Moving on ...

Report of the High Level Review of Training Packages

April 2004
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Introduction</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Scope and boundaries</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Review findings</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Major areas for action</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 A new ‘settlement’</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Better design</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Rigorous and inclusive development and review</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 An effective qualifications framework</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5 Supporting quality teaching, learning and assessment</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6 Improving Pathways</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Making the transition</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Dealing with the legacy</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Funding</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 R&amp;D</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4 A staged approach</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annexes</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 1. Project Brief</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 2. Methodology</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 3. Project Management Group</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 4. Sounding Board members</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 5. Organisations consulted</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 6. Submissions received</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 7. List of Working Papers</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 8. Bibliography and References</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledgments

Over a thousand people contributed directly to this Review. They brought with them much goodwill, considerable insight, and a positive attitude to bringing about the necessary change. Many also expressed confidence that the bodies responsible for Training Packages were committed to listening to clients and stakeholders in an attempt to create a robust system for the future.

We are grateful to the Project Management Group, who guided us throughout the project: Gary Collins (Chair), Sharon Coates, Pam Gill, Leslie Loble, Robert Player, Julius Roe, Gary Willmott (details in Annex 3). We also express our appreciation to Janina Gawler, CEO of ANTA, who encouraged us to be prepared, if necessary, to ‘go bold’.

Over the last six months, we have been helped in our work by:

- Sharon Coates and Sherinda Shea, who managed the project and provided guidance;
- Members of our Sounding Board Group (Annex 4), who gave fearless advice and comment, and contributed in no small way to our work;
- STaff of ANTA—particularly Eddie Hardman, Anita Roberts, Tony Vandenberg and Peter Hannigan for their advice on technical matters, and Sangeetha Das for her administrative support; and
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We also thank the many individuals throughout the VET community who generously and patiently responded to our specific queries and requests and who allowed us to test various propositions with them.

We could not have satisfactorily completed this Report without the assistance of Cheryl Leary, whose deep and broad knowledge of the Training Package model and related matters was invaluable. Cheryl also prepared a number of the Working Papers that served to inform this Report.

Although we accept responsibility for delivering a satisfactory product, a project as large and multi-layered as this is inevitably a joint effort between consultant and client. We wish to place on record our gratitude for the way in which this project was led and managed by ANTA—and in particular by Sharon Coates and Sherinda Shea. Each of us has worked for many clients, and we have experienced at first hand both the best and worst in terms of how clients work with consultants. In our opinion the quality of leadership and management of this project is a benchmark for client-consultant relationships—and as the recipients of this, we express our heartfelt appreciation.

Kaye Schofield  Rod McDonald
Training Packages reflect some of the most fundamental principles and policies on which the national VET system has been built. In drawing on both the future context and the current situation to suggest a number of new directions, we have been very aware of this central position that Training Packages occupy, and the importance of ensuring that the VET sector has the best foundations available to it for the future.

The future context for Training Packages
The Phase 1 research paints a picture of VET in the future serving a world very different from the one which initially produced Training Packages. It suggests that the challenge of aligning skill outcomes to the changing world of work, new industry and labour market dynamics, and different social circumstances is now even greater than when Australia first embarked on the path of national training reform.

New skills will be needed, underpinned by new knowledge and learning, and promoted by new pedagogies. Employees will be subject to changing employment patterns and organisational changes. And this will need to be supported by new ways in which training providers engage with their clients.

Any model for skills development needs to sit comfortably in such a future, and make an effective contribution to achieving it.

Training Packages today
There are 72 industry Training Packages, and the share of total hours of VET delivered through Training Packages is rising steadily: in 2002 it was around 56%, with 95% of apprenticeship and traineeship commencements being in Training Package qualifications.

The Training Package model has advanced VET in many areas and in many ways. However, the Phase 2 research showed that many clients and stakeholders continue to express major concerns around:

- clarity about their purposes, and their role within the VET system
- clarity of the roles of the key stakeholders and users
- quality of design and levels of specification and detail
- development and review processes
- content, and the capacity for it to evolve to meet changing needs
- quality of delivery.

Review findings
Our research and consultations re-affirm the labour market and educational value of industry-developed statements describing performance expected in the workplace, and of industry-developed, nationally recognised portable qualifications linked to the Australian Qualifications Framework. They also re-affirm the value of bringing them together.
As a result, we are convinced that the Training Package model has the potential, with improvements, to facilitate good labour market and educational outcomes for enterprises, industries, individuals and communities. However, changes will be needed to the ways in which Training Packages are conceptualised, developed and implemented, or the model will struggle to achieve its purposes, and will ultimately fail.

All involved need to start by keeping in mind the overall purposes of the Training Package model, to keep the framework consistent with the broader VET direction, without drowning in the vortex of detail.

This will require nothing less than determination and goodwill from all parties to proceed along the next stage in a long journey to maximise the potential of the model. A revolution might have been easier.

**New directions**

Underpinning the new directions is a theme that decisions be made to hold some things tight while loosening the reins on others—in particular:

- fewer (and more meaningful) rules,
- streamlining and simplifying,
- more faith in the professionalism of VET practitioners,
- less focus on risk aversion and more on risk mitigation, and
- being more open to a disorderly but effective process.

We propose a number of new directions to ensure that the vocational education and training system in the future derives the most benefit from this robust model.

**A new ‘settlement’**

By this we mean ensuring confidence and trust in the capacity of this model to serve diverse clients and to be relevant in a changing labour market, and we mean rebuilding expectations about what it can, and cannot, deliver. This will involve doing more than re-affirming the existing assumptions about competence—we will have to think our way to conceptual and therefore policy clarity. In particular, there is a need to continue to emphasise that competency is a broader concept than the ability to perform workplace tasks.

We also see a need for national leadership to involve all stakeholders in considering how processes could be streamlined to avoid unnecessary disputation between endorsing parties.

**Better design**

We believe that the language associated with Training Packages should shift from discussion about ‘rules’ to discussion around ‘design,’ and more emphasis should be placed on improving the design of Training Packages than adjusting the rules.

The issue of generic skills needs to be ‘front and centre’ in the redevelopment of Training Packages.
Rigorous and inclusive development and review

Development and review processes need to be more rigorous than in the past, and they need to use a broader range of evidence about skill needs.

We also see a need for a change in the conception of the roles of industry and educators. Industry is indisputably responsible for specifying work performance outcomes, and providers for deciding how best to impart the necessary skills and knowledge, but there is also a ‘middle ground’ around the constituents of competence. This ground, largely ignored until now, would be best covered by industry, provider and equity perspectives being brought together to ensure that a rich picture is developed of the skills and knowledge needed to achieve competence.

An effective qualifications framework

If Training Packages are to continue to serve the needs of both industry and learners, the status of full qualifications must not be eroded. At the same time, employers and individuals are increasingly valuing ‘skill sets’: discrete but cohesive components of learning, and we recommend steps to give them greater recognition.

Submissions and consultations also suggested that a review of the adequacy of the AQF and the flexibility of its descriptors is also needed, taking account of national and international efforts to achieve a coherent qualifications framework which works for all sectors.

Supporting quality teaching, learning and assessment

Training Packages assume a high level of competence within an RTO to facilitate valid training delivery and assessment, as the implementation of Training Packages is even more important than improving them as “products”. However, we find an unacceptably high level of confusion amongst educators in particular about the relationship between Training Packages and teaching, learning and assessment. Even after six years, many do not seem to understand how Training Packages work, or how to work with them. This is a key issue that demands attention in order to achieve improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment practice.

The current compliance framework of the AQTF is a necessary but not sufficient means of ensuring good quality teaching, learning and assessment. What is needed is a capacity-building approach that emphasises quality, creativity, professional judgement and growth rather than simply compliance.

Improving Pathways

Action is needed on a number of fronts to better provide for the full range of potential learners and their individual needs: RPL, entry level (including pre-vocational), VET in Schools, and higher education. The needs of new entrants and of mature and existing workers are significantly different, and greater flexibility within Training Packages should be pursued to accommodate these differences. Some additional flexibility might also be helpful in international markets—for example, by increasing the capacity to contextualise Units of Competency to suit international conditions.
Making the transition

Many teaching and training staff are not engaged, and some still feel anger or confusion as a result of the implementation process. They may be right, they may be wrong. But they’re there—even though some of them are clinging to outdated perceptions of Training Packages. Engagement might start with an acknowledgment that the introduction of Training Packages could have been better handled by all parties.

It is important to learn from these lessons in implementing the suggestions in this Report:

• We suggest that rather than the changes being seen as either a fine-tuning of a robust model, or as a fundamental shift away from the existing Training Package approach, changes need to be represented as moving purposefully into the next stage of the Training Package model—a significant next stage of a long journey to maximise their potential.

• Part of the resistance to Training Packages in the past was undeniably due to the use of regulatory and compliance mechanisms to ensure implementation. This may have been necessary in the early stages, but Training Packages are now sufficiently embedded in VET provision that such approaches should not be necessary.

• We urge a strategy that encourages experimentation—even where this would require some flexibility in the application of standard rules—for example, the use of ‘probes’ and ‘pilots’ to test different approaches, and a strategy that works with (rather than against) diversity.

• In the same spirit, we recommend a staged approach to change, achieving what we can by evolution and natural attrition rather than by regulation and compulsion.

It will also be necessary to deal with the fact that Training Packages do not operate in isolation, but are intertwined with many other parts of the system—in particular, the Australian Qualifications Framework and the Australian Quality Training Framework. Changes to one element without regard to the others inevitably has its limitations.

And lastly, there is a need to manage expectations. Many have pinned their hopes on this Review, and it is going to be important to be able to show some early gains.
Vocational Education and Training is characterised by an enduring relationship between the logic of the labour market and the logic of education, a relationship which makes VET unique. Skills are social relations, and especially labour relations, and both the labour market and education are involved in their definition. Changes in the world of work trigger a need for new social definitions of skill which are settled only through interaction between the spheres of labour and education (Mounier 2001).

This ongoing dynamic underpins the transition to the Training Package model and subsequent adjustments to it; and it is the same dynamic which has led to this Review, as changes in the labour market and social structures impact on the definition of skill and prompt re-calibration. It is a dynamic which will continue well beyond this Review.

This Review has comprised three phases, which are connected to the four elements of the Training Package model as follows:

- **Phase 1:** The future context
- **Phase 2:** The here and now
- **Phase 3:** Synthesis and the way forward

Phase 1 of the Review comprised an analysis of the current and future context in which Training Packages will need to operate, and the implications of these changes for learning and pedagogy; Phase 2 contained a summary of the current status of Training Packages and an analysis of implementation issues.

Using these earlier Phases as a starting-point, Phase 3 has involved an analysis of key documents, targeted consultations with key stakeholders, a National Forum, circulation of a Consultation Paper, and public consultations in each State and Territory. Over one thousand people have provided direct input into Phase 3.

In the course of writing this Report, we have also prepared a number of Working Papers which will serve to explain the foundations behind our thinking. These have been published separately by ANTA and are available on the ANTA website: www.anta.gov.au.

The focus of the High Level Review is the future. We look forward to a future in which VET:

- adapts and responds to the fluid nature of society and the labour market;
- creates a truly globally-competitive workforce; and
- provides pathways for all learners—both young people and mature-age workers, and those experiencing labour market and social disadvantage.

Any model for skills development needs to sit comfortably in such a future, and make an effective contribution to achieving it.
We were asked to advise on how Training Packages and their supporting structures could better meet current and future skill needs, and to consider any implications this might have for teaching and learning and wider VET sector responses. To do this, we have had to establish some boundaries, so that the task did not become too diffuse.

Not a systemic review
Training Packages reflect some of the most fundamental principles and policies on which the national VET system has been built (the ‘rules of the VET game’), and they are an important instrument through which the objectives of the National VET Strategy can be achieved.

But Training Packages are not the national VET system itself, and this review is not a systemic review of VET, although the submissions and consultations raised issues across the full spectrum of VET. Rather, we deal with wider VET issues only in so far as they impact on efforts to improve the way Training Packages are designed, developed and implemented.

But Training Packages do not operate in isolation
Nevertheless, the boundary between Training Packages and the VET system is porous. Training Packages are intimately intertwined with many other parts of the VET system. In particular, they have a symbiotic relationship with the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF), with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), and with issues around the capability of the VET workforce. A review of one without regard to the other elements inevitably has its limitations.

There are also many different national projects, State and Territory initiatives and reviews underway related to different aspects of Training Packages. This has inevitably restricted the extent to which we can construct a complete picture, and in fact we are concerned about the capacity of anyone in the future to pull them all together to tell a coherent story. We have, however, attempted to provide signposts which might help.

Phase 1 scopes a new world for Training Packages in the future
Beyond this boundary-setting, we have also had to place Training Packages in their future economic and social context, and the Phase 1 Report, prepared by Clive Chappell and colleagues at the University of Technology, Sydney (ANTA 2003b) has been critical in this task.

The Phase 1 research paints a picture of Training Packages today serving a world very different from the one which initially produced them. It also canvasses a future world which will be even more radically different. It suggests that the challenge of aligning skill outcomes to the changing world of work, new industry and labour market dynamics, and different social circumstances is now far greater than when Australia first embarked on the path of training reform.

It identifies eight broad areas of change which we have drawn on in this section, and which we have taken into account in Phase 3.1

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1 In this section, we have drawn not only on the Phase 1 Report but also on the Think Piece by Peter Noonan on the Phase 1 Report which was commissioned by ANTA for this Review.
Changing employment patterns

Growth in non-standard employment, rapid and multiple career changes and different forms of work organisation, mean that skills can no longer be defined in terms of traditional occupations and career structures.

Within Australia’s labour force, around one half can be classified as permanent employees; while casual, part-time and contract employees comprise around one quarter of the labour force and around one quarter is made up of owner-managers. Concepts of career have been radically recast as labour mobility has increased and new forms of work organisation have taken shape. As links between employer and employee weaken for many in the labour force, career development, training and learning are becoming the responsibility of the individual.

These trends are certainly evident, but some caution is needed. The labour market is a dynamic institution and trends do not necessarily play out as expected. Also, not all industries display the same employment patterns, and differences between industries and even between firms in the same industry can be substantial. Training Packages need to operate within this complexity.

Organisational changes

In the future, organisations will be more agile, adaptable, less hierarchical, smaller, and have unique practices and values with a greater emphasis on informal learning.

New ways of organising and coordinating work involve inter-organisational networks of production, supply chains and outsourcing arrangements. This trend is evident, but not uniformly so, across all industries and enterprises. However, historically-defined industry ‘silos’ are under challenge from more and different business-to-business relationships. We can expect to see new forms of cross-enterprise and cross-industry communication and more inter-dependence and collaboration between firms and industries. While Training Packages today are essentially structured around industry sectors, in the future they will need to incorporate cross-industry perspectives and competencies.

Changing skill

Job and occupational competence which underpins the Training Package model will remain relevant in the immediate future. But the current emphasis on technical skills needs to be supplemented (but not replaced) by a greater emphasis on both cognitive and behavioural skills in response to changing employer expectations and the growing demand for “knowledge workers”. However, it is important to get the balance right between demands of employers for these generic skills and personal attributes and capacities and the interests of employees who have traditionally used technical skills as a bargaining tool. This balance will vary between entry-level workers and experienced workers, between occupations and occupational levels and between industries. Irrespective of whether the focus is on technical, cognitive or behavioural skills and knowledge, it is clear that more and more workers will be expected to be able to learn new things throughout their lives.

Evidence of high skilled high performance work models is ambiguous: there has been significant growth in low skill/low wage employment but there is also evidence of increasing demand for the application of knowledge across all industries not just the newer ones. VET needs to be responsive along the full spectrum of skill.
Changing knowledge

Knowledge work is increasingly seen as the critical ingredient for economic success. It drives innovation, increases productivity and is the raw material that produces new products, processes and services. Moreover, there is evidence that knowledge work is needed in all industries and at all levels, not just in new industries. However, knowledge work tends to be specific to individual workplaces and networks.

Knowledge for the new economy is less foundational or discipline-based and is rarely the product of individuals, but arises through collaborations and networks that exist within specific sites and particular contexts.

This implies that current definitions and understandings of competence must be reconceptualized and broadened to encompass broader learning domains.

Changing learning

Contemporary ideas concerning learning and work have moved beyond the provision of formal award courses. For many individuals and enterprises, learning is now an integral and continuous part of working, and workplace learning already encompasses both informal and formal learning and increasingly will reflect both individual and collective competence.

This suggests that education and training needs to be linked more systematically to wider human resource management strategies that promote new approaches to job design and work organisation and which explicitly support business strategies.

Although learning through work will become increasingly important, work itself is not always conducive to learning. Employers and providers need to create programs and practices that lead to more work-conducive learning—learning which is highly context-bound, driven by specific and immediate work requirements.

Changing clients

Training Packages must encompass increasingly diverse client needs. Direct clients include individuals, enterprises, employers, government, and local communities. Indirect client groups include industry through Industry Skills Councils and other industry training advisory bodies, employer and employee associations.

Individuals are now more prominent in policy considerations than they were a decade ago and they include existing workers seeking occupational upgrading, those seeking to change careers and new entrants including apprentices and trainees. Local and regional communities have also become increasingly important in national and international policy interventions in education and training.

This diverse client base has very different needs and expectations which, at times, are contradictory or conflicting, leading inevitably to tensions in various efforts to meet their needs. These tensions are apparent at many points in the VET system, including within the Training Packages model, and need to be explicitly managed.
Changing pedagogy

A broad range of delivery modes and models are needed to meet the needs of this diverse client base.

Standardised curricula containing recommended teaching, learning and assessment practices are much less useful in a VET environment characterised by increasing diversity of contexts, clients, learning sites and practitioners—a development which was foreshadowed some eight years ago in moving from national curriculum to Training Packages.

Consequently, VET is increasingly reliant on highly skilled VET professionals who:

• have and choose from a sophisticated pedagogical repertoire;
• use more learner-centred, work-centred and attribute-focused approaches, rather than traditional transmission pedagogies;
• can work with multiple clients, in multiple contexts and across multiple learning sites; and
• understand that the integration of learning and work is a major feature of the contemporary work environment.

Changing education and training relationships

The growing emphasis on learner-driven lifelong learning and work related skills and knowledge is driving the need for seamless pathways and cross-sectoral linkages, especially through local partnerships and collaborations. Issues related to generic skills, knowledge production and learning at work will become increasingly influential in education and training provision across all sectors.

Phase 2 reports on the implementation of the Training Package model

The Phase 2 Report was based on over 300 documents on aspects of Training Package implementation, including a number of short papers produced specifically for this Review. The snapshot it provides of progress to date in Training Package implementation to 2002 includes:

• 70 industry Training Packages, 9 enterprise Training Packages, and 2 Training Packages currently under development
• 4,110 Registered Training Providers
• Over 50% of total VET hours delivered in every jurisdiction is Training Package based—80% in Tasmania, with an Australia-wide average around 56%—and rising steadily
• 95% of apprenticeship and traineeship commencements were in Training Package qualifications.

The Phase 2 Summary Report also highlighted a number of issues raised by clients and stakeholders. These have been incorporated in the relevant sections of this Report.
Based on our research and consultations, we re-affirm the labour market and educational value of industry-developed statements describing performance expected in the workplace, and of industry-developed, nationally recognised portable qualifications linked to the Australian Qualifications Framework. We re-affirm the value of bringing them together. We re-affirm the continuing importance to individuals of technical and cognitive skills identified in Training Packages, even in an emerging "knowledge-based economy" which, it is claimed, values behavioural skills more highly.

As a result, we re-affirm the potential of the Training Package model, with improvements, to facilitate good labour market and educational outcomes for enterprises, industries, individuals and communities.

The commitment to persevering with a Training Package model (competency standards, qualifications and assessment guidelines), rather than suggesting a different one, is recommended for two reasons:

- A stark and significant one is that almost no-one wants to do otherwise. It is hard to find any client or stakeholder who would want the system to execute a U-turn and revert to the previous practice, or develop yet another model.
- There is, however, an even stronger imperative. In our view—although it took us some time to come to this point—the Training Package model has the potential to produce very clever products. Training Packages are far more than industry-developed products, replacing national curricula. They have the potential to provide a very effective lever for skill formation in the future. Doing so, however, is, as one informant described it, "an audacious task".

At the same time, although the Training Package model has advanced VET in many areas and in many ways, it has yet to win the confidence of many clients and stakeholders. Major concerns focus on:

- lack of clarity about their purposes, and their role within the VET system
- quality of design and levels of specification and detail
- development and review processes
- content, and the capacity for it to evolve to meet changing needs
- quality of delivery.

So there’s a major caveat: although we have confidence in the potential of the model, without major changes to the ways in which Training Packages are currently conceptualised, developed and implemented, the model will struggle to achieve its purposes, and will ultimately fail.
We suggest an approach to change based on three principles:

**No need to ‘go bold’: it’s harder than that**

At the start of this project we were encouraged to be prepared to ‘go bold’, and it was certainly not our intention to hold back if this was what was needed. What we have found, however, is not a need for revolutionary changes, but for something much harder. All involved need to start by keeping in mind the overall purposes of the Training Package model, to keep the framework ‘in harness’ with the broader VET direction, and to pull the strands together more effectively without drowning in the vortex of detail.

This will require nothing less than grim determination and goodwill from all parties. A revolution might have been easier.

**Hold some things tight, and let others loose**

Finally, a theme running through this report is a suggestion that decisions be made to hold some things tight while loosening the reins on others—in particular:

- fewer (and more meaningful) rules
- streamlining and simplifying
- more faith in the professionalism of VET practitioners
- less focus on risk aversion and more on risk mitigation, and
- being more open to a disorderly but effective process.

**Embark on several new directions**

To position the Training Package model to serve the vocational education and training sector for the next decade, we suggest half a dozen new directions:

- A new ‘settlement’, to ensure confidence and trust in the capacity of the model, and reaffirming expectations about what it can, and cannot, deliver
- Better design—and in particular relying more on good design than on rules—and putting the issue of generic skills ‘front and centre’
- Rigorous and inclusive development and review, drawing on a broader range of evidence as to skill needs, and acknowledging the need for industry, educational and equity expertise to be brought together in the development of Training Packages.
- An effective qualifications framework—holding tight to the importance of full qualifications, and at the same time give more weight to ‘skill sets’—and including a review of the adequacy of the AQF and the flexibility of the descriptors
- Supporting quality teaching, learning and assessment. Training Packages assume a high level of competence within an RTO to facilitate valid training delivery and assessment, and more development is needed.
- Improving Pathways to better provide for the full range of potential learners and their individual needs.
4 - Major areas for action

4.1 A new ‘settlement’

At the very highest level Australian governments, together with employer organisations and trade unions, have agreed to a policy position that sees the Training Package model underpinning publicly funded VET provision.

But at other levels, fractures are evident: between old industries and emerging ones; between manufacturing and service industries; within occupational hierarchies and between occupations; between policy and practice; between education and training sectors; and between VET practitioners and industry.

By a new ‘settlement’ around Training Packages we mean ensuring confidence and trust in the capacity of this model to serve diverse clients and to be relevant in a changing labour market, and we mean rebuilding expectations about what it can, and cannot, deliver. We believe a new settlement across the stakeholder community can be reached partly by fostering a more collaborative climate at all levels, partly by achieving better clarity about the purpose and limits of the Training Package model, and partly by clarifying roles and responsibilities.

Developing confidence and trust

Training Packages are not simply products: they are the negotiated outcome of a complex set of interactions and relationships between individuals and organisations within and beyond the VET system. While there is ample room for streamlining and simplifying, we do not believe that this will eliminate complexity: Training Packages are designed, developed and implemented in and through an inherently complex and human system involving many parties all with a legitimate interest in them.

We think all parts of the VET system could manage this technical, social and political complexity in a more sophisticated way, balancing the natural human desire for simplicity with the realities of working in a necessarily complex national VET system which depends on collaboration.

Further on in this Report we make a number of suggestions which are likely to lead to this.

Rebuilding expectations

The Training Package model will only be effective if it is clear about what it is, and what it is not. This may seem self-evident, but we have come across a raft of misconceptions about the Training Package model and the Packages themselves, which has convinced us that there is not currently the necessary shared understanding.

The purposes of Training Packages

Throughout this review we have been struck by the apparent confusion among users as to the purpose of Training Packages. We have now come to the view that at the heart of this confusion is the tension between a model designed on the one hand to enable diverse and relevant vocational learning outcomes, and on the other to regulate training outcomes through nationally recognised qualifications.
This tension is reflected in current demands for greater flexibility from enterprises, learners and providers alike, paradoxically in combination with a firm wish across the stakeholder community to retain the “bedrock” of a system based on competency-based training and nationally portable qualifications.

Too much “flexibility” is likely to lead to a devaluation of nationally recognised qualifications. Too much regulation is likely to lead to a residual Training Package system, where accredited courses and non-accredited VET rather than Training Package qualifications will be the preferred choice of the majority of users. This is not an either/or choice. Both perspectives are valid depending on the user and the use.

Therefore we see a need to acknowledge that Training Packages will continue to have both an enabling and regulatory function, and that the relative importance of each will vary between industries, between client groups and between occupational levels, depending on the dynamics of the labour market and social and cultural factors.

A starting point is to define and communicate the multiple purposes of Training Packages. Taking account of the changing context in which skills are being developed, outlined in Phase 1 of the Review and in the wider research literature, we suggest that such a statement should emphasise the role of Training Packages in four high-level purposes of VET:

- To help the VET system achieve a better match between skills demand and supply
- To encourage flexible and relevant workforce development and learning
- To provide for the national recognition of the vocational outcomes of learning
- To guide and support individuals in their choice of training and career.

**The limits of Training Packages**

There is a perception, widely held, that Training Packages do, should or could provide for all needs across the whole VET sector.

However, it was never intended that Training Packages would become synonymous with VET provision. Indeed, from the inception of Training Packages in 1996, it was recognised that there will always be specific needs not directly connected to a job outcome which are either not amenable to or fully covered by a Training Package approach: general education; career development; international education; employability skills; language, literacy and numeracy; social and cultural skills; bridging, access, prevocational skills; bridging programs for higher education entry and learning to learn skills.

The system has also over-claimed on the benefits of a competency-based training (CBT) approach and this has led to unrealistic expectations. There is a need for a sharper understanding of what can and cannot be achieved through a CBT system: for example, detailed specification of outcomes cannot produce standardisation and uniformity either in what is learnt or in how it is learnt, nor can it produce the same outcome in different contexts, or automatically ensure the transferability of competence. Indeed, one might ask who ever thought they could, and what alternative system could? Yet this assumption appears to be the basis for some design aspects of Training Packages.
4 - Major areas for action

In the early years of their implementation, it is understandable that the policy emphasis has been on encouraging and requiring the take-up of Training Package qualifications. Seven years on, it may be time to communicate more clearly to clients, policy-makers, purchasers and funders of training that Training Packages should not be expected to encompass all learning and development needs at all times for all groups.

Our position is that

- CBT can work for all industries and at all levels if the competencies are written by highly experienced occupational practitioners, are framed by the specific nature and context of the industry, describe the primary aspects of performance, allow for a wide range of contexts and applications and are used holistically rather than atomistically.

- However, it needs to be accepted that there are situations in which Training Packages do not provide the best framework.

The name of Training Packages

Most respondents to this Review believe that the name "Training Packages" was a misnomer and that the choice of the name has led to expectations that their primary purpose was to provide training resources. Some suggested that they be renamed as Industry Skills Standards or Australian Occupational Standards or similar. Tempting as a re-naming might be, the brand is beginning to gain wider acceptance and the costs of re-branding would be excessive. We therefore do not believe re-naming is a viable option.

The nature of ‘competence’

If we are to improve the Training Package model, we will have to do more than re-affirm the existing assumptions about competence—we will have to think our way to conceptual and therefore policy clarity. Competence (and therefore competency-based training and assessment) appears on the surface to be a deceptively simple concept but, theoretically and in practice, that simplicity melts away to reveal conceptual complexity.

The Training Package model is underpinned by a range of explicit and implicit assumptions about work, work performance, knowledge and skill, teaching, learning and assessment and qualifications. It is some of these assumptions that are in greatest need of a re-think.

There is a need to continue to emphasise that competency is a broader concept than the ability to perform workplace tasks, and in defining competence it is necessary to clearly distinguish between:

- work performance, and its outcomes which are observable, measurable and assessable; and

- the constituents of competence: the personally held skills, knowledge and abilities which, in combination, underpin performance.
To achieve this, competency must include:

- effective performance in employment
- application of skills and knowledge within and across a number of work contexts and contingencies
- ability to transfer skills and knowledge across and within work contexts and within a changing context over time
- (where relevant) a combination of higher order skills.

This is not an arcane conceptual point. It has practical implications for the definition of competence, for the design and structure of Training Packages and for the processes through which they are developed. It challenges the current approach whereby performance and outcomes are assumed to be the same as skills and knowledge, and competency standards are taken to be specifications of knowledge and skills.

This understanding needs to be used consistently in all documentation and communication related to Training Packages.

**Clarifying roles**

We see a need to look again at the various roles in the Training Package endorsement process.

Firstly, there is a need for more active national leadership and coordination. Over the last few years, the support provided by ANTA has tended to take the shape of managing multiple outsourced projects, rather than fulfilling its leadership and strategic mandate. It is not appropriate for us to suggest a solution to this issue, but we wish to emphasise the importance of the allocation of sufficient resources to enable both national leadership and coordination of Training Package policy, and the management of Training Package processes.

Secondly, there are instances where Training Packages which are widely supported by industry are amended at State/Territory level to suit jurisdictional delivery preferences. There are instances where a state industry association objects to jurisdictional endorsement of Training Packages which have the support of the national industry association. And we have seen instances where endorsement of important Training Packages is delayed for lengthy periods because of individual jurisdiction concerns. We understand that given the State/Territory legal powers, endorsement has to be an iterative process, but we think there must be some more sensible way for the various parties to play their part in getting Training Packages endorsed reasonably quickly and with a broad base of support in each jurisdiction.

We suggest that ANTA continue discussions with State Training Authorities and industry bodies to consider how the process of endorsement could be streamlined to reduce delays in endorsement and avoid unnecessary disputation between the endorsing parties.
4.2 Better design

Everywhere we went, people spoke to us about the stifling effect of Training Package “rules”. The belief that rules are driving the Training Package system is palpable. Ironically, there were also calls for new “rules”. Yet when looked at more closely, many of the so-called rules are not national rules at all—they are local custom and practice, funding requirements, AQTF audit practices, or former national rules (protocols) which have since been changed. The flexibility that exists within the national rules is often not understood; the distinction between AQTF standards and AQF or Training Package rules is blurred in many people’s minds (and in the ‘rules’); and the significant improvements with each generation of Training Packages are not always acknowledged. But irrespective of the facts of the matter, perception is reality, and the Training Package approach is often characterised as rule-bound.

We believe that the language associated with Training Packages should shift from discussion about “rules” to discussion around “design” and more emphasis should be placed on working to design criteria and improving the design of Training Packages than adjusting the rules. This is not a sleight of words but an attempt to balance the regulatory function of Training Packages with their enabling function.

Under the umbrella of Training Package design lie many issues of substance, which have been considered in the course of this Review. They are addressed comprehensively in the Working Papers, and are summarised below:

The overall structure of Training Packages

Many Training Packages are now drowning under their own weight, as more and more delivery advice has been loaded into them.

Taking into account our earlier analysis of the concept of competence, we suggest that a more streamlined approach to Training Packages should be pursued.

This involves firstly ensuring that Units of Competency make explicit both the specification of work performance and the underpinning constituents of competence: the knowledge, skills, and abilities required; and secondly, holding the structure of Units of Competency ‘tight’, to comprise:

- Introductory section—title, codes, description, etc.
- Elements and performance criteria
- Evidence Guide—which includes the essential underpinning skills, knowledge and abilities, and which is developed through a wider stakeholder process (e.g. with regulators, equity representatives, Boards of Studies representatives and others with a direct interest in and knowledge of teaching, learning and assessment)
- Description of context—a renamed and much-improved Range Statement
- Recommended (not mandated) Resource Materials—a quality-assured listing of public domain and commercial teaching and learning materials that trainers and assessors or learners may find useful.

No other guidance on delivery should be included in a Unit of Competency.
Generic skills
We believe that generic skills is the most significant design issue facing the Training Package model, and one which requires immediate attention and urgent resolution. Generic skills are highly valued by industry and employers for their role in facilitating competent workplace performance and in enhancing the capacity of workers to respond, learn and adapt when workplace demands change.

This issue needs to be ‘front and centre’ in consideration of design issues.

However, despite this widespread support and the development of the ACCI/BCA Employability Skills Framework, this has not translated into national agreement on the Framework or its implementation. Providers treat generic skills including the Key Competencies inconsistently; there is no agreed mechanism for the delivery, assessment or recording of generic skills, or even agreement over their language. In the main they are unsure on how to deal with them, although there are clear examples of good practice, for example in the approach taken to Key Competencies by Torrens Valley TAFE. Across States and Territories, adoption of the ACCI/BCA Employability Skills Framework and approaches to generic skills vary.

We see the main issue being not about exactly what generic skill set should be used—as with Training Packages, this debate will always be with us—but rather how they can be best incorporated in and developed through Training Packages.

We urge that:
• the current work in this area be accelerated and strengthened, and that an agreed national position be reached and implemented as a matter of urgency

• Training Package developers be provided with specific guidance and advice on how to identify employability skills needed within industry and how to incorporate them into Training Packages.

Graded assessment
Assessment in the VET sector is competency based with the benchmarks for this assessment being the endorsed Units of Competency in Training Packages. The use of graded assessment would, for some, undercut the principle of competency-based training.

There is a clear demand for graded assessment, not simply from providers but from learners and industry as well. Despite its widespread nature there is no national policy around grading, and its application is highly inconsistent with a range of approaches and systems for assigning grades.

We acknowledge the great passion on both sides of the debate about graded assessment, but frankly, we do not see it as a threshold issue likely to undermine the essential principles of CBT, as long as it remains as supplementary reporting, permitted under current policy. Coordination and leadership on this issue at a national level is, however, overdue, and we suggest that ANTA investigate the range of graded assessment models currently being implemented across Australia with a view to developing a model that allows for graded assessments to be provided within Training Packages as supplementary reports.
4 - Major areas for action

Occupational licensing

The intersection between occupational licensing and vocational education and training can be complex and frustrating for a range of stakeholders. Various initiatives have been taken and some progress has been made, but according to feedback to the Review, the gains of this work are yet to be fully realised.

Regulators are concerned about adequate occupational standards, the variability of delivery and approaches to risk management of this in VET. The freeing up of delivery under Training Packages may have exacerbated these concerns. Until strategies effectively address these issues regulators will continue to develop their own criteria over and above VET requirements, reflecting their mission to protect the community.

We believe that ANTA’s leadership in this area has been sound and the current strategy for engaging regulators in a process of alignment should continue to be actively pursued as one element in an overall reform strategy. But it needs to be kept in perspective. There are obvious limits to what the VET sector itself can and should do to encourage reform to occupational licensing arrangements across Australia given the other challenges it faces.

4.3 Rigorous and inclusive development and review

Development processes are widely seen as too slow, too consensual, too inward-looking, too backward-looking, with insufficient quality assurance and variable attention to equity considerations. We have received very many comments that suggest that the way the model is currently implemented needs to be changed significantly if Training Packages are to serve as a basis for developing skills in the future.

Our suggestions would see a number of major changes:

- objective review and validation processes
- use of a broader range of evidence as to skill needs than in the past, including more rigorous assessment of market demand for Training Packages, better tracking and use of labour market intelligence, and greater attention to trends in individual demand
- less unproductive duplication.

We also see a need for a change in the conception of the roles of industry and educators. Industry is indisputably responsible for specifying work performance outcomes, and providers for deciding how best to impart the necessary skills and knowledge, but there is also a ‘middle ground’, largely ignored until now. Here, both industry and provider perspectives are needed, as are equity perspectives, and all parties need to reach a ‘settlement’ on the constituents of competence—skills and knowledge—and other matters affecting the delivery of Training Packages such as whether descriptions of work performance can actually be assessed and whether work outcomes reflect a wide reading of ‘work’.
Objective review and validation processes

We see a clear and urgent need to reinvigorate the development and review process. Continuing on the current trajectory will alienate the legitimate industry constituency and miss the opportunity for wider but more meaningful input and better quality assurance throughout the process of development and review.

We suggest:

• Processes be set in place to ensure that inconsistencies in quality, content, Plain English, and alignment with the AQF are dealt with during the development process
• Part of the validation process involve representatives of Industry Skills Councils coming together with a small number of independent qualification design specialists and equity specialists, to review Training Packages before endorsement
• Different Packages should have different review cycles depending on industry dynamics
• KPIs be set to ensure that the potential for broad leadership by the new Industry Skills Councils is fulfilled
• The National Industry Skills Forum be further developed so that its potential for national leadership on skills issues is realised.

Better market intelligence

The aim here is to ensure that workforce development supported by Training Packages is simultaneously aligned with current needs—today’s business—while adapting to tomorrow’s business: emerging industry dynamics, changing labour market patterns and changing community expectations. The capacity of Training Packages to adapt depends on a range of factors including a collaborative culture, clear authorities, enlightened leadership and excellent market intelligence and predictive capacity.

We ignore the market at our peril, and we see two primary areas of focus to inform Training Package development and review.

First, intelligence from multiple and diverse sources about economic, social, labour market and business aspirations in national, regional and international markets likely to impact on the design of Training Packages.

Second, it is important that we understand trends in individual demand for VET products and services.

We suggest:

• Ensure broadly-based market intelligence rather than narrowly-based ‘strategic planning’ informs the evolution of Training Packages
• Ensure that research and modelling pays particular attention to:
• How best to provide a platform for cross-industry intelligence
• How to gain intelligence on emerging industries, and how to support their skill needs.
Reducing unproductive duplication

There is a widely-held view that there is an unhelpful proliferation of qualifications, competency standards and Training Packages and that duplication at each of these levels needs to be reduced for the benefit of end users.

Eliminating duplication of similar Units of Competency is an objective of present Training Package development and we support this. Efforts appear to be hampered by inconsistent advice to developers and a tendency for each industry’s sense of its uniqueness to prevail. For example there are over 300 different communications-related Units of Competency across Training Packages.

We see little value in a policy-driven or rule-based reduction in the number of qualifications or Training Packages because

- Occupational coverage by Training Package is now largely complete, and the next generation of Training Package reviews is likely to reduce the number of qualifications
- Over time, common-sense will prevail. This will, however, be aided if the new Industry Skills Councils have as part of their agreement with ANTA the requirement to systematically reduce duplication of Units of Competency and qualifications, and to consolidate existing Training Packages where there are obvious synergies.

We wish to strongly encourage the use of “approved template units”—which builds on the current Guideline Standards—as an option for resolving five problems within the current Training Package model:

- Duplication of generic skill standards
- How to deal with cross-industry units such as first aid, managing diversity, occupational health and safety, quarantine procedures, environmental management, project management
- How to deal with Key Competencies (and whatever eventually replaces them) when they need to be both “built in” to technical units and “bolted on” as explicit units in some circumstances
- How to deal with work and jobs which do not fit within a standard job structure, such as unpaid voluntary and community work or different work contexts experienced by rural and remote Indigenous communities
- How to deal with new competencies required where the labour market experiences sudden change.

In certain circumstances (e.g. Key Competencies/Employability Skills, cross-industry competencies and new competencies), “approved template competencies” would each be constructed as full Units of Competency with elements and performance criteria as well as a range statement. A Training Package developer or someone developing an accredited course could then take these template units and add sufficient information to contextualise them to suit the particular application.
The template units would not have a life of their own, but would swing into the nationally recognised system when they are endorsed as, say, an elective in a Training Package or as a Unit within an accredited course.

This idea is not radically new; it builds on and extends current good practice. The ‘innovation’ competencies follow this approach in that they do not have a life of their own but must be contextualised before use.

In making this suggestion, we emphasise our earlier point about the centrality of context to competence; and that the more non industry-specific competences become, the less their perceived value to industry and actual value to contextualised learning. We are also mindful of the New Zealand experience where, during the 1990s, industry commitment drifted with overly-generic standards.

While Industry Skills Councils (and in the transition period, national ITABs/Recognised Bodies) are currently the only bodies approved to develop industry competency standards, there may be scope for other bodies to be engaged to write approved template competencies, especially Key Competencies (or their replacement). This option may also have particular value to Indigenous enterprises and communities and in those cases where new work outcomes are identified in new and emerging industries.

### 4.4 An effective qualifications framework

There are inherent tensions associated with Training Package qualifications, tensions which cannot be eradicated but which do require regular review for balance and which need to be actively managed.

#### Qualifications and skill sets

The principle of nationally recognised and industry-developed qualifications is central to the Training Package model and widely valued. At the same time, it was put to us that individuals and enterprises are looking not for full qualifications but for flexible skill sets: individual or groups of Units of Competency.

While qualifications are valued by the VET system given their role in employment, the relationship between qualifications attained (particularly those beyond Certificate III) and employment outcomes and international benchmarking. However there is a low conversion of enrolments to qualifications awarded. Research shows that half of all vocational education and training students successfully complete only part of a qualification rather than a full qualification (Foyster et al 2000).

While many respondents to this review see an emphasis on full qualifications as a constraint on the ability of Training Packages to meet client demand, a deeper analysis suggests that full qualifications provide a protection for individuals against deskilling and the fragmentation of work; offer guidance to them about a career pathway and an incentive for lifelong learning; and provide an important market signal to employers for recruitment and other purposes.

One of the strengths of the Training Package model is that it does not require a choice between skill sets and full qualifications—it provides for both, where the Units of Competency are drawn from a recognised qualification.
4 - Major areas for action

Therefore, we see little value in a continuing debate about qualifications versus skills sets, and we see no need for change to the principle of providing for both within the current model. However, because the VET system aims to be learner-centred, more needs to be done to give weight to smaller but coherent components of learning and increase the potential to recognise related clusters of units structured around an individual’s needs.

Statements of Attainment

A set of related competencies below the level of a full qualification can be highly portable and valuable for individuals. The tool for recognising this achievement—the Statement of Attainment—is an important recognition of personal achievement, and is a legitimate credential in its own right, but it has no wider community standing or recognition.

We see a need to enhance the market standing of Statements of Attainment by re-positioning and promoting them as an important tool for nationally recognising related skill sets below full qualification level and which will be valued by individuals and by industry.

We also see a need to:

- review the current systems for reporting the enrolment in and achievement of individual Units of Competency to achieve greater clarity for the issuers, recipients and end users of Statements of Attainment; and to
- clarify and harmonise advice on Statements of Attainment within AQTF documents and the AQF Implementation Handbook.

User information

There is a good deal of valuable information available to all through the NTIS, and we expect that the current re-vamp will make the service more user-friendly. Eventually, Training Package information should be readily available to a broad audience: employers, training specialists and individual learners alike. Their use beyond recognised VET should be further encouraged so that the value of the substantial investment in Training Packages is reflected not only in their use for nationally recognised training, but in their use for wider workforce development initiatives, especially within workplaces.

We also think more can be done to guide users who do not wish to commit to a full qualification on how individual Units of Competency could be grouped or clustered in different ways to create more complete skill sets which have a value in employment. Those clusters would not be endorsed but would provide information to individual learners and enterprises on employment-relevant groupings of Units.

VET statistics

While there are very strong indicators that many individuals are looking for particular skills rather than full qualifications, VET statistics do not reflect this reality: they do not allow for a good understanding of how learners think about qualifications.
It may be that they think partial completion is a desired outcome, but answers are particularly hard to find in those jurisdictions where learners can only be enrolled in whole qualifications even when they simply want a single Unit of Competency.

Ways need to be found to provide a better picture of learner motivations and decisions to complete a full qualification and/or skill sets.

**Training Package qualification titles**

The current rules and protocols used for the titling of Training Package qualifications exist for a good reason, but are seen by some providers as restrictive and inflexible.

Stakeholder views on whether the rules around titling should be loosened are quite mixed, with providers as the main proponents and industry and policy-makers as opponents citing concerns that change could lead to a proliferation of titles and market confusion.

In this debate we think there is a middle ground which should be explored, with marketing standards allowing titles to be used in way that better reflects the needs of the market.

NTQC could take the initiative here, entering into a dialogue with AQFAB and the States and Territories on ways that providers could customise national qualification titles without compromising national objectives.

**Training Package qualifications and the AQF**

Developers of Training Packages are responsible for creating AQF qualifications by packaging Units of Competency into groups that meet meaningful job roles and aligning these groups of units into qualifications.

In this task, they face many challenges: assigning an AQF level to a qualification; ensuring the right degree of flexibility and the right balance between core and elective Units; and interpreting the AQF descriptors which are not clear.

The approach to assigning an AQF level to a qualification varies markedly in and across Training Packages. We recognise the need to allow different industries a high level of autonomy in defining qualifications for that industry. We accept that different industries have different histories, different dynamics and different requirements and not all Packages could or should apply the same rules. Nor should we expect that in a competency-based system, average learning time for a qualification should be nationally specified. However, this does not mean that industries and developers should not be challenged more robustly than at present to justify their decisions about the size and structure of Training Package qualifications and their alignment to the AQF.

We suggest that this challenge needs to come through a fresh approach to the development and review processes for Training Package qualifications rather than by a new set of rules.
Submissions and consultations suggested that a review of the adequacy of the AQF and the flexibility the descriptors is needed, taking account of national and international efforts to achieve a coherent qualifications framework which works for all sectors and the idea seems to have merit.

Finally, we think that any move away from nationally recognised qualifications to provider-based qualifications would be a retrograde step for the achievement of VET policy objectives, and would lead to a proliferation and fragmentation of qualifications which is now recognised as a major problem in the UK, New Zealand and elsewhere.

Course accreditation

It was never intended that the Training Package model could or would provide for all training needs. For this reason, the Training Packages are complemented by accredited courses, justified as meeting broad community, social and equity needs beyond the specific workplace competencies and functionality of Training Packages. However, the provision for accredited courses was not intended to create a dual system of qualifications in VET.

The current AQTF Review may identify weaknesses in the AQTF Standards related to accredited courses. However, consultations do suggest different practices across jurisdictions. We suggest that State/Territory accreditation authorities might revisit their interpretation of the AQTF rules to ensure that there is a good balance between course accreditation which complements Training Packages on the one hand and, on the other, a course accreditation system which can encourage duplication of resources, variability of qualifications and lack of portability of qualifications for individuals.

Overall, we think that the demand for accredited courses is likely to diminish as Training Packages get better; that there will always be some demand for accredited courses and that this should not be seen as a weakness of the Training Package model per se.

Credit points

Alignment between Training Packages and school and university systems is desirable although difficult, and a more consistent way of comparing qualifications that run across sectors (secondary school, VET, higher education) and ensuring consistency in the level of the award would have considerable benefit.

Victoria has been working on the development of a credit matrix as a means of developing a common language and currency for all qualifications and, while we are not in a position to endorse this approach, it does seem to have a wider application. As a first step, we believe there would be value in national discussion of the principles behind the Victorian Credit Matrix system to assess its relevance for the national VET system.
4.5 Supporting quality teaching, learning and assessment

The distinction between Training Package policy and Training Package implementation, although real, is not always helpful because Training Packages are simultaneously "... the instruments and embodiments of policy and the tools of practice". (Virgona et al 2003) The ultimate test of the efficacy of Training Package policy is its effective implementation.

Improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment practice and in the environments in which Training Packages are being implemented are even more important than improving the "products" and the business processes associated with their production. Better products, more collaboration, good leadership, exemplary national and State/ Territory co-ordination and more supportive and adaptive systems at all levels are needed to complement the compliance requirements of the AQTF.

As “tools of practice", Training Packages must be fit for purpose, as must the system within which they are implemented. We think improvements are needed on both counts.

Understanding Training Packages

There is an unacceptably high level of confusion amongst educators in particular about the relationship between Training Packages and teaching, learning and assessment. Many do not seem to understand how Training Packages work, or how to work with them, and blame them for what may well be their own planning and practice or inadequate management support. After seven years, we would have expected a more widespread understanding. We see three main areas of confusion:

- Misunderstandings about competency based training and its embodiment in Training Packages.
- Confusion between the specification of competence contained in Training Packages, the curriculum of its delivery (learning design) and resources to support teaching and learning.
- Confusion between curriculum and the methods of teaching (pedagogy).

We do not accept the view put to us that Training Package model per se devalues curriculum, teaching or learning. On the contrary, we have seen many examples of practitioners doing an outstanding job providing innovative, flexible and high-quality learning opportunities and rigorous assessment. Regrettably, there is also evidence that at worst, Training Packages have been literally interpreted as national curriculum, and that "tick and flick" training is more than a rare occurrence.

Training Packages assume a high level of competence within the RTO to facilitate valid training delivery and assessment. The AQTF clearly mandates requirements for this, and irrespective of the quality of a Training Package, good learning outcomes are contingent on the capabilities of the RTO. Accountability and risk clearly lies with the RTO. This should remain a bedrock of the Training Package model.
But we do see a need for State Training Authorities and RTOs alike continue to emphasise that:

- using Training Packages as a curriculum and using individual Units of Competence as if they are curriculum modules is poor practice;
- high-order professional expertise is needed to decide how to develop competence, drawing from a wider pedagogical repertoire and a sophisticated capability to diagnose individual learning needs, and how to make holistic, context-sensitive judgments about whether it has been achieved;
- good teachers and trainers will continue to develop their own teaching and learning materials and not necessarily look for centrally produced resources.

A system which supports quality teaching, learning and assessment

While accountability and risk for Training Package implementation lies with RTOs, the VET system nationally and State Training Authorities do have an obligation to provide a reasonable level of support for the implementation of a nationally-agreed model. The compliance framework of the AQTF is a necessary but not sufficient means of ensuring good quality teaching, learning and assessment. What is needed is a capacity-building approach that emphasises quality, creativity, professional judgement and growth rather than simply compliance.

Many millions of dollars have been spent by the Commonwealth, by States/Territories, RTOs, enterprises and individual teachers, trainers and assessors in developing resource materials to support the implementation of Training Packages. Yet calls for more support, guidance, more centrally provided resources and more professional development are persistent, especially but not only from TAFE Institutes.

We have drawn a number of conclusions from the evidence before us, taking into account that Training Packages do not mandate specific delivery strategies and learning programs, resources or assessment approaches.

- Calls for more "support" for the implementation of Training Packages must be understood. Sharper analysis of the problem, its scale and better targeting of subsequent effort will be required. It may be possible to identify areas within National Implementation Guides for improvement which would support teaching, learning and assessment.

- However, more teaching, learning and assessment resources or professional development for individual practitioners will have a limited impact without parallel attention to the organisational context (management, resources, systems and physical space) in which the practitioners are working.

- The respective roles and responsibilities of ANTA, State Training Authorities, RTOs and individual practitioners for providing quality teaching, learning and assessment resources have become blurred. Perhaps as a result, State/Territory and RTO facilitation of better teaching, learning and assessment has been patchy—although there are some important exceptions.
• Although we agree with Down and Stewart (2001) that the implementation of Training Packages involves an ongoing process of staff development and capacity-building, calls for more national resources and for more national professional development should be treated with caution. National effort should be directed to national co-ordination, to those areas which complement State/Territory, RTO and individual effort in which there is a strategic national interest in doing so. We suggest that assessment is one such area.

• The availability of widely distributed assessor expertise is critical to the success of the Training Package model. The basic need now is for increased emphasis on professional judgment by assessors combined with stronger mechanisms to ensure the validity, reliability and consistency of assessment.

• More needs to be done to promote the application of technologies to support flexible Training Package delivery through blended learning incorporating e-learning options.

• Directions which we would like to see explored include:
  - Resource materials—explore the feasibility of developing a National Assessment Bank, and consider options for better coordination of multiple existing resource repositories.
  - Professional growth—consider ways of developing a stronger sense of professional identity; build the capacity of training managers; provide better professional guidance to teachers and assessors at a pedagogical level; encourage robust national dialogue around alternative pedagogies and assessment practices in a Training Package environment; and consider how the Australian Flexible Learning Framework could further contribute to enhancing teaching and assessment.
  - Assessment—trial innovative approaches to sharing of successful approaches among practitioners, and explore ways in which more support can be given to encourage individual industries to strengthen assessor networks.
  - Research—initiation of two major projects as outlined in section 5.3.

4.6 Improving Pathways

For many years, Australia has been implementing policies to support flexible lifelong learning. These emphasise coordination and collaboration between learning sectors and the social partners, pathways between basic education, further education, training and employment and support for the national recognition of all kinds of learning—formal, non-formal and informal.

Training Packages are relevant to this policy mix, but only in so far as they define the content of VET learning and how it is to be assessed and help (or hinder) lifelong transitions. We consider them from this perspective only, recognising that there are other factors, particularly financing systems and accountability frameworks, which are likely to have the most impact on lifelong learning.
Recognition of Prior Learning

RPL has an important role in the training cycle, especially as a precursor to training. Recent research shows that views about RPL within VET have matured over past years. However, there is clear evidence that RPL has not brought about the gains expected, despite it being on the national agenda for a decade. This has implications for national training effort and the acquisition and international recognition of AQF qualification outcomes.

Identified barriers to the uptake of RPL include restrictive provider practices; funding mechanisms; costs to learners; lack of understanding by RTOs and their clients; learner perceptions of the value of participating in training; complexity of processes; and funding models. The introduction of the AQTF may be playing a role in improving provider attention to RPL, but the evidence needs further analysis and it is clear that RPL requires attention.

At a national level a body of recently completed work is being considered. This includes the draft National Principles and Operational Guidelines for RPL developed by AQFAB to improve national consistency. We do not wish to cut across this work, but emphasise the need to get the right incentive for employers, employees and those not in employment. Two options have arisen in this review that may be worth considering further. One would be a learning incentive payable to employers to contribute to RPL and gap training; the other would be a learning incentive payable to individuals (in or looking for employment) to facilitate their access to RPL and gap training.

Entry to VET

Training Packages are premised on notions of flexibility and access, offering entry and progression for learners through a range of pathways. However, the absence and sometimes the make up of AQF qualifications at Certificates I and II are seen as potentially inhibiting entry to training. This may be particularly so for people with disabilities, people who are unemployed or changing careers, Indigenous Australians, and people from other equity groups. 27 Training Packages currently provide no Certificate I, while others provide limited offerings at both Certificate I and II qualification levels.

In order to improve the participation of equity groups in Training Packages an agreed entry point is required; entry to an industry via Training Package qualifications would seem to be logical. Where Training Packages do not offer Certificate I, or where the offerings are not suited to learner needs, access through multi-field accredited courses needs to be available. All provision at entry level needs to offer an appropriate mix of generic workplace skills, common and cross industry competencies and technical skills in order to maintain learner choice and facilitate pathways. The AQF descriptors may need attention to support this.

We suggest that to better provide for the full range of potential learners and their individual needs, action will be needed across three fronts.

• Decisions not to include Certificate I or II qualifications within Training Packages need to be more closely scrutinised and fully justified than is currently the case. There is a widely held view within VET, which we share, that sometimes the decision not to include qualifications at these levels may be influenced more by New Apprenticeship incentive arrangements than by industry-specific characteristics.
4 - Major areas for action

- Decisions on whether the Training Package model should allow for cross-sector and cross-industry qualifications at Certificate I and II levels based on a cluster of Training Packages should be accelerated, although we do have some concerns that current initiatives may be trying too hard to make Training Packages into ‘all things to all people’ when vocational pathway course might be more suitable.

- We see a need to clarify the demand for vocational pathways, not limited to entry levels or VET in Schools (e.g. mature-age workers), and taking account of current initiatives such as the Ai Group work on Technology Cadetships.

VET in Schools

While VET in Schools programs were available before Training Packages, they have flourished under them. With the increased participation, concerns have been expressed about the quality and parity of outcomes between this and other VET provision.

Schools find the complexity of Units of Competency, the variability between Training Packages and the pace of change challenging, and they often struggle to achieve outcomes required by industry and workplaces.

We suggest that the Training Package model should remain the basis of VET in Schools, with encouragement and support for schools to offer both Training Package qualifications and, in some instances, programs based on a locally appropriate selection of units from Certificate II - III qualifications, where the full qualification may not be attainable in school. We also suggest that schools be provided with better guidance about Training Packages, including advice on work placement and simulated assessment.

VET and Higher Education

Articulation between VET and Higher Education is based on agreements made between institutions, usually based on VET Diploma level courses and above and usually providing credits into three- and four-year Bachelor Degrees. Currently multiple such agreements exist between institutions and there is evidence of increasing formal articulation from VET to Higher Education.

We do not accept that the reluctance of some universities to offer fair and reasonable credit transfer for VET qualifications is sufficient reason to cause a re-think of the Training Package model.

We have the sense that the tide may have turned and that as RTOs and Universities come to understand the Training Package model better, graded assessment is introduced, and the Associate Degree introduced, pathways into higher education will open up.

Leadership responsibility in this area lies with the Commonwealth and ANTA who should be systematically encouraging close liaison between the VET and higher education sectors on a broad range of issues including articulation and credit transfer arrangements; overlapping qualification structures; and assessment reporting arrangements for entry and credit for streamlined progression into higher education.
Training Package developers should actively pursue increased articulation between higher level VET qualifications and higher education outcomes, and encourage and explore innovative approaches with willing higher education institutions.

**International markets**

International markets are significant to VET and to the economy more broadly. The aspiration within the National Strategy for Vocational Education and Training 2004-2010 is for Australia to have a sizeable share of the international education market and for VET to facilitate access to international markets.

Views on the use of Training Packages in international markets are polarised around a range of issues including qualification titles (a matter dealt with earlier), AQF nomenclature, credits for University entry and in the case of off-shore provision, issues of quality, auditing and monitoring, the language of instruction and Training Package requirements for workplace training.

We have two suggestions to deal with this problem. ANTA could commission a research study to assess the impact of refining Training Packages for the international market; and/or Training Packages with possible overseas markets should incorporate additional flexibility in their development by, for example, increasing capacity to contextualise units of competency to suit international conditions.

Globalisation has raised the related but different question of the extent to which the Training Package model can accommodate the effects of globalisation. Australian industry must have the skills base to compete in global markets and to satisfy the requirements of international standards; and the needs of all VET clients, domestic and international, will increasingly become more diverse and sophisticated. Australian clients will inevitably demand qualifications they can use beyond national boundaries. Training Package development must be able to keep pace with these international developments and so we suggest that Training Package developers should take into account international standards and consider the need to satisfy their requirements. We also think that Training Packages with possible overseas markets might perhaps incorporate additional flexibility in their development by, for example, increasing capacity to contextualise Units of Competency to suit international conditions.
We started this Report by asserting that the environments in which Training Packages are being implemented are even more important than improving the "products" and the business processes associated with their production. Better collaboration, good leadership, outstanding national and State/Territory co-ordination and more supportive and adaptive systems at all levels are needed.

In the past, all parties agree that there has been a lack of attention to the management of the massive changes that Training Packages represented to practitioners and providers.

The suggestions in this Report will require considerable attention to the processes that will ensure a successful transition.

5.1 Dealing with the legacy

Many clients are not engaged, and many still feel anger or confusion as a result of the implementation process. They may be right, they may be wrong. But they're there—even though some of them are clinging to outdated perceptions of Training Packages. There is a need to engage them—and the first step in engagement is to admit that the introduction of Training Packages could have been better handled by all parties.

This is a legacy that needs to be dispatched, and a high level of transparency is needed if we are to achieve the necessary ‘settlement’. We reject the option of selling the changes as simply a fine-tuning of a robust model, or as a fundamental shift away from the existing Training Package approach. Instead, we suggest that changes are represented as moving purposefully into the next stage of the Training Package model—a significant next stage of a long journey to maximise their potential.

5.2 Funding

Funding was raised at some point in almost all our consultations and in many submissions. This is not a Training Package issue per se, but it does go to the question of “What other VET sector responses are needed for the future?” in the Project Brief.

Funding issues raised were largely confined to questions of public funding to providers across four dimensions: national consistency of funding; the flexibility of funding; the basis of funding; and the adequacy of funding.

Without canvassing all the financial, technical and political aspects of the way public funding is allocated Training Package delivery, we were struck by:

• growing dissatisfaction in industry groups and providers about inexplicably large differences in nominal hours for qualifications at different and the same levels and fast tracking of candidates through levels
• the unacknowledged decentralisation of the responsibility and resourcing of curriculum and resource development and its impact on the cost structures of providers
• the way State purchasing authorities and/or local managers cut nominal hours where they need to cut costs
5 - Making the transition

- a lack of transparency in many State/Territory-based funding and purchasing systems related to Training Package delivery
- the impracticality of suggestions that in an outcomes-based competency-based system, input hours are not relevant.

These are not new problems brought about by the introduction of Training Packages, but the Training Package model combined with budget constraints have brought them into sharper relief.

It seems to us that the tendency to ignore the way Training Packages are funded at provider level has created its own problems for implementation, and for quality. There are current initiatives underway to address macro-level funding issues and to consider the scope for greater harmonisation of nominal hours assigned to Training Package qualifications. We can only commend these efforts and hope they may lead, in time, to a better understanding of provider cost-structures and new funding model which will do a better job of supporting the implementation of Training Packages.

5.3 R&D

Although this is not an area we examined closely, we have been struck by the substantial body of high quality of academic and practitioner literature on various aspects of Training Packages and also by the difficulty in using it in a systematic way as an evidence-base for Training Package policy and practice. We have two suggestions:

- Sponsor a high quality meta-research project to draw together the themes and findings of individual research in the area of Training Packages.
- Initiate a nationwide and multi-year research program examining new pedagogic practices and possibilities to facilitate the implementation of Training Packages.

5.4 A staged approach

Part of the resistance to Training Packages in the past was undeniably due to the use of regulatory and compliance mechanisms to ensure implementation. This may have been necessary in the early stages, but Training Packages are now sufficiently embedded in VET provision that such approaches should not be necessary.

We urge a strategy that encourages experimentation—even where this would require some flexibility in the application of standard rules—for example, the use of ‘probes’ and ‘pilots’ to test different approaches, and a strategy that works with (rather than against) diversity.

In the same spirit, we recommend a staged approach to change, achieving what we can by evolution and natural extinction rather than by regulation and compulsion.

And lastly, there is a need to manage expectations. Many have pinned their hopes on this Review, and it would be important to be able to show some early gains.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annex 1.</th>
<th>Project Brief</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annex 2.</td>
<td>Methodology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 3.</td>
<td>Project Management Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 4.</td>
<td>Sounding Board members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 5.</td>
<td>Organisations consulted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 6.</td>
<td>Submissions received</td>
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<td>Annex 7.</td>
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<td>Annex 8.</td>
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Annex 1. Project Brief

At the ANTA MINCO meeting on 15 November 2002, Ministers agreed that:

"The ANTA Board request the NTQC, in consultation with ANTA CEOs, to establish a high level review of Training Packages to ensure teaching and learning are strengthened and that they meet both current and future skill needs".

In response to this resolution, ANTA developed the following Terms of Reference:

"The purpose of this high level review is to inform ANTA MINCO about whether and, if so how, Training Packages could better meet both current and future skill needs. In addition, the review will address the capacity of the VET system to deliver the outcomes defined in Training Packages, with a particular focus on teaching and learning strategies, and will identify ways in which this capability could be strengthened.

The review will focus on the following three areas:

1. Review existing evidence and research relating to the current and future context in which Training Packages will need to operate.

2. Analyse the capacity of the Training Package model and the realities of implementation to meet current and future skill needs. This would encompass such factors as the structure of Training Packages, the Training Package development/review process and implementation arrangements, including planning/resourcing in relation to the implementation of Training Packages i.e. professional development arrangements, current approaches to teaching, learning and assessment and the availability and use of support materials.

3. Recommend how the Training Package model and supporting structures could be enhanced to better meet current and future skill needs, including a particular focus on the implications for teaching and learning approaches.

The review will need to address a number of related key questions. These include but are not limited to:

(i) Context: New and emerging factors affecting the development, review and use of Training Packages

(ii) Capacity of the Training Package model and the current realities of implementation

(iii) Enhancing the Training Package model and its supporting structures."
Annex 2. Methodology

Phase 1

Phase 1 consisted of the preparation of a report entitled An analysis of the current and future context in which Training Packages will need to operate, prepared by OVAL Research at the University of Technology, Sydney (ANTA 2003b). This was published and made widely available.

Phase 2

Phase 2 concentrated on the realities of implementation of Training Packages. It involved an ANTA-commissioned key research project that analysed documented evidence from States and Territories, other key stakeholders, and research from over 300 sources. It also involved the commissioning of short papers from TAFE Directors Australia and ACPET on their members’ experiences with Training Packages, and a number of ‘think pieces’ on a variety of topics.

The summary was published and made widely available.

Phase 3

Phase 3 commenced in late September 2003, and proceeded through the following steps:

Review of Phases 1 and 2

Phase 1 had already been completed and published before Phase 3 started, and Phase 2 was completed during the first month. It was therefore possible for Phase 3 to take into account the findings of both earlier Phases.

Review of key documents

This review took into account the findings of Phases 1 and 2, and also considered approximately 60 additional key documents including those referenced in the Phase 3 Project Brief. It made a number of general observations about the Training Package literature.

Targeted consultations

About 20 consultations were carried out with key stakeholders in the early stages of Phase 3: industry peak bodies, State and Territory training and recognition bodies, national ITABs, key bodies representing particular groups, unions, practitioners, researchers, and the Enterprise and Training Provider Working Group of the ANTA Board.

National Forum

On 7 November 2003 the NTQC hosted a National Forum, to which 100 key stakeholders were invited. Forum participants were provided with

- Report of the Review of Key Documents
The Forum enabled the NTQC and ANTA to:

- inform key stakeholders of the progress of the Review
- check the consultants’ initial premises and assumptions
- check the proposed direction that Phase 3 would take.

Circulation of Consultation Paper

The Consultation Paper was published on the ANTA web-site in early December and served as a basis for consultations in every State and Territory, submissions, and further targeted consultations.

Nationwide Consultations

In early February 2004, the consultants conducted 24 consultations which were co-hosted by ANTA and the relevant State Training Authority. This provided an opportunity for approximately 700 people to give feedback to the consultants on the Consultation Paper.

Submissions

136 written submissions were received and analysed (see Appendix G).

The break-up of submissions was:

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<th>Category</th>
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<tr>
<td>Government bodies</td>
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<td>Enterprises, peak industry bodies, ITABs/ISCs</td>
<td>36</td>
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<tr>
<td>RTOs and individual practitioners</td>
<td>67</td>
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<tr>
<td>VET and education sector organisations</td>
<td>9</td>
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</table>

Further targeted consultations

In addition to the above opportunities for feedback, further targeted consultations, based on the Consultation Paper, were conducted with industry peak bodies, State and Territory training and recognition bodies, national ITABs and ISCs, key bodies representing particular groups, unions, practitioners, researchers.

Over 1000 people provided input into the Review in Phase 3.

Presentation to ANTA CEOs

The consultants also presented their findings and proposals to CEOs of the Commonwealth and each State and Territory on 12 March 2004, for comment and discussion.

Presentation of Options Paper to NTQC

An Options Paper was presented to the National Training Quality Council in mid-March 2004, and this Report was prepared as a result of the discussions at that meeting.
Annex 3. Project Management Group

The Project Management Group had the following responsibilities:

- developing a full work plan for the review, including the assignment of necessary resources to each stage, up to June 2004 MINCO
- developing the project brief for the high level review of Training Packages
- selecting the consultant(s) for the project
- overseeing the consultancy work
- providing regular progress reports for consideration by NTQC
- ensuring consultation with ANTA CEOs at key stages
- ensuring that the conduct of the review is consistent with the agreed Terms of Reference.

The Project Management Group comprised:

- Gary Collins Chair
  (NTQC industry representative)
- Sharon Coates
  (ANTA)
- Pam Gill
  (NTQC equity representative - nominated by ANTA CEOs' Committee)
- Leslie Loble
  (NSW nominee replacing Gary Willmott from September 2003 till present)
- Robert Player
  (representing State/Territory Training Authority perspective - WA, now member of NTQC)
- Julius Roe
  (NTQC industry representative - former NTQC member, now ANTA Board member)
- Gary Willmott
  (co-representative from NSW Dept of Education and Training - Feb 2003 until September 2003)
- Sherinda Shea
  Executive Officer and Project Manager
- Wendy Katz (for Phases 1 and 2)
  Principal Project Officer
- Sangeetha Das
  Project Officer
Annex 4.  Sounding Board members

As part of their process, the consultants met with a small group who acted as a ‘sounding board’. They were:

Robin Booth
Manager, Vocational Education and Assessment Centre
TAFE NSW

Meg Collins-Hughes
Australasian Training and Development Manager
Pilkington Australasia Limited

Margaret Dix
R/Manager Staff Learning and Development
Northern Sydney Institute of TAFE

Jeremy Gilling
Executive Officer, Manufacturing Learning Australia

Felicity Mildon
Director, Felicity Mildon and Associates Pty Ltd
Annex 5. Organisations consulted

The following organisations were consulted as part of the initial or follow-up targeted consultations:

**INDUSTRY BODIES**
- ACCI
- ACTU
- Ai Group
- Australian Business Limited
- BCA
- Council of Small Business Organisations of Australia*

**EDUCATION AND TRAINING BODIES and EDUCATORS**
- Meetings of national ITABs/ISCs/Recognised Bodies/TP developers
- Enterprise and Training Provider Working Group of the ANTA Board
- TAFE Directors Australia
- AEU/TAFE
- ACPE
- ACIV
- Researchers

**TRAINING AND RECOGNITION AUTHORITIES**
- ANTA
- Department of Education and Training, NSW
- Department of Education and Training, WA
- Department of Education, Science and Training
- Department of Employment and Training, Queensland
- Department of Further Education, Employment, Science & Technology, SA
- Office of Post-Compulsory Education and Training, Tasmania
- OTTE, Victoria
- Victorian Learning and Employment Skills Commission
- Victorian Qualifications Authority
- ACACA Managers
- State/Territory Training Package Expert Advisors’ Group
- Meeting of State and Territory Representatives on funding models related to qualifications

**VET AND EDUCATION SECTOR ORGANISATIONS**
- AITAC
- ADTAC
- NOHSC
- Dual Sector Universities

* = consultation offered, but offer not taken up
## Annex 6. Submissions received

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<tr>
<th>Organisation:</th>
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<tr>
<td>ABC</td>
<td>Elizabeth Ellis*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACAS</td>
<td>Dr Ross Woods</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adult Learning Australia</td>
<td>Francesca Beddie</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adult Learning Australia</td>
<td>Jim Nicholls*</td>
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<td>Ai Group</td>
<td>Megan Lilly</td>
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<td>AMES Victoria</td>
<td>Lynn Wallace Clancy</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANTA Industry Team</td>
<td>Andre Lewis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aspire Training &amp; Consulting</td>
<td>Carmel Byrne</td>
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<td>Australian Asphalt Pavement Association</td>
<td>Richard Culliford</td>
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<td>Australian Disability Training Advisory Council</td>
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<td>Australian Indigenous Training Advisory Council</td>
<td>Anne Maree Walker</td>
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<td>BCA Training and Development Services Pty Ltd</td>
<td>Bob Cooper</td>
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<td>Charles Sturt University</td>
<td>Assoc Prof Erica Smith</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chisholm Institute</td>
<td>Alan Daniel</td>
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<td>Commonwealth Dept Education, Science &amp; Technology</td>
<td>Murray Judd</td>
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<td>Commonwealth Dept Environment &amp; Heritage</td>
<td>Joan Cornish</td>
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<td>Marie Manidis</td>
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<td>Rees Barrett</td>
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<td>David J Foreman &amp; Associates</td>
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<td>Douglas Mawson Institute of Technology, SA</td>
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<td>Educational Living Pty. Ltd.</td>
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<td>Noel E Miller &amp; Associates</td>
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## Annexes

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(Corporate Service Education & Training Unit)
Queensland Studies Authority
Queensland Studies Authority
Queensland Training & Employment Board
RAFF Defence Forces
Rail Infrastructure Corporation, NSW
Red Cross Queensland
Restaurant & Catering Association of Victoria
RTCA
Rural Training Council of Australia
SA DFEEST
SA DFEEST
Schefenacker Vision Systems Australia.
Skillsoft
Software Publications Pty Ltd
South East Institute of TAFE, SA
Southbank Institute of TAFE
Southern Edge Training
Spencer TAFE
SSABSA
SSABSA
Swan TAFE WA
Swinburne University of Technology
TAFE Directors Australia
Take Another Look
Tasmania Building & Construction ITB
Tasmanian Government
Tasmanian Government

Peter Silk
Kim Banikoff
Ian Fyfe
Barry Smith
Shaun MacFadyen
Eugene Tse
Dan Keams
John Chalker
Shannon Brown*
Judith Nettleingham
Ann Doolette
Elisabeth Owers
Gary Rayner
Sharon Wilks
Max Johnson
Paul Hart
Neil Appo
Emma MacCulloch
Jeff Poole
Rod Bauer
Janet Keightley
Geoff Hawke
Judith Bissland
Margaret Fanning
Tamara Slattery
Peter Coad
Paula Steenholdt*
Trish McCullough
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<td>TDT Australia</td>
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<td>Textile Rental &amp; Laundry Assoc VIC</td>
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<td>TMI Management Solutions</td>
<td>Nicola Burridge</td>
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<td>Trison Business College</td>
<td>Cheryl Whittenbury</td>
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<td>University of Ballarat (TAFE Division)</td>
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<td>University of Sydney</td>
<td>Carol O'Donnell</td>
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<td>Victoria Dept of Education and Training</td>
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<td>Victoria University of Technology</td>
<td>Belinda McLennan</td>
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<td>Visionary &amp; Enterprising Management</td>
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<td>Cheryl Wiltshire*</td>
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<td>William Muller*</td>
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<td>Wodonga TAFE</td>
<td>Bill Daly</td>
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<td>John Youngman</td>
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<td>Allan Pitter</td>
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<td>Karen Plane</td>
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<td>John Hatch</td>
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* Although submissions marked * originated from an organisation, the submission indicated that they were made in a ‘personal’ or ‘individual’ capacity.
Annex 7.  List of Working Papers

These papers are available on the ANTA website: www.anta.gov.au

The Training Package Model

Training Packages today

Training Package Design

Training Package Development and Review

Training Package Qualifications

Pathways

Supporting quality teaching, learning and assessment

The change environment

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Annex 8. Bibliography and References


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High Level Review of Training Packages

It's happened... what now?
The High Level Review of Training Packages has resoundingly confirmed that:

- industry must have a pre-eminent role in defining work outcomes
- the Training Package model has widespread support
- the model has the flexibility to serve a range of broader purposes.

However, the review also identified the need for improvements to Training Package products and processes and to strengthen teaching and learning in response to the challenges faced by clients and stakeholders in implementing Training Packages. In June 2004, the Australian minister and state and territory ministers for vocational education and training considered the review findings and agreed to major areas for action.

This document summarises how the work will be taken forward. It is a supplement to Moving On, the report of the review.

The review showed that the time is right and that we have sufficient maturity and goodwill in the system to improve Training Packages and their implementation to benefit enterprises, industries, individuals and communities.

>> How did we get here?

The 18 month review involved three highly integrated stages of national research and consultation with many VET stakeholders.

- Phase One researched issues affecting Training Packages now and into the future and confirmed that Training Packages need to respond to new challenges—new skills, new knowledge, new approaches to teaching and learning.
- Phase Two investigated the current realities of Training Packages—exploring the experience of Training Package implementation from a wide range of users.
- Phase Three involved national consultation with more than 1000 stakeholders and analysis of more than 130 written submissions on the future responses needed to enhance the Training Package model and to support teaching, learning, and assessment. Finally, this phase drew together the key learnings from the review into the report Moving On available at www.anta.gov.au/highlevel.asp

>> The way ahead?

The National Training Quality Council (NTQC) has committed to a comprehensive Training Package Work Plan that prioritises work under six areas for action in short, medium and longer timelines over the coming three years.

ANTA will work with industry skills councils, other key national industry stakeholders, Australian Government, state and territory governments, registered training organisations (RTOs) and other interest groups to complete the work. This commitment will make sure that Training Packages are a cornerstone of a vocational education and training system that adapts and responds to the fluid nature of society and the labour market to create a truly globally competitive workforce and pathways for all learners.
Summary of the six major areas for action

Here is a summary of the work for the next three years to address the six major areas for action from the review.

Action 1: A new ‘settlement’

The review found that all stakeholders had under-estimated the massive changes that Training Packages represented to providers and systems. Under a new ‘settlement’ ANTA will provide the necessary leadership to instil confidence in Training Packages and to develop more supportive and adaptive systems and processes. A shared understanding of the role and importance of Training Packages will be fostered so that Training Packages meet the workforce skill needs of Australian industry now and in the future.

- A key component of this action is a three-year project to provide more rigorous processes for the development, review and endorsement of Training Packages. This will progressively improve Training Package quality and consistency by:
  > minimising overlap and inconsistency between Training Packages
  > providing for pre-vocational pathways and school to work transition
  > streamlining the endorsement process
  > ensuring consistent alignment of VET qualifications to the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)
  > capturing advice from the full range of stakeholders
  > maximising cross-industry commonalities.

- Stakeholders will be kept up-to-date with progress on implementation of the Work Plan, for example with forums for information sharing and regular updates on the ANTA website.

- New quality assurance mechanisms will be developed.

- Collaborative, cooperative and innovative approaches will be fostered.

Action 2: Better Training Package design

Training Package design will be improved through wider VET stakeholder input into development and review processes. This will ensure the emphasis is on good design rather than rules and that units of competency clearly specify appropriate work performance, knowledge, skills and abilities. To achieve this the following work will be completed.

- Clearer, more consistent guidance will be provided and shared among developers and reviewers of Training Packages.

- Industry stakeholders and regulators will continue to provide input into Training Package content. Provider input, including that of equity and qualification design specialists, will be strengthened in developing evidence guides where they link to teaching and learning.
• Better guidance will be provided to practitioners and assessors, for example through improved evidence guides and range statements; specifying workplace simulation and participation more clearly and explicitly; and providing guidance on the clustering of skills sets.

• A national approach to explicitly incorporating generic and employability skills in Training Packages will be implemented.

• Supplementary reporting systems will be investigated.

**Action 3: Rigorous and inclusive development and review processes**

Training Packages must be of high quality and fit for their multiple purposes including providing for entry level training, higher level qualifications and shorter skills sets. To this end, processes will be enhanced in the following ways.

• Tighter quality assurance will apply to Training Package development and review processes.

• Broad based market intelligence on current and future skills needs, including the input of equity and educational expertise, will inform Training Package development and review through the work of the newly formed industry skills councils.

• The key performance indicators for the councils will ensure a high degree of accountability consistent with their national industry leadership role.

• Global and international drivers will be fully considered in Training Package development and review processes, while ensuring Training Packages continue to meet the needs of the Australian market.

**Action 4: An effective qualifications framework**

The AQF must be clearly understood and interpreted by developers of Training Packages to ensure qualifications and Statements of Attainment meet industry and individual requirements. The following work will be done to progress this and to provide more comprehensive information to users of Training Packages.

• The need for clearer AQF descriptors in the VET sector will be explored with the Australian Qualifications Framework Advisory Board (AQFAB) to ensure consistent interpretation when determining Training Package qualifications.

• The potential for use of Training Package content for short training programs will be promoted.

• Strategies will be developed to raise awareness and recognition of Statements of Attainment.

• The potential for providers to customise national qualification titles for marketing purposes without affecting the integrity of nationally portable training will be investigated.
**Action 5: Supporting teaching, learning and assessment**

Mechanisms will be provided to support high quality delivery and assessment under Training Packages and to enhance VET professionalism.

- A range of collaborative and nationally agreed strategies will be implemented to enhance the quality of teaching and learning.
- Current mechanisms for storing and accessing Training Package related material will be examined, with some form of rationalisation if warranted.
- Greater connections will be made between research findings, national priorities, market intelligence and Training Package development and review processes.

**Action 6: Improving pathways**

Valid pathways will be available into and through Training Packages and into higher education to meet the needs of the full range of potential learners.

- Industry skills councils will develop pre-vocational pathways into Training Package qualifications and relevant entry level cross-industry qualifications to ensure valid pathways are available.
- Opportunities for cross-sectoral competencies will be maximised.
- Strategies will be developed to promote and improve articulation arrangements.
- Options will be explored for improving recognition of prior learning pathways.

>> How will the VET sector benefit?

There will be:

- more rigorous development, review and endorsement processes and better Training Package design leading to direct improvements in Training Package quality over a three year cycle
- greater skills transfer across industry and improved industry relevant pre-vocational pathways and enhanced school to work transition
- access to the generic and employability skills that industry and individuals require
- improved AQF descriptors for VET, increased value placed on VET qualifications, more status ascribed to Statements of Attainment
- better guidance to VET practitioners, trainers and assessors through improved evidence guides and range statements in Training Packages
- a greater system understanding of the roles and multiple purposes of Training Packages, clearer roles and responsibilities for key stakeholders, and national dialogue on approaches to teaching, learning and assessment
- enhanced RTO capabilities for Training Package implementation.

The six major areas for action build on existing achievements and position the Training Package model to serve the vocational education and training sector and industry's broader workforce and organisational development needs for the next decade.
What are the immediate priorities?

The NTQC Work Plan has identified five immediate priorities that will be completed by the end of 2004. These are:

- establishing more rigorous Training Package development, review and endorsement processes for roll out in 2005
- reaching a nationally agreed approach for accelerating the incorporation of generic and employability skills in Training Packages
- generating strategies in consultation with industry bodies to promote the value of Statements of Attainment
- evaluating current national programs and projects to develop a coherent, integrated strategy to better support flexible teaching, learning and assessment
- moving on—bringing about and supporting the necessary changes in the system.

For ongoing information visit www.anta.gov.au/highlevel.asp
Author/s:
Schofield, Kaye; McDonald, Rod

Title:
Moving on ...: report of the high level review of training packages.

Date:
2004

Persistent Link:
http://hdl.handle.net/11343/115460