



**OF NCVER 1981-2021**



# A BRIEF HISTORY

Forty years ago, on 2 November 1981, the TAFE National Centre for Research and Development was officially opened at its first premises in the leafy suburb of Payneham, South Australia. The Centre was established in June 1980, after the Conference of TAFE Directors and the Chairman of the Technical and Further Education Council (TAFEC) prepared a proposal for the Australian Education Council (AEC) meeting of October 1979 for the establishment of a 'TAFE R&D centre'.

At that meeting, a draft charter was accepted which made provision for the review of the Centre after three years. The Memorandum and Articles of Association was signed by all Ministers of Education in June 1981.

The Centre was created as a company registered in the state of South Australia and limited by guarantee on 2 September 1981 and started its national operations in November in the same year.

## 40 YEARS OF NCVER

“I really think NCVER is one of the very few institutions in Australian VET that is genuinely world class”.

Testimonial from Robin Shreeve,  
former CEO of the Australian  
Workforce and Productivity Agency  
and Immediate Past President,  
AVETRA

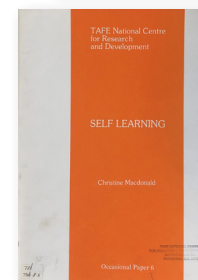
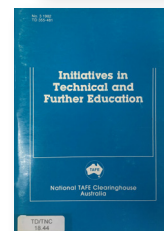
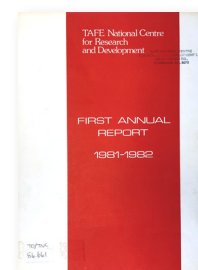
At the end of its first twelve months, the Centre then led by Graham Hermann had a team of just eleven staff including four project officers, five support staff and a part-time education officer who maintained the National TAFE Clearinghouse Network, the predecessor to today's VOCEDplus international database.

Early on, the priority was centred on conducting 'research and development' including training resources and materials development and working to establish a solid foundation for research in 'Technical and Further Education' - an area significantly under-researched at the time compared with general and higher education.



The second office occupied by NCVER in Leabrook, South Australia.

## 40 YEARS OF NCVER



## CHRONOLOGY OF KEY NCVER EVENTS

**1974**

Kangan Committee recommends setting up an 'Australian TAFE Technology Centre'

**1979**

Williams inquiry recommends establishment of a National Centre for Research and Development in TAFE

National TAFE Clearinghouse established

**1981**

TAFE National Centre for Research and Development begins operations in November

**1984**

Review of the TAFE National Centre for Research and Development recommends the Centre to continue on a permanent basis

**1985**

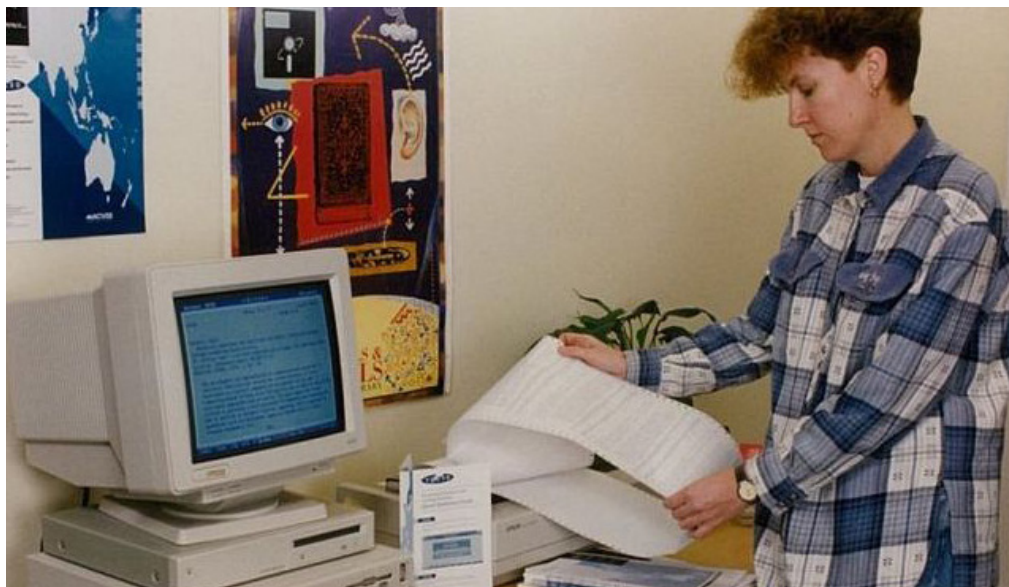
Australian Journal of TAFE Research and Development launched

**1989**

VOCED (later to become VOCEDplus) officially launched



In the early 1990s, the remit of NCVER was expanded significantly to include the oversight and management of the major VET sector administrative statistical collections as the sector moved towards a more uniform and national approach to data gathering and performance reporting.

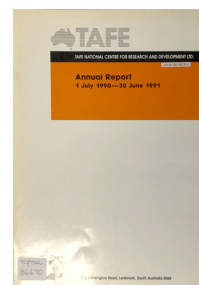


Lea-ann Harris looking at some of the latest research uploaded to the VOCED database (1993).

By our twentieth anniversary in 2001, the Centre had been renamed to the National Centre for Vocational Education Research Ltd and had grown to 70 staff situated across two locations in Adelaide and Canberra.

By this time, NCVER had relocated to a larger building in Leabrook, South Australia and the Centre's role was further expanded to include the management of the major national student and employer surveys for the VET sector.

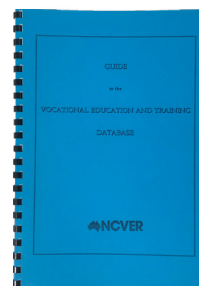
## 40 YEARS OF NCVER



**1991**

TAFE National Centre for Research and Development takes over responsibility for annual statistics collection under a contract from the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training and the Statistics division is established

Second review of the TAFE National Centre for Research and Development instigated by the Australian Conference of TAFE Directors and conducted by John White and Martha Kinsman



**1992**

TAFE National Centre for Research and Development changes its name to the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER)

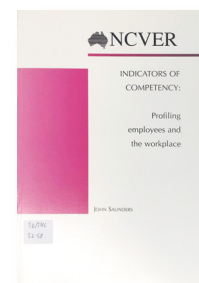
First NO FRILLS conference held in Sydney



**1996**

NCVER takes new responsibility for National Research and Evaluation Committee (NREC) under contract from the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA)

NCVER contracted to oversee the major national VET student and employer surveys



**1997**

First national research strategy for vocational education in Australia published covering the period 1997-2000

Australasian VET Research Association (AVETRA) established with support from NCVER



Within a year of NCVET gaining the contract to oversee LSAY, a dedicated website was launched.

Now in our fortieth year, NCVET has grown to 110 highly skilled staff spread across our core functions of research and data analytics, statistics and system support and global information management at our Adelaide central business district headquarters. Today, NCVET conducts and manages research under a set of national research priorities determined through the Skills Senior Officials Network (SSON), a group comprising of senior Commonwealth, and state and territory officials. Our research informs policy and practice and is used to assist regulators and training organisations to ensure quality in the system.

As the national VET data custodian, NCVET continues to coordinate the major VET administrative data collections and national surveys; each covering different aspects of VET in Australia and manage the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS) and support registered training organisations to report their activity data.

## 40 YEARS OF NCVET



### 2001

The second national research and evaluation strategy for vocational education and training 2001-2003 published

NCVER formally recognised as a UNESCO Centre of Excellence in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in partnership with TAFE South Australia



### 2004-2006

Annual national research priorities for VET - 2004, 2005 and 2006



### 2006

Review of the National Centre for Vocational Education Research Ltd Research and Statistical services (Department of Education, Science and Training) completed



### 2005-2015

National VET Research and Evaluation Program (NVETRE) competitive research grants program managed by NCVET

### 2007

Contracted to oversee the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY)



### 2007-2010

NCVER building researcher capacity initiative and Community of Practice (CoP)



Dr Lynn Arnold AO, former Chief Executive Officer, Anglicare SA, and former South Australian Premier speaking at the Intelligence Squared (IQ<sup>2</sup>) Australia live debate at the Adelaide Town Hall in 2012.

NCVER is building on the successes of the last forty years to ensure it continues to transform and to remain highly relevant as the vocational education and training sector moves into a new era of skilling the Australian workforce of the future.

## 40 YEARS OF NCVER



### 2010-2011

NCVER commissioned to develop support papers for 'A shared responsibility: Apprenticeships for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century - Final Report of the Expert Panel'

### 2012

NCVER designated the official UNESCO-UNEVOC regional coordination hub for the Pacific Island region

IQ2 debate - "Having a university degree is grossly overrated" presented in partnership with The Ethics Centre (formerly St James Ethics Centre)



### 2015-2016

NCVER Research Prospectus: 2015/16



### 2015-2017

National VET Research Program (NVETR) established

### 2016-present

Contracted to develop and maintain the National Industry Insights Report website for the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC) and the Australian Government



### 2016-present

VET Skills Senior Officials Network (SSON) Research Program





In 2019 VOCEdplus celebrated a 30th anniversary.



Every year since 1992 NCVER has held the National Vocational Education and Training (VET) Research Conference 'No Frills' and in 2021 celebrated the 30th anniversary.



**2017**  
NOUS Group review of NCVER's Strategic Plan



**2018**  
National VET Data Linkage Roundtable, Canberra 17 May 2018

**2019**  
Skills Senior Officials Network (SSON) endorsed NCVER to lead the development of Data Design and Governance policy options for the VET sector

VOCEdplus turned thirty



**2021**  
30th National VET Research Conference 'No Frills': 'Past informing the future: how has the VET landscape changed in 30 years?'



# SOME THINGS CHANGE, SOME STAY THE SAME

Back in 2001 on our twentieth anniversary, the major policy priorities were identified through the *First national strategy for VET: A bridge to the future – 1998-2003*. Achieving the development of an effective and competitive training market; equipping Australians for the world of work; enhancing mobility in the labour market; achieving equitable outcomes in vocational education and training; and increasing investment were all



Many staff who were here in 2001 for the twentieth anniversary are still here today for the fortieth.

**40 YEARS OF NCVET**

“Thank you for VOCEDplus, which must be the most comprehensive resource of vocational education-related research on the planet!”

Testimonial from Dr Malcolm Greig, ALTO Manager - Evidence and Impact Programme, Skills Development Scotland



important. In addition, increasing the participation of Australians in an integrated VET system that allows for local diversity was a key goal (Bowman and McKenna, 2016).

In 2012 all governments signed the National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development, a long-term commitment that aimed to support the VET system and deliver a productive and highly skilled workforce. It included new funding arrangements and the ‘training entitlement’ commitment.

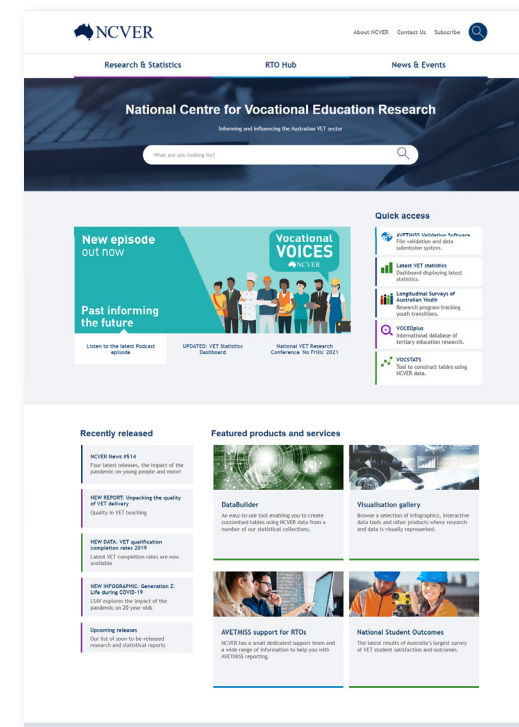
In 2021, in NCVER’s fortieth year, many of these sound goals remain while others have changed. The *Heads of Agreement for Skills Reform (Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2020)* highlights a range of important policy priorities around simplifying, rationalising and streamlining national VET qualifications, micro-credentials, and enhancing transparency and accountability, through clear roles and responsibilities for governments and industry, and improving the timeliness and quality of data collection.

In addition, the Commonwealth, and state and territory governments’ aim of increasing VET investment and supporting a viable and robust VET market that ensures quality and student choice continues to be important as is promoting lifelong learning and increasing access to foundation skills.

The VET sector is adapting and transforming in light of the challenges posed by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the need to adopt flexible models of learning and teaching. To that end, NCVER’s work continues to focus on these important priorities while contributing to a greater understanding of how COVID-19 is impacting VET, the skilling needs of the labour market and the broader community.

## 40 YEARS OF NCVER

# NCVER PORTAL CHANGING WITH THE TIMES



## THEN

## NOW

NCVER website from August 2000 (top left), August 2011 (bottom left) and August 2021 (right).

# LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Much has changed during this time and in particular the focus of our work. NCVER is evolving its products and services to meet changing user demands and information preferences. We are developing a digital strategy that will fundamentally alter the way we deliver our services and communicate with our important customers and stakeholders.

In response to the global Coronavirus pandemic, NCVER is producing timely and nuanced information for governments and other stakeholders of the impacts of the pandemic and providing special insights into understanding student outcomes during the crisis.

Our recently released DataBuilder statistical analysis tool enables users to more easily build tables using NCVER data and a range of enhanced statistical reports to improve readability. In addition, we have been working towards new products focused around a new NCVER 'DataHub' which is a secure single sign-on identity management facility. This will allow users to tailor their data analysis needs and receive a more bespoke experience.

We are releasing new surveys and reports which feature a larger range of innovative products suited to different users and explores



NCVER Managing Director Simon Walker presenting research at 2019 VELG Conference held in Brisbane.

new data linkage opportunities to examine employment outcomes for students selecting a VET pathway, and uses advanced data analytics to better understand VET student outcomes for vulnerable groups in our society.

With the advent of new and advanced analytic methods, NCVET has embraced machine learning to undertake complex analyses and has broadened our research interests to include the full spread of post-secondary pathways and skills supply and demand issues.

In addition, our work is promoting better understanding and discussion within the VET sector, and assists policymakers, practitioners, industry, training providers, and students to make informed decisions.

And we continue to take a leading role in supporting the VET sector to streamline the collection and reporting of VET data, including defining the elements of a new VET information standard and the development of a new data model to deliver faster data and a better user experience.

## REFERENCES

Bowman and McKenna, 2016, The development of Australia's national training system: a dynamic tension between consistency and flexibility, Adelaide, NCVET, <https://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/development-of-australias-national-training-system>

Prime Minister and Cabinet (Dept.), 2020, Heads of Agreement for Skills Reform, accessed at: <https://www.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/heads-of-agreement-skills-reform.pdf>

## 40 YEARS OF NCVET

**“NCVER provides a great service, and the data holdings in particular are crucial to improving our training outcomes and for future planning.”**

Response from a large RTO to the 2018 NCVET Stakeholder Survey

**40 YEARS**  
**480 MONTHS**  
**14 610 DAYS**  
**350 640 HOURS**  
**21 038 400 MINUTES**  
**1 262 304 000 SECONDS**  
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