highly dissatisfied) to 6 (Highly satisfied) to indicate your level of satisfaction with the performance of <u>your own organisation</u> in the following aspects of partnering with industry or with specific employers.**

	Highly dissatisfied 1	2	3	4	5	Highly satisfied 6
1. Our ability to establish trust	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. The quality of our communication with the industry partner	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. The commitment shown by our staff to make the partnerships a success	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Our willingness to customise training to meet industry needs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Our success in customising the training	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Our openness to experimentation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Our flexibility with staffing arrangements	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Our application of financial measures to determine the success of the partnering	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. Our application of non-financial measures to determine the success of the partnering	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. The financial returns to us to date	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. The financial returns to us in the longer term	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. Our flexibility in providing different delivery modes for the training	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. Our level of planning within the partnership	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. Our willingness to adopt a long-term perspective in judging the success of the partnership	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. Our willingness to make changes to the nature of the off-the-job training	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
16. Our willingness to make changes to the nature of the on-the-job training that we deliver	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
17. The administrative arrangements we put in place to manage the day-to-day issues arising in such partnerships	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q18. **In your opinion, what are the best features of your organisation that make it attractive for industry to partner with?** *(Please list anything that comes to mind)*

____

____

____

____

____

Section 3. Developing as partners to industry

Q19. **What are the key areas for improvement for your organisation to enable it to be more competitive and successful in partnering?** *(Please list anything that comes to mind)*

____
____
____
____
____

Q20. **Please select a number from 1 (Highly dissatisfied) to 6 (Highly satisfied) to indicate your level of satisfaction with the attributes of <u>your industry partners in general</u> in the following aspects of their partnering with your organisation.**

	Highly dissatisfied 1	2	3	4	5	Highly satisfied 6
1. Their ability to establish trust with us	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. The quality of their communication with us	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. The commitment shown by their staff to make such partnerships a success	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Their willingness to customise the training	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Their success in customising the training on the job	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Their openness to experimentation with the training model	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Their flexibility with staffing arrangements	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Their application of financial measures to determine the success of the partnering	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. Their application of non-financial measures to determine the success of the partnering	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. The financial returns to them to date	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. The financial returns to them in the longer-term	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. Their flexibility in facilitating different delivery modes for the training	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. Their level of planning within the partnership	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. Their willingness to adopt a long-term perspective in judging the success of the partnership	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. Willingness to make changes to the nature of the on-the-job training that they deliver	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
16. The administrative arrangements they put place to manage the day-to-day issues arising in such partnerships	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q21. **We want to know how well you think your organisation does at some aspects that relate to partnering. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements in relation to your organisation.**

In our organisation:

	Strongly disagree 1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree 6
1. Staff are comfortable about sharing new ideas that might improve the partnering outcomes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. There is open discussion of what we have learned from our mistakes in partnering	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. A failed partnership is seen as an opportunity to learn and improve our operations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Our organisation does a good job in communicating to all staff what we have learned from successful and failed partnering	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. I work in an environment where constructive feedback is welcomed by management about how our industry partnerships are going	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. We regularly review the progress of partnerships with our industry partners	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. New ideas that challenge current training practices are welcomed	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q22. **What are the criteria that you apply to judge whether a partnership is proving to be successful?** *(Please list such criteria below)*

1. ______________________________

2. ______________________________

3. ______________________________

Q23. **Have you been involved in ending an industry-provider partnership?** *(Please select one)*

☐ Yes
☐ No

Q24. **If yes, what caused the end of the partnership?**

____
____
____
____

Q25. Please select a number from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 6 (Strongly agree) to show how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Think about those staff who do industry partnering and the following aspects.

Those staff are effective in:

	Strongly disagree 1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree 6
1. Marketing what we can do	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Negotiation skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Doing training needs analyses	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Employer liaison	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Legal and contractual arrangements	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Project management	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Winning the job	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Setting shared goals with the industry partner	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. Building personal relationships with the industry partner	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. Identifying and managing risk in the partnership	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. Showing real interest in partners' proposals and concerns	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. Providing information and regular feedback to the organisation about the performance of partnerships that they manage	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q26. Please list up to three areas or aspects where staff who manage VET industry-provider partnerships are particularly strong. (*Please write down anything that comes to mind*)

1. ____

2. ____

3. ____

Q27. In what areas or aspects do staff need to develop further to achieve stronger financial and non-financial returns from industry partnering? *(Please write down anything that comes to mind)*

____

____

____

____

Q28. **Considering your current role in making partnerships work, what do you feel you yourself need to learn more about to perform your current role more effectively?** *(Please list up to three features)*

1. ______________________________

2. ______________________________

3. ______________________________

Section 4. Funding

Q29. **How important is government funding in your partnerships with industry?** *(Please select one)*

☐ Very important
☐ Important
☐ Not very important
☐ Not at all important

Q30. **Please write the two most important forms of government funding for VET that you/your industry partners use in your partnerships.** *(Note: Please do not include normal funding for apprenticeships and traineeships)*

1. ______________________________

2. ______________________________

Q31. **If applicable, please list the two most important forms of non-VET government funding that you use in your partnerships with industry.**

1. ______________________________

2. ______________________________

Q32. **Have recent changes to Commonwealth training funding affected the amount and nature of training that employers with whom you partner provide to their employees?** *(Please select one)*

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Don't know

Q33. **If yes, please provide more details by selecting one of the following statements.** *(Please select one)*

☐ 1. Employers accessing more training from RTOs
☐ 2. Employers accessing less training from RTOs

☐ 3. Employers accessing the same amount of training but pay more for it themselves
☐ 4. Other changes (*please specify*):
____

Q34. Have recent changes to state/territory training funding affected the amount and nature of training that employers with whom you partner provide to their employees? *(Please select one)*

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Don't know

Q35. If yes, please provide more details by selecting one of the following statements. *(Please select one)*

☐ 1. Employers accessing more training from RTOs
☐ 2. Employers accessing less training from RTOs
☐ 3. Employers accessing the same amount of training but pay more for it themselves
☐ 4. Other changes (*please specify*): ____

End of survey

Thank you very much for completing this survey. Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

If you have any queries about the survey please contact Erica Smith on (03) 5327 9665 or <e.smith@federation.edu.au>.

You can also learn more about the project at: <https://federation.edu.au/faculties-and-schools/faculty-of-education-and-arts/research/fea-research-groups/rave-researching-adult-and-vocational-education/current-research>.

To thank you for your participation, you may enter a draw to win one of two $200 gift vouchers. If you would like to go in the draw to win, please provide your name and contact details in the fields below.

(Note: Entry into this competition is optional and your details will be separated from your responses to the survey in order to protect your confidentiality)

Name: ________________________________
Email address: ________________________
Phone number: ________________________

Appendix C – RTO–industry telephone interview questions

Interviewees are people managing the specified partnership.

A BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Q1 CONFIRM TYPE OF RESPONDENT: Provider/employer

Q2 NAME and position, organisation name & location, nature & scope of organisation

Q3 Who is the provider/industry partner who makes up the partnership we have agreed to discuss today?

Q4 Please provide details of your operations and workforce (Size, nature and main occupational groups of employees)

B ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Q5 What is the nature of the partnership? (By partnership we mean a recognised formal arrangement negotiated between the training provider and the employer)

Q6 When did it begin (to your knowledge)? When is it planned to finish? (if applicable)

Q7 Which party initiated the partnership? The employer or the RTO?

Q8 What groups of worker(s) is the training for? And what qualifications/skill sets/other training do they receive?

Q9 What were the key drivers within the employer for the training?

Q10 What were the key drivers for making this partnership happen? (e.g. key people, availability of seed capital, need to share resources, reputation of other partner)

Q11 Is any funding from governments or other bodies used to fund the training (partly or wholly)? Please give details

Q12 What are the benefits (financial and non-financial) of the partnership to you as a provider/industry partner?

Q13 What have been the major challenges to you as a provider/industry partner in making the best out of this partnership?

Q14 On the whole, how successful do you think the partnership is, and how do you evaluate its success (both process and product evaluation of the training)?

Q15(a) Do you have other current or recent partnerships with industry/training providers (RTO or not)? What are they?

Q15(b) When you compare the current success of this partnership to other partnerships you are involved in, is it: more successful than other partnerships, about the same success, less successful than other partnerships. Why?

Q16 Can you provide some information about the partnership we are discussing today?

- Dollar value of the partnership? Up to $10,000 pa/between $10,000 and $100,000 pa/over $100,000?
- (For employers) Number of training/HR staff involved? Employees being trained
- (For RTOs) Number of teaching staff involved? Student numbers
- Number of support/other staff involved?
- Number of states/territories (just one or more)?
- Number of locations for delivery of the training?

Q17 How does the training described above intersect with/complement the employer's own training efforts?

C TRAINING MODEL

Q18 Please describe how the training model is currently set up:

- Modes and sites of delivery
- Levels of customisation
- Administration arrangements

Q19 How well has the training gone? (if not covered adequately in Q 14 about evaluation)

D EVOLUTION OVER TIME

Q20 What changes have occurred in both the delivery model and the partnership itself over time, and why?

Q21 Are any changes planned for the future?

E PEOPLE ISSUES

Q22 Have the same people been involved in the partnership to date, or have personnel changed? What have been any impacts (positive and negative) of having changes (or no changes) in the personnel involved?

Q23 How has the partnership benefited your people who have been involved in the partnership?

Q24 Have staff development needs emerged, and if so, how have these been addressed?

Q25 What people issues need to be improved to make this and other partnerships work better?

F FINAL COMMENTS

Q26 Is there anything else you would like to say about this partnership?

Q27 Do you have any suggestions for other partnerships we might study?

Appendix D – Employer survey: overall results[6]

Table D1 Q1.2 How many employees approximately are in your entire business/organisation in Australia

	N	%
1–49 employees	50	29.2
50–99 employees	18	10.5
100–499 employees	44	25.7
Above 500 employees	59	34.5
Total	171	100.0

Table D2 Q1.3 We would like to know how many sites you have. Is your business/organisation

	N	%
Located at a single site	63	36.4
Multi-site (up to 9 branches)	61	35.3
Multiple sites (10+ branches)	44	25.4
Other	5	2.9
Total	173	100.0

Table D3 Q1.4 Please estimate the percentage of employees in the following classifications

	N	Mean	SD
Full-time permanent	165	69.9	27.2
Part-time permanent	163	14.8	17.9
Casual (either full-time or part-time)	164	8.7	14.8
Contractors	165	6.7	13.6

Table D4 Q1.6 To what extent does government regulation or licensing affect the market for the sales and/or services of your business/organisation

	N	%
A great deal	71	43.0
Somewhat	77	46.7
Not at all	17	10.3
Total	165	100.0

Table D5 Q1.7 Over the last five years, has your business/organisation

	N	%
Expanded its operations	79	47.9
Stayed about the same	74	44.8
Reduced its operations	12	7.3
Total	165	100.0

6 Note that percentages may not always sum to 100 due to rounding.

Table D6 Q1.8 Over the last five years, has your business/organisation

	N	%
Added new products and services	81	49.4
Stayed about the same	75	45.7
Reduced its range of products and services	8	4.9
Total	164	100.0

Table D7 Q1.9 Over the last five years has the total number of employees in your business/organisation

	N	%
Increased	62	37.8
Stayed the same	70	42.7
Declined	32	19.5
Total	164	100.0

Table D8 Q1.10 Over the last five years, in your opinion, has the use of technology in your industry

	N	%
Increased rapidly	38	23.2
Increased steadily	102	62.2
Undergone no real change	23	14.0
Declined	1	0.6
Total	164	100.0

Table D9 Q1.11 Over the last five years, in your opinion, have the skill needs of your industry

	N	%
Increased rapidly	28	17.2
Increased steadily	93	57.1
Undergone no real change	40	24.5
Declined	2	1.2
Total	163	100.0

Table D10 Q1.12 Over the last five years, in your opinion, have the skill needs of your business/organisation

	N	%
Increased rapidly	29	17.8
Increased steadily	99	60.7
Undergone no real change	33	20.2
Declined	2	1.2
Total	163	100.0

Table D11 Q1.13 Over the last five years, in your opinion, has the environment for your business/organisation

	N	%
Become much more competitive	46	28.2
Become somewhat more competitive	74	45.4
Undergone no real change	40	24.5
Become less competitive	3	1.8
Total	163	100.0

Table D12 Q2.1 Compared with similar businesses/organisations in your industry, do you think you do

	N	%
More training	55	33.7
About the same training	81	49.7
Less training	27	16.6
Total	163	100.0

Table D13 Q2.2 Over the last five years, in your opinion, has the amount of training that your business/org

	N	%
Increased greatly	25	15.3
Increased somewhat	66	40.5
Stayed about the same	57	35.0
Decreased	15	9.2
Total	163	100.0

Table D14 Q2.3 In your business/organisation, how important are the following reasons for the training of your existing staff

	Not important		Of some importance		Very important		Total N
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
New technology	9	5.6	73	45.6	78	48.8	160
WH&S requirements	20	12.5	67	41.9	73	45.6	160
Licensing requirements	26	16.3	59	36.9	75	46.9	160
Other regulatory requirements	22	13.8	68	42.5	70	43.8	160
Market pressures	30	18.9	70	44.0	59	37.1	159
Quality	5	3.1	55	34.4	100	62.5	160
Business strategy	18	11.2	67	41.6	76	47.2	161
Demand from employees	22	13.8	81	50.6	57	35.6	160
Business/organisation change	20	12.5	74	46.3	66	41.3	160
Required skills are not available on the external labour market	27	16.8	78	48.4	56	34.8	161
Other			10	7.9	7	5.6	

Notes: Industry areas higher than average for licensing: Financial services; Communications and IT; Manufacturing; Construction and civil engineering; Health; Consulting; Education.
Industry areas higher than average for other regulation: Financial services; Communications and IT; Manufacturing; Government/community/public utilities; Construction and civil engineering; Consulting.

Table D15 Q2.4 Please nominate, from the list above (i.e. from Q2.3), the number that represents the most important driver for training

	N	%
New technology	30	19.2
WH&S requirements	16	10.3
Licensing requirements	18	11.5
Other regulatory requirements	14	9.0
Market pressures	17	10.9
Quality	30	19.2
Business strategy	12	7.7
Demand from employees	2	1.3
Business/organisation change	7	4.5
Required skills are not available on the external labour market	5	3.2
Other	5	3.2
Total	156	100.0

Table D16 Q2.5a Does your business/organisation have a dedicated training department or section

	N	%
Yes	82	50.6
No	80	49.4
Total	162	100.0

Table D17 Q2.5b How many employees approximately are employed solely in the training department or section

	N	%
1–5 employees	27	41.5
6–15 employees	17	26.2
16–40 employees	14	21.5
41–80 employees	3	4.6
81 or more employees	4	6.2
Total	65	100.0

Table D18 Q2.6 Does your business/organisation have

	Yes		No		Don't know		Total N
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
A written training strategy or implementation plan	84	53.2	62	39.2	12	7.6	158
A training manager	83	51.9	70	43.8	7	4.4	160
Workplace trainers/instructors, part of whose job is to train or assess	99	61.9	55	34.4	6	3.8	160
A separate training budget	82	51.6	68	42.8	9	5.7	159
A scheme to reimburse employees for course fees for external courses (please exclude apprentices or trainees)	85	53.1	64	40.0	11	6.9	160
Training based on systematic training needs analyses	75	47.5	66	41.8	17	10.8	158
A training committee	45	28.3	98	61.6	16	10.1	159
Its own training manuals developed for the company	87	54.7	58	36.5	14	8.8	159
An in-house online learning system	69	43.9	78	49.7	10	6.4	157
A purchased online learning system	55	34.6	87	54.7	17	10.7	159
Formal development plans for staff	86	54.4	63	39.9	9	5.7	158
Evaluation of workers' satisfaction with training events	93	58.9	58	36.7	7	4.4	158
Evaluation of learning outcomes for workers from training events	82	52.2	65	41.4	10	6.4	157
Evaluation of workers' changes in behaviour or skills post-training	71	44.9	75	47.5	12	7.6	158
Evaluation of impact for the business/organisation (e.g. fewer quality problems or fewer accidents)	79	49.7	65	40.9	15	9.4	159

Table D19 Q2.7 Since January 2014 has your business/organisation purchased (using its own funds or government/other official funds) training for your employees from any of the following external providers? Please include cases where the provider comes on-site and also where your staff attend the provider or study by distance.

	No		A little		Some		A great deal		N who purchased	% of all respondents
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
TAFE colleges	86	54.1	31	19.5	30	18.9	12	7.5	73	45.9
Universities	84	52.8	27	17.0	35	22.0	13	8.2	75	47.1
Private training providers	43	26.9	40	25.0	53	33.1	24	15.0	117	73.1
Equipment & product suppliers	59	36.9	35	21.9	43	26.9	23	14.4	101	63.1
Employer, industry or professional associations	62	38.8	31	19.4	42	26.3	25	15.6	98	61.2
Other										8.9

Note: 28 respondents answered 'No' to **all** types.

Table D20 Q2.8 How useful for your business/organisation are the following potential features of using external training providers

	No real benefits		Some benefits		A great deal of benefit	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Their specific content expertise	25	15.8	74	46.8	59	37.3
Their training expertise	24	15.2	76	48.1	58	36.7
Availability of a range of qualifications	29	18.4	72	45.6	57	36.1
Opportunities for employees to gain a wider viewpoint	24	15.2	74	46.8	60	38.0
Opportunities for employees to have time away to think	46	29.3	70	44.6	41	26.1
Useful when only one or a few employees require training	29	18.5	84	53.5	44	28.0
More resource efficient than providing in-house	29	18.6	80	51.3	47	30.1
Other			7	5.1	4	2.9

Table D21 Q2.9 What is your general level of satisfaction with each of these sources of training (1 = highly dissatisfied to 5 = highly satisfied)

	Satisfied[1]		Dissatisfied[2]		Total N[3]	Mean
	N	%	N	%		
TAFE colleges	41	66.1	21	33.9	62	3.33
Universities	50	82.0	11	18.0	61	3.52
Private training providers	68	80.0	17	20.0	85	3.50
Equipment & product suppliers	57	79.2	15	20.8	72	3.49
Employer, industry or professional associations	61	83.6	12	16.4	73	3.52
Other	4	57.1	3	42.9	7	3.07

Notes: 1 Respondents who answered 4 or 5 were aggregated to form the proportion of 'satisfied' respondents.
2 Respondents who answered 1 or 2 were aggregated to form the proportion of 'dissatisfied' respondents.
3 Total N excludes respondents who answered 3.

Table D22 Q3.1 Thinking about your organisation as a whole (and excluding management and professional workers who receive their vocational preparation at university) what is the relative importance of informal training as a component of overall training

	N	%
Not important (there is very little informal training)	27	17.2
Somewhat important (about half of our overall training)	86	54.8
Very important (greater than the formal training provided)	44	28.0
Total	157	100.0

Table D23 Q3.2 Has your business/organisation provided any of the following informal training to aid the development of your employees since January 2014

	None		A little		Some		A great deal	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Provided supervision by a manager or supervisor to ensure that employees are guided through their job role	21	13.5	34	21.8	64	41.0	37	23.7
Provided a mentor or buddy to ensure that employees are guided through their job role	21	13.5	42	27.1	61	39.4	31	20.0
Provided opportunities to spend time learning through watching others perform their jobs	25	16.0	41	26.3	65	41.7	25	16.0
Allowed staff to perform tasks that go beyond their strict job roles, in a structured manner	24	15.3	39	24.8	72	45.9	22	14.0
We have structured work so that inexperienced people can progressively undertake more complex activities	21	13.5	44	28.2	67	42.9	24	15.4
We have regular meetings (at least monthly) of groups of employee groups that incorporate a sharing of lessons learned	38	24.7	34	22.1	49	31.8	33	21.4
Provided development activities for supervisors in how to train via informal training	42	26.9	36	23.1	53	34.0	25	16.0
Other			6	4.5	8	6	1	0.8

Table D24 Q4.1 Please estimate the percentage of your employees that have been involved in the following types of training since January 2014 (either provided in-house or by an external provider)

	Nationally accredited training		Other formal or structured training	
	N	%	N	%
0%	41	27.0	42	27.5
1–25%	29	19.1	31	20.3
26–50%	29	19.1	35	22.9
51–75%	15	9.9	9	5.9
76–100%	38	25.0	36	23.5
Total	152	100.0	153	100.0

Table D25 Q4.2 Which of the following types of training has your business/organisation provided for your employees since January 2014 (either yourselves or through an external provider)

	None		A little		Some		A great deal	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Induction training	17	11.2	33	21.7	46	30.3	56	36.8
OH&S training (including first aid)	18	11.8	33	21.7	49	32.2	52	34.2
Training for licensing requirements	28	18.5	33	21.9	58	38.4	32	21.2
Job-specific training	12	7.9	33	21.7	50	32.9	57	37.5
Supervisory training	25	16.8	43	28.9	54	36.2	27	18.1
Management training	37	24.7	38	25.3	51	34.0	24	16.0
Training in new technology	23	15.3	36	24.0	58	38.7	33	22.0
Vendor training (new products or equipment)	35	23.3	38	25.3	51	34.0	26	17.3
Other			4	3.0	6	4.5	4	3.0

Table D26 Q4.3 What are the sources of your knowledge about nationally accredited training

	N	%
Have no knowledge	33	21.6
TAFE or other registered training organisation	80	52.3
Commonwealth Department of Education and Training	41	26.8
State training authority or department	33	21.6
Employer/industry association	52	34.0
Trade unions	28	18.3
Australian Apprenticeship Centre	18	11.8
National Industry Skills Council	23	15.0
State industry training advisory body if still present in your state/territory	19	12.4
Group training organisation	32	20.9
Training.gov.au website, My Skills website or Australian Apprenticeships website	24	15.7
Skills@Work eNewsletter	7	4.6
Other	8	5.2

Table D27 Q4.4 Please nominate, from the list above (i.e. from Q4.3), the number that represents the source of information that is the most useful

	N	%
Have no knowledge	10	7.4
TAFE or other registered training organisation	32	23.7
Commonwealth Department of Education and Training	10	7.4
State training authority or department	10	7.4
Employer/Industry association	25	18.5
Trade unions	5	3.7
Australian Apprenticeship Centre	2	1.5
National Industry Skills Council	5	3.7
State industry training advisory body if still present in your state/territory	6	4.4
Group training organisation	12	8.9
Training.gov.au website, My Skills website, or Apprenticeships website	9	6.7
Skills@Work eNewsletter	3	2.2
Other	6	4.4
Total	135	100.0

Table D28 Q4.5 Do you use nationally accredited qualifications or skill sets for existing workers in your business/organisation

	N	%
No	48	31.0
Yes and the qualification or skill set is awarded	84	54.2
Yes – but no qualification or skill set is awarded	12	7.7
Don't know	11	7.1
Total	155	100.0

Table D29 Q4.5a Did you include qualifications for apprentices or trainees in your answer

	N	%
Yes	50	59.5
No	34	40.5
Total	84	100.0

Table D30 Q4.5b Did you include apprentices

	N	%
Yes	35	70.0
No	15	30.0
Total	50	100.0

Table D31 Q4.5c If so, were they recruited from outside or were they existing workers

	N	%
From outside	14	40.0
Existing workers	17	48.6
Some from each group	4	11.4
Total	35	100.0

Table D32 Q4.5d Did you include trainees

	N	%
Yes	42	84.0
No	8	16.0
Total	50	100.0

Table D33 Q4.5e Were they recruited from outside or were they existing workers

	N	%
From outside	17	40.5
Existing workers	19	45.2
Some from each group	6	14.3
Total	42	100.0

Table D34 Q4.6 Do you use competency standards as the basis for any of the following other activities

	N	%
Do not use	54	35.5
In writing job descriptions	45	29.4
In job evaluation/classification	58	37.9
In performance management	55	35.9
In recruitment and selection	45	29.4
In non-accredited training	15	9.8
Other	3	2.0

Table D35 Q4.7 Has your business/organisation provided or purchased (using its own funds or government/other official funds) nationally accredited training for any existing workers since January 2014

	N	%
Yes	74	48.4
No	79	51.6
Total	153	100.0

Table D36 Q4.11 How important was the availability (or non-availability) of government funding in your business/organisation's decision to use nationally accredited training

	N	%
Very important	28	36.8
Of some importance	24	31.6
Not important	10	13.2
No funding available, to my knowledge	11	14.5
Don't know	3	3.9
Total	76	100.0

Table D37 Q4.13 Is the nationally accredited training you provide to, or purchase for, your employees customised to the specific needs of your business/organisation

	N	%
Customised to a great extent	23	30.3
Customised somewhat	32	42.1
Not customised or customised in very minor ways	21	27.6
Total	76	100.0

Table D38 Q4.14 Since your business or organisation has been using nationally accredited training, has the total amount of all training in your business/organisation

	N	%
Increased considerably	7	9.2
Increased somewhat	32	42.1
Stayed about the same	32	42.1
Decreased	3	3.9
Don't know	2	2.6
Total	76	100.0

Table D39 Q4.15 If the total amount of all training has increased, do you think this is attributable to

	N	%
The availability of nationally accredited training	39	52.7
Some other reason	14	18.9
Don't know	21	28.4
Total	74	100.0

Table D40 Q5.1 What arrangement(s), if any, do you have with an external RTO or RTOs for the purpose of providing nationally accredited training

	N	%
No arrangements at all	84	54.9
A formal partnership with a TAFE(s)	29	19.0
A formal partnership with a non-TAFE RTO(s)	22	14.4
An informal but ongoing partnership with a TAFE(s)	19	12.4
An informal but ongoing partnership with a non-TAFE RTO(s)	16	10.5
Ad hoc arrangements with training provider(s) as necessary	31	20.3
We are an enterprise RTO but also have arrangements with other RTOs	2	1.3
We are an enterprise RTO and have no arrangements with other RTOs	1	0.7

Table D41 Q5.2 Please nominate, from the list above (i.e. from Q5.1), the number that represents the most important arrangement that you currently have in place with an external RTO

	N	%
No arrangements at all	43	37.1
A formal partnership with TAFE(s)	16	13.8
A formal partnership with a non-TAFE RTO(s)	14	12.1
An informal but ongoing partnership with a TAFE(s)	8	6.9
An informal but ongoing partnership with a non-TAFE RTO(s)	7	6.0
Ad hoc arrangements with training provider(s) as necessary	26	22.4
We are an enterprise RTO and have no arrangements with other RTO(s)	2	1.7
Total	116	100.0

Table D42 Q5.4 In general, is the nationally accredited training/assessment provided by the external training provider(s) to your workers

	N	%
Mostly at the training provider's premises	44	34.9
About half and half	40	31.7
Mostly on site by the training provider(s)	22	17.5
Mostly on site delivered by our trainers and moderated by the training provider(s)	20	15.9
Total	126	100.0

Table D43 Q5.5 Thinking about the training provider with which you have done most of your training business, please rate along the scale from 1 = Highly dissatisfied to 6 = Highly satisfied your level of satisfaction with the performance of your training provider partner in the following aspects

	Satisfied[1]		Dissatisfied[2]		Total N	Mean
	N	%	N	%		
The training provider's ability to establish trust	89	70.6	37	29.4	126	4.11
The quality of the training provider's communication with us	94	73.4	34	26.6	128	4.18
The commitment shown by the training provider's staff to make the partnership(s) a success	93	72.1	36	27.9	129	4.17
The training provider's willingness to customise training to meet our needs	91	72.2	35	27.8	126	4.13
The training provider's success in customising the training	83	67.5	40	32.5	123	4.04
The training provider's openness to experimentation	75	60.5	49	39.5	124	3.94
The training provider's flexibility with staffing arrangements	86	68.8	39	31.2	125	4.08
The training provider's flexibility in providing different delivery modes for the training	87	71.3	35	28.7	122	4.11
The training provider's level of planning within the partnership	88	70.4	37	29.6	125	4.13
The training provider's willingness to adopt a long-term perspective in judging the success of the partnership	89	71.8	35	28.2	124	4.08
The training provider's willingness to make changes to the nature of the off-the-job training	76	63.3	44	36.7	120	3.94
The training provider's willingness to make changes to the nature of the on-the-job training that they deliver	83	69.7	36	30.3	119	4.03
The administrative arrangements the training provider puts in place to manage the day-to-day issues arising in such partnerships	85	69.1	38	30.9	123	4.12

Notes: 1 Respondents who answered 4, 5, or 6 were aggregated to form the proportion of 'satisfied' respondents.
2 Respondents who answered 1, 2 or 3 were aggregated to form the proportion of 'dissatisfied' respondents.

Table D44 Q5.6 Continuing to think about the same training provider partner, please rate them on the following items regarding your satisfaction with the quality of their training

	Satisfied[1]		Dissatisfied[2]		Total N	Mean
	N	%	N	%		
Skill of the trainer delivering the qualification/skill set	97	74.6	33	25.4	130	4.19
Volume of learning received	93	72.1	36	27.9	129	4.02
Quality of resources provided	95	73.6	34	26.4	129	4.16
Currency of resources provided	88	69.8	38	30.2	126	4.10
Efficient use of learning technologies	92	71.9	36	28.1	128	4.10
Qualification or skill set was assessed at the appropriate level	89	69.0	40	31.0	129	4.09
Quality of the feedback provided to the learner	97	75.2	32	24.8	129	4.17

Notes: 1 Respondents who answered 4, 5, or 6 were aggregated to form the proportion of 'satisfied' respondents.
2 Respondents who answered 1, 2 or 3 were aggregated to form the proportion of 'dissatisfied' respondents.

Table D45 Q6.1 In an ideal world, over the last 12 months, would you have provided more training for your staff than you were able to do

	N	%
Yes	93	60.8
No	60	39.2
Total	153	100.0

Table D46 Q6.2 How applicable are the following reasons for not providing as much training as you would have liked

	Not applicable		Somewhat applicable		Very applicable	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Insufficient money available for training	10	10.9	47	51.1	35	38
Managers have lacked sufficient time to organise training	15	16.1	42	45.2	36	38.7
Employees are generally too busy to give training to others	9	9.9	38	41.8	44	48.4
Employees are generally too busy to undertake training and development	12	13	43	46.7	37	40.2
Training is not considered to be a high priority for the establishment, by senior management	29	31.2	41	44.1	23	24.7
All our staff are proficient/no pressing business need for a great deal of training	35	38	35	38	22	23.9
More highly trained staff may be poached by other employers	37	40.7	32	35.2	22	24.2
No particular reason	52	57.8	22	24.4	16	17.8
Other			5	6.2	5	6.2

Table D47 Q6.3 From the list in the previous question (i.e. Q6.2) what is the most important reason for not providing more training

	N	%
Insufficient money available for training	30	38.0
Managers have lacked sufficient time to organise training	11	13.9
Employees are generally too busy to give training to others	6	7.6
Employees are generally too busy to undertake training and development	15	19.0
Training is not considered to be a high priority for the establishment, by senior management	6	7.6
All our staff are proficient/no pressing business need for a great deal of training	3	3.8
More highly trained staff may be poached by other employers	2	2.5
No particular reason	3	3.8
Other	3	3.8
Total	79	100.0

Appendix E – RTO survey: overall results

Table E1 Q2. What is your title

	N	%
Chief executive Officer/director/managing director	48	44.9
Other senior manager	33	30.8
Head of school/department	3	2.8
Program coordinator	3	2.8
Business development Manager/partnership management coordinator	5	4.7
Other	15	14.0
Total	107	100.0

Table E2 Q3. How would you classify your organisation

	N	%
TAFE	20	18.7
For-profit private provider	55	51.4
Non-profit private provider	32	29.9
Total	107	100.0

Table E3 Q4. How would you classify the location and type of your organisation

	N	%
Metropolitan-based, public provider	13	12.3
Metropolitan-based, private provider	41	38.7
Regional, public provider	15	14.2
Regional, private provider	27	25.5
Other	10	9.4
Total	106	100.0

Table E4 Q5. What state/territory is your organisation (head office) based in

	N	%
New South Wales	24	22.4
Victoria	27	25.2
Queensland	34	31.8
South Australia	7	6.5
Western Australia	9	8.4
Tasmania	3	2.8
Northern Territory	2	1.9
Australian Capital Territory	1	0.9
Total	107	100.0

Table E5 Q6. What is your level of involvement in VET industry–provider partnerships

	N	%
Set up partnerships	13	12.3
Manage partnerships	9	8.5
Set up and continue to manage partnerships	53	50.0
Those managing key partnerships report to me	17	16.0
Other	14	13.2
Total	106	100.0

Table E6 Q7. In which of the following locations does your organisation have VET industry–provider partnerships

	How many times the location was mentioned	% based on answers	% based on respondents
Your local region	85	44.7	79.4
Other parts of your state	53	27.9	49.5
Other Australian states	45	23.7	42.1
Overseas countries	7	3.7	6.6
Total	190	100.0	100.0

Table E7 Q9. Please select a number from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 6 (Strongly agree) to show how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements

	Agree		Disagree		Mean
	N	%	N	%	
There is strong support in our organisation for seeking industry training partnerships that will be profitable and high-profile	81	75.7	26	24.3	4.6
We are operating in a highly competitive training market	100	93.5	7	6.5	5.3
Increasing the levels of profitable training partnerships is a major goal of our organisation	85	79.4	22	20.6	4.5
We operate almost as the only provider of certain types of industry training	50	46.7	57	53.3	3.3
We have a highly successful track record in partnering with industry	92	86.0	15	14.0	4.8
Our geographical location gives us competitive advantages in gaining access to certain key industry partners	53	49.5	54	50.5	3.5
Our organisation manages partnerships interstate	55	51.4	52	48.6	3.4
Our organisation has a clear strategy about how it will build its level of industry partnering	76	71.7	30	28.3	4.2
Industry is attracted by our track record as a successful partner	90	84.1	17	15.9	4.5
We see ourselves being successful in particular niche markets of industry training	95	88.8	12	11.2	4.9
We are still developing a track record as a good training partner	68	63.6	39	36.4	3.9
Our organisational culture (e.g. our values, how we relate to people) is proving to be an asset in our partnering with industry	98	91.6	9	8.4	5.1
Our organisational structure (e.g. level of hierarchy, control systems) is proving to be an asset in our partnering with industry	85	79.4	22	20.6	4.7
We are the ‘partner of choice’ for a number of industries	74	69.2	33	30.8	4.3

Table E8 Q10. What percentage of your training partnerships with industry falls under each of the following categories

	N	Mean	SD
Mutual service partnerships where we pool resources with the industry partner to gain access to equipment or resources that aid training	92	15.1	21.7
Joint ventures where we pursue a training opportunity together by combining our capabilities and sharing business risk	92	9.2	14.6
We provide fee-for-service contracted services to client organisations	92	39.8	30.1
We cooperate with an industry partner to provide training that is wholly or largely government subsidised	91	29.2	28.8
Other	92	7.0	21.1

Table E9 Q11. What are the main drivers for your organisation's involvement in industry/employer partnerships

	Agree		Disagree		Mean
	N	%	N	%	
To bring in additional revenue	72	78.3	20	21.7	4.5
To copy what other organisations are doing	12	13.3	78	86.7	2.0
To give staff stronger links with industry	72	78.3	20	21.7	4.5
Our motivations are not really clear	11	12.2	79	87.8	1.9
Industries/employers have requested that we assist them	76	82.6	16	17.4	4.6
If we did not get involved in the partnering, another organisation would have taken the opportunity	50	54.9	41	45.1	3.7
To find future employers for our students	61	66.3	31	33.7	4.0
To build extra capability within our staff	68	73.9	24	26.1	4.3
To keep up to date with industry needs/requirements	82	89.1	10	10.9	5.0
To maintain relevance/alignment with industry needs/requirements	84	91.3	8	8.7	5.2

Table E10 Q15. Please indicate whether your partnerships are mainly with small, medium or large enterprises

	N	%
Mainly small or medium (up to 200 employees)	54	58.7
Mainly large	5	5.4
A fairly equal mixture of small, medium and large	33	35.9
Total	92	100.0

Table E11 Q16. As you indicated that your partnerships are mainly with small or medium enterprises (up to 200 employees), please indicate which predominates

	N	%
Small: up to 20 employees	30	62.5
Medium: 21 to 200 employees	18	37.5
Total	48	100.0

Table E12 Q17. Please select a number from 1 (Highly dissatisfied) to 6 (Highly satisfied) to indicate your level of satisfaction with the performance of your own organisation in the following aspects of partnering with industry or with specific employers

	Satisfied		Dissatisfied		Mean
	N	%	N	%	
Our ability to establish trust	83	95.4	4	4.6	5.2
The quality of our communication with the industry partner	78	89.7	9	10.3	4.9
The commitment shown by our staff to make the partnerships a success	80	92.0	7	8.0	5.2
Our willingness to customise training to meet industry needs	82	95.3	4	4.7	5.3
Our success in customising the training	82	95.3	4	4.7	5.1
Our openness to experimentation	75	88.2	10	11.8	4.8
Our flexibility with staffing arrangements	72	82.8	15	17.2	4.7
Our application of financial measures to determine the success of the partnering	67	77.9	19	22.1	4.4
Our application of non-financial measures to determine the success of the partnering	68	79.1	18	20.9	4.5
The financial returns to us to date	60	69.8	26	30.2	4.0
The financial returns to us in the longer-term	68	80.0	17	20.0	4.2
Our flexibility in providing different delivery modes for the training	70	82.4	15	17.6	4.8
Our level of planning within the partnership	76	87.4	11	12.6	4.8
Our willingness to adopt a long-term perspective in judging the success of the partnership	76	87.4	11	12.6	4.8
Our willingness to make changes to the nature of the off-the-job training	73	85.9	12	14.1	5.0
Our willingness to make changes to the nature of the on-the-job training that we deliver	73	86.9	11	13.1	5.0
The administrative arrangements we put in place to manage the day-to-day issues arising in such partnerships	65	74.7	22	25.3	4.5

Table E13 Q20. Please select a number from 1 (Highly dissatisfied) to 6 (Highly satisfied) to indicate your level of satisfaction with the attributes of your industry partners in general in the following aspects of their partnering with your organisation

	Satisfied		Dissatisfied		Mean
	N	%	N	%	
Their ability to establish trust with us	83	96.5	3	3.5	5.2
The quality of their communication with us	75	89.3	9	10.7	4.8
The commitment shown by their staff to make such partnerships a success	75	88.2	10	11.8	4.8
Their willingness to customise the training	72	88.9	9	11.1	5.0
Their success in customising the training on the job	66	84.6	12	15.4	4.7
Their openness to experimentation with the training model	74	88.1	10	11.9	4.8
Their flexibility with staffing arrangements	64	79.0	17	21.0	4.5
Their application of financial measures to determine the success of the partnering	56	80.0	14	20.0	4.3
Their application of non-financial measures to determine the success of the partnering	62	84.9	11	15.1	4.6
The financial returns to them to date	54	84.4	10	15.6	4.5
The financial returns to them in the longer-term	52	83.9	10	16.1	4.6
Their flexibility in facilitating different delivery modes for the training	66	84.6	12	15.4	4.7
Their level of planning within the partnership	61	79.2	16	20.8	4.5
Their willingness to adopt a long-term perspective in judging the success of the partnership	68	89.5	8	10.5	4.7
Willingness to make changes to the nature of the on-the-job training that they deliver	63	86.3	10	13.7	4.7
The administrative arrangements they put place to manage the day-to-day issues arising in such partnerships	60	77.9	17	22.1	4.4

Table E14 Q21. We want to know how well you think your organisation does at some aspects that relate to partnering. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements in relation to your organisation

Aspects of partnering	% Agree		% Disagree		Mean
	N	%	N	%	
Staff are comfortable about sharing new ideas that might improve the partnering outcomes	82	94.3	5	5.7	5.1
There is open discussion of what we have learned from our mistakes in partnering	75	86.2	12	13.8	5.0
A failed partnership is seen as an opportunity to learn and improve our operations	75	87.2	11	12.8	4.9
Our organisation does a good job in communicating to all staff what we have learned from successful and failed partnering	66	75.9	21	24.1	4.4
I work in an environment where constructive feedback is welcomed by management about how our industry partnerships are going	76	87.4	11	12.6	5.0
We regularly review the progress of partnerships with our industry partners	73	84.9	13	15.1	4.8
New ideas that challenge current training practices are welcomed	80	92.0	7	8.0	5.0

Table E15 Q23. Have you been involved in ending an industry–provider partnership

	N	%
Yes	45	51.7
No	42	48.3
Total	87	100.0

Table E16 Q25. Please select a number from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 6 (Strongly agree) to show how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Think about those staff who do industry partnering and the following aspects

Staff effectiveness	% Agree		% Disagree		Mean
	N	%	N	%	
Marketing what we can do	69	80.2	17	19.8	4.5
Negotiation skills	74	86.0	12	14.0	4.7
Doing training needs analyses	78	91.8	7	8.2	4.8
Employer liaison	81	94.2	5	5.8	4.9
Legal and contractual arrangements	59	68.6	27	31.4	4.2
Project management	65	76.5	20	23.5	4.3
Winning the job	72	83.7	14	16.3	4.6
Setting shared goals with the industry partner	78	90.7	8	9.3	4.8
Building personal relationships with the industry partner	84	97.7	2	2.3	5.2
Identifying and managing risk in the partnership	72	84.7	13	15.3	4.5
Showing real interest in partners' proposals and concerns	83	96.5	3	3.5	5.3
Providing information and regular feedback to the organisation about the performance of partnerships that they manage	72	84.7	13	15.3	4.7

Table E17 Q29. How important is government funding in your partnerships with industry

	N	%
Very important	38	43.7
Important	25	28.7
Not very important	15	17.2
Not at all important	9	10.3
Total	87	100.0

Table E18 Q32. Have recent changes to Commonwealth training funding affected the amount and nature of training that employers with whom you partner provide to their employees

	N	%
Yes	49	57.0
No	20	23.3
Don't know	17	19.8
Total	86	100.0

Table E19 Q33. If yes, please provide more details by selecting one of the following statements

	N	%
Employers accessing more training from RTOs	5	10.2
Employers accessing less training from RTOs	32	65.3
Employers accessing the same amount of training but pay more for it themselves	4	8.2
Other changes	8	16.3
Total	49	100.0

Table E20 Q34. Have recent changes to state/territory training funding affected the amount and nature of training that employers with whom you partner provide to their employees

	N	%
Yes	50	58.1
No	23	26.7
Don't know	13	15.1
Total	86	100.0

Table E21 Q35. If yes, please provide more details by selecting one of the following statements

	N	%
Employers accessing more training from RTOs	3	6.0
Employers accessing less training from RTOs	29	58.0
Employers accessing the same amount of training but pay more for it themselves	5	10.0
Other changes	13	26.0
Total	50	100.0

Appendix F – RTO survey: summary results by organisation type

Table F1 Q6. What is your level of involvement in VET–industry partnerships

	TAFE		For-profit		Non-profit		All RTOs	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Set up and continue to manage partnerships	11	55.0	25	45.5	17	54.8	53	50.0
Those managing key partnerships report to me	7	35.0	4	7.3	6	19.4	17	16.0
Set up partnerships	1	5.0	9	16.4	3	9.7	13	12.3
Manage partnerships	0	0.0	7	12.7	2	6.5	9	8.5
Other	1	5.0	10	18.2	3	9.7	14	13.2
Total	20	100.0	55	100.0	31	100.0	106	100.0

Table F2 Q7. In which of the following locations does your organisation have VET–industry provider partnerships

Respondents	TAFE		For-profit		Non-profit		All RTOs	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Your local region	19	95.0	39	70.9	27	84.4	85	79.4
Other parts of your state	16	80.0	25	45.5	12	37.5	53	49.5
Other Australian states	12	60.0	24	43.6	9	28.1	45	42.1
Overseas countries	4	20.0	2	3.6	1	3.1	7	6.6
Total Respondents	20		55		32		107	

Table F3 Q9. Please select a number from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 6 (Strongly agree) to show how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements

Per cent of respondents who agree (rated 4,5 or 6 out of 6) Total N = 107	TAFE	For-profit	Non-profit	All RTOs
We are operating in a highly competitive training market	95.0	94.5	90.6	93.5
Our organisational culture (e.g. our values, how we relate to people) is proving to be an asset in our partnering with industry	80.0	96.4	90.6	91.6
We see ourselves being successful in particular niche markets of industry training	80.0	89.1	93.8	88.8
We have a highly successful track record in partnering with industry	95.0	83.6	84.4	86.0
Industry is attracted by our track record as a successful partner	90.0	83.6	81.3	84.1
Increasing the levels of profitable training partnerships is a major goal of our organisation	95.0	78.2	71.9	79.4
Our organisational structure (e.g. level of hierarchy, control systems) is proving to be an asset in our partnering with industry	65.0	83.6	81.3	79.4
There is strong support in our organisation for seeking industry training partnerships that will be profitable and high-profile	100.0	70.9	68.8	75.7
Our organisation has a clear strategy about how it will build its level of industry partnering	70.0	76.4	64.5	71.7
We are the ‘partner of choice’ for a number of industries	70.0	72.7	62.5	69.2
We are still developing a track record as a good training partner	85.0	69.1	40.6	63.6
Our organisation manages partnerships interstate	75.0	45.5	46.9	51.4
Our geographical location gives us competitive advantages in gaining access to certain key industry partners	85.0	40.0	43.8	49.5
We operate almost as the only provider of certain types of industry training	60.0	47.3	37.5	46.7

Table F4 Q11. What were the main drivers for your organisation’s involvement in industry/employer partnerships

Per cent of respondents who agree (rated 4, 5 or 6 out of 6)	TAFE	For-profit	Non-profit	All RTOs
To maintain relevance/alignment with industry needs/requirements	100.0	91.1	86.2	91.3
To keep up to date with industry needs/requirements	100.0	86.7	86.2	89.1
Industries/employers have requested that we assist them	94.4	77.7	82.8	82.6
To bring in additional revenue	100.0	77.7	65.5	78.3
To give staff stronger links with industry	88.9	75.5	75.9	78.3
To build extra capability within our staff	94.4	68.8	69.0	73.9
To find future employers for our students	88.9	55.5	69.0	66.3
If we did not get involved in the partnering, another organisation would have taken the opportunity	83.3	45.4	51.7	54.9
To copy what other organisations are doing	11.1	15.9	10.7	13.3

Note: N = 106.

Table F5 Examples of successful industry partnerships (Q13)

What is the partnership about?	How did it come about?	What benefits does it bring to your RTO?	What benefits does it bring to the industry partner?	Revenue in an average year
TAFE institutes				
As always, meeting the training requirements of an employer aligned to their work environment and ensuring that they meet their statutory, compliance and WHS obligations	Employer dissatisfied with training outcomes from attendance at a campus	Access to equipment donations, premium client to assist with positioning in the marketplace, currency of teachers, increased number of apprentices, first option to any fee-for-service training	Training is completely contextualised to the practices and equipment used in their workplace, less time away from the workplace, improved productivity, greater value for their training dollar by leveraging off government funding sources	$400 000
Provision of ongoing formal and informal training spanning apprentices, licensing, specialist skill sets and general professional development	Building trust and capability with industry	Opportunities to develop our offering and provide diversity for our training departments	Able to work with an RTO to achieve accredited training that is specific to their site's needs and procedural policies.	$0.5 million
Health.	Longer-term relationship building.	Student placements, job outcomes for graduates, positive marketing.	Meeting workforce needs.	Not provided.
For-profit RTOs				
Delivering a program of procurement certification training and standards	Public tender	Intimate knowledge of the government procurement policies and standards/ability to contribute to current and future needs	Expanded body of skills and expertise with real-life experiences and current industry case studies	Not provided
Dementia	Fee for service workshop	Industry engagement, innovation	Quality cost-effective training	Not provided
Training the whole workforce in safety	Approached by industry/employer	Ongoing/annual training provided and the company uses us for other training also	The learnings from this partnership also impact the content of other training programs delivered to industry – content targets current needs/issues	Not provided
Delivery of first aid training to corporate and private clients.	They were referred to me by a common acquaintance.	Networking/brand awareness/additional revenue.	Revenue/additional services.	$10 000 – $15 000
What is the partnership about?	**How did it come about?**	**What benefits does it bring to your RTO?**	**What benefits does it bring to the industry partner?**	**Revenue in an average year**
Non-profit RTOs				
Mutual service partnership – work placement for our students which benefits us and the industry employer	Strategised and planned for more hands-on experience for our students to gain practice in the real world, rather than just a simulated environment	Reputation gained with how good our training is, and the industry partners are keen to obtain more of our students. Satisfies the work placement requirement which is embedded as part of our course	Free labour during the work placement period. The opportunity to witness our students, and employ them once their work experience is completed.	$0
To deliver timely and relevant training where gaps exist	By approaching industry direct where partnership funding arose	Keeping up to date with industry needs	A better skilled and job-ready workforce	Not provided

Getting a group of previously unqualified staff in an organisation trained and ensuring that the organisation can then in the future train their own staff.	Through previously established networks.	Increased revenue, better industry connection.	High-quality staff training, ability to provide staff training internally, better ROI.	$100 000.

Table F6 Q17. Please select a number from 1 (Highly dissatisfied) to 6 (Highly satisfied) to indicate your level of satisfaction with the performance of your own organisation in the following aspects of partnering with industry or with specific employers

Per cent of respondents rating themselves as satisfied with (rated 4, 5 or 6 out of 6)	TAFE	For-profit	Non-profit	All RTOs
Our ability to establish trust	100.0	93.3	95.8	95.4
Our willingness to customise training to meet industry needs	94.4	95.5	95.8	95.3
Our success in customising the training	94.4	95.5	95.8	95.3
The commitment shown by our staff to make the partnerships a success	83.3	95.6	91.7	92.0
The quality of our communication with the industry partner	72.2	93.3	95.8	89.7
Our openness to experimentation	66.7	97.7	87.5	88.2
Our level of planning within the partnership	83.3	88.9	87.5	87.4
Our willingness to adopt a long-term perspective in judging the success of the partnership	77.8	95.6	79.2	87.4
Our willingness to make changes to the nature of the on-the-job training that we deliver	72.2	95.2	83.3	86.9
Our willingness to make changes to the nature of the off-the-job training	66.7	95.3	83.3	85.9
Our flexibility with staffing arrangements	44.4	97.8	83.3	82.8
Our flexibility in providing different delivery modes for the training	77.8	84.1	82.6	82.4
The financial returns to us in the longer-term	88.9	76.7	79.2	80.0
Our application of non-financial measures to determine the success of the partnering	61.1	86.4	79.2	79.1
Our application of financial measures to determine the success of the partnering	66.7	79.5	83.3	77.9
The administrative arrangements we put in place to manage the day-to-day issues arising in such partnerships	33.3	86.7	83.3	74.7
The financial returns to us to date	72.2	65.9	75.0	69.8

Table F7 Q20 Please select a number from 1 (Highly dissatisfied) to 6 (Highly satisfied) to indicate your level of satisfaction with the attributes of your industry partners in general in the following aspects of their partnering with your organisation

Per cent of respondents satisfied with their industry partners (rated 4, 5 or 6 out of 6)	TAFE	For-profit	Non-profit	All RTOs
Their ability to establish trust with us	94.4	97.7	95.8	96.5
Their willingness to adopt a long-term perspective in judging the success of the partnership	88.2	87.2	95.0	89.5
The quality of their communication with us	87.5	86.4	95.8	89.3
Their willingness to customise the training	94.1	88.1	86.4	88.9
The commitment shown by their staff to make such partnerships a success	88.2	86.4	91.7	88.2
Their openness to experimentation with the training model	88.9	88.4	87.0	88.1
Willingness to make changes to the nature of the on-the-job training that they deliver	81.3	88.9	85.7	86.3
Their application of non-financial measures to determine the success of the partnering	86.7	79.5	94.7	84.9
Their success in customising the training on the job	88.2	90.0	71.4	84.6
Their flexibility in facilitating different delivery modes for the training	77.8	89.5	81.8	84.6
The financial returns to them to date	93.8	78.8	86.7	84.4
The financial returns to them in the longer-term	88.2	80.6	85.7	83.9
Their application of financial measures to determine the success of the partnering	88.2	70.6	89.5	80.0
Their level of planning within the partnership	70.6	81.1	82.6	79.2
Their flexibility with staffing arrangements	70.6	80.5	82.6	79.0
The administrative arrangements they put place to manage the day-to-day issues arising in such partnerships	82.4	73.0	82.6	77.9

Table F8 Q21. We want to know how well you think your organisation does at some aspects that relate to partnering. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements in relation to your organisation

Per cent of respondents who agree (rated 4, 5 or 6 out of 6)	TAFE	For-profit	Non-profit	All RTOs
Staff are comfortable about sharing new ideas that might improve the partnering outcomes	83.3	97.8	95.8	94.3
New ideas that challenge current training practices are welcomed	72.2	95.6	100.0	92.0
I work in an environment where constructive feedback is welcomed by management about how our industry partnerships are going	61.1	97.8	87.5	87.4
A failed partnership is seen as an opportunity to learn and improve our operations	66.7	97.7	83.3	87.2
There is open discussion of what we have learned from our mistakes in partnering	50.0	97.8	91.7	86.2
We regularly review the progress of partnerships with our industry partners	66.7	93.2	83.3	84.9
Our organisation does a good job in communicating to all staff what we have learned from successful and failed partnering	22.2	95.6	79.2	75.9

Table F9 Q25. Please select a number from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 6 (Strongly agree) to show how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Think about those staff who do industry partnering and the following aspects

Per cent of respondents rating their own staff as effective in (rated 4,5 or 6 out of 6)	TAFE	For-profit	Non-profit	All RTOs
Building personal relationships with the industry partner	100.0	95.6	100.0	97.7
Showing real interest in partners' proposals and concerns	94.4	100.0	91.3	96.5
Employer liaison	94.4	97.8	87.0	94.2
Doing training needs analyses	88.9	97.7	82.6	91.8
Setting shared goals with the industry partner	88.9	93.3	87.0	90.7
Negotiation skills	83.3	84.4	91.3	86.0
Identifying and managing risk in the partnership	77.8	88.6	82.6	84.7
Providing information and regular feedback to the organisation about the performance of partnerships that they manage	72.2	90.9	82.6	84.7
Winning the job	72.2	88.9	82.6	83.7
Marketing what we can do	66.7	86.7	78.3	80.2
Project management	66.7	79.5	78.3	76.5
Legal and contractual arrangements	44.4	77.8	69.6	68.6

Table F10 Q29. How important is government funding in your partnerships with industry

	TAFE		For-profit		Non-profit		All RTOs	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Very important	11	61.1	15	33.3	12	50.0	38	43.7
Important	6	33.3	10	22.2	9	37.5	25	28.7
Not very important	1	5.6	12	26.7	2	8.3	15	17.2
Not at all important	0	0.0	8	17.8	1	4.2	9	10.3
Total	18	100.0	45	100.0	24	100.0	87	100.0

Table F11 Q32. Have recent changes to Commonwealth training funding affected the amount and nature of training that employers with whom you partner provide to their employees

	TAFE		For-profit		Non-profit		All RTOs	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	12	66.7	21	47.7	16	66.7	49	57.0
No	3	16.7	11	25.0	6	25.0	20	23.3
Don't know	3	16.7	12	27.3	2	8.3	17	19.8
Total	18	100.0	44	100.0	24	100.0	86	100.0

Table F12 Q33. If yes, please provide more details by selecting one of the following statements

	TAFE		For-profit		Non-profit		All RTOs	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Employers accessing less training from RTOs	9	75.0	11	52.4	12	75.0	32	65.3
Employers accessing more training from RTOs	0	0.0	3	14.3	2	12.5	5	10.2
Employers accessing the same amount of training but pay more for it themselves	1	8.3	2	9.5	1	6.3	4	8.2
Other changes	2	16.7	5	23.8	1	6.3	8	16.3
Total	12	100.0	21	100.0	16	100.0	49	100.0

Table F13 Q34. Have recent changes to state/territory training funding affected the amount and nature of training that employers with whom you partner provide to their employees

	TAFE		For-profit		Non-profit		All RTOs	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	14	77.8	22	50.0	14	58.3	50	58.1
No	3	16.7	13	29.5	7	29.2	23	26.7
Don't know	1	5.6	9	20.5	3	12.5	13	15.1
Total	18	100.0	44	100.0	24	100.0	86	100.0

Table F14 Q35. If yes, please provide more details by selecting one of the following statements

	TAFE		For-profit		Non-profit		All RTOs	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Employers accessing less training from RTOs	6	42.9	14	63.6	9	64.3	29	58.0
Employers accessing more training from RTOs	2	14.3	2	9.1	1	7.1	5	10.0
Employers accessing the same amount of training but pay more for it themselves	0	0.0	1	4.5	2	14.3	3	6.0
Other changes	6	42.9	5	22.7	2	14.3	13	26.0
Total	14	100.0	22	100.0	14	100.0	50	100.0

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