

## AEU response

### The quality of teaching in VET: options paper

1. The AEU supports the broad direction of the options presented in the paper, and welcomes the detailed investigations of the issue of VET teacher quality and its relationship with qualifications and professional development represented in the research.
2. The AEU supports the concerns raised by the ACTU in their response to the options paper around the issue of casual and precarious employment, and believes that this issue cannot be separated from the discussion around qualifications and professional development for the current and future teaching workforce in VET.
3. The question of the decline in funding and resourcing of the TAFE sector similarly cannot be separated from the issue of current and future development strategies for the VET sector teaching workforce. A copy of the work prepared by CEET around the issue of TAFE and VET funding is attached to this response.
4. A copy of a discussion paper prepared by the AEU on TAFE teacher qualifications and professional development, *A future framework for TAFE teacher qualifications* is also attached .

### Consultation with unions

A large number of the options presented in the paper would have a significant impact on existing industrial arrangements, and therefore need to be discussed in the context of negotiations between employers (often in the case of TAFE state and territory governments) and the union. As the ACTU submission notes, the framework of industrial awards and agreements that applies to the VET workforce performs a vital role in providing access to skill based career paths that link salary progression to improvements in formal qualifications and improvements in skills acquired and utilised in the workplace. These industrial agreements have also played a key role in defending and extending the idea of an autonomous and professional teaching workforce in TAFE institutes across the country.

### Teachers, workplace trainers and assessors

In the section of the options paper entitled *Options for the structure of the VET teaching workforce*, a number of proposals are canvassed around the distinction between VET teachers and workplace trainers and assessors. *Option 1- the augmented status quo* is the only option which argues for a maintenance of the current status quo in which there is (nominally) no distinction between teachers in institutions and teachers in workplaces. The augmented status quo argues that all teachers, regardless of context, be required to undertake a base level qualification at the level of a certificate IV. The subsequent options in this section of the paper - Options 2 and Option 3 - contain proposals to distinguish between teachers and workplace trainers and assessors either on the basis broadly of the context of their work (ie institutional or workplace) or on the basis of their level of responsibility. The augmented status quo offers no option for further and higher levels of qualification and professional development. Options 2 and 3 do.

The union remains unconvinced by the argument that VET teachers and workplace trainers and assessors should be distinguished in terms of qualifications and professional development needs on the basis of the context of their work, or the levels of responsibility. This is not to say that the union is not acutely aware of the differences in a range of ways between those working in institutional settings and those working in the workplace, or between those who have different levels of responsibility in terms of either delivery or support and development in either the workplace or within institutional settings. The AEU argues just this in its discussion paper *A future framework for TAFE teacher qualifications*, professional development and registration. It is clear that there are differences, but unclear whether these differences would necessarily lead to entirely different, or lesser qualification and professional development needs.

Indeed, it would seem that there is ample scope within both the master practitioner section of the options paper, and within the cross sectoral section to explore workplace training and assessing as requiring additional preparation and professional development. The notion of a workplace trainer and assessor as a master practitioner lends itself to some further consideration.

## Registration

The AEU draws your attention to the discussion paper *A future framework for TAFE teacher qualifications* for some brief consideration of the issues in relation to registration, but also wants to emphasise the crucial nature of teacher and union involvement in any process around registration of the profession. The TAFE and VET teaching profession needs to be actively involved in any discussion and debate around the broad issues canvassed in the options paper, but critically in any consideration of the questions around registration and standards.

## Pre-employment induction program

The AEU is broadly supportive of the proposal for pre-employment induction programs outlined in the options paper, but in line with the comments in the ACTU submission, supports the proposition that these programs be properly accredited and have the integrity to count towards subsequent qualifications. We would also argue that these programs need to be developed in consultation with teachers and professional development experts.

## CIV TAE

The AEU has argued in *A future framework for TAFE teacher qualifications* for a specifically designed AQF Level 4 entry level qualification for TAFE teachers. The AEU remains unconvinced by the appropriateness of the CIVTAE as an entry –level qualification for TAFE and VET.

## Accredited professional development

The AEU is broadly supportive of propositions around CPD, but believes that CPD should be accredited and contribute towards the acquisition of further qualifications, including specialist units in the teachers' areas of expertise. We would also like to emphasise the importance of funding and support from governments for CPD, because we believe that a well supported teaching workforce contributes to the overall good of the VET sector.