

## CHAPTER 5: TAFE AND HIGHER EDUCATION

5.1 There is a growing perception that the differentiation between TAFE and higher education is becoming more blurred, with some TAFEs moving to confer degrees and some universities offering TAFE-like courses. This blurring is considered by some as useful but by others as undesirable. The Committee therefore sought a reference which allowed an examination of the extent to which the roles should overlap. It is the Committee's view that greater cooperation and better articulation between TAFE and higher education will result in benefits to many students and to Australia generally. However, if the interface between TAFE and higher education is poorly managed inefficiencies will occur and students' and VET clients' interests will suffer.

5.2 It is important to note that the majority of TAFE activity does not occur at the diploma levels it shares with higher education. In 1996, associate and advanced diploma enrolments in the VET sector were only 8 per cent of all vocational course enrolments and enrolments in diploma courses were only an additional 4.5 per cent.<sup>1</sup> To place too much emphasis on the overlap and interface between TAFE and universities is to make the mistake of assuming that TAFE's primary role is to provide another route to university. It is one of TAFE's ancillary roles.

5.3 TAFE's overlap and interface with higher education is in one sense a marginal issue for institutions in both sectors. However, its significance to approximately 12,000 students admitted per year to bachelor level courses on the basis of their TAFE results means TAFE institutes are vitally interested in ensuring that these students receive maximum recognition for their TAFE studies. It is also necessary that students' achievements at TAFE are fairly recognised if those students subsequently apply to and enrol in university.

### Overlap between TAFE and higher education

5.4 There is direct overlap in the course offerings of the TAFE and higher education sectors at the AQF diploma and advanced diploma levels and, to a much lesser extent, degree level. However the actual overlap, measured as enrolments, is low relative to the other courses offered in each sector. In 1995, enrolments in higher education at diploma level equated to only 6.25 percent of enrolments in TAFE and to only 15.25 per cent of a much smaller number of students at advanced diploma level. Combining enrolments of these AQF levels results in higher education enrolments being only 7.3 per cent of TAFE enrolments or 14,553 in higher education compared to 199,701 in TAFE. At

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1 NCVET, *Submission No. 49*, p. 8.

degree level there were only 45 TAFE enrolments in 1995 compared to 454,846 in higher education.<sup>2</sup> (see Appendix VI)

5.5 Furthermore, the Committee was informed that university enrolments in diploma level courses were not growing and that two year associate degrees which are offered by some universities will not be recognised within the AQF.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, TAFE degrees are not recognised within the AQF<sup>4</sup> and are not funded by the Commonwealth.<sup>5</sup>

5.6 The official picture does not accord entirely with the impressions the Committee received directly from some of the witnesses. Several witnesses from the higher education sector saw a widespread desire by TAFE institutes to be able to offer degree courses while witnesses from TAFE generally believed that universities were expanding their offerings at the diploma levels. However, it appears that these perceptions are more influenced by the occasional 'border skirmish' between TAFE and higher education than any major shift by either sector into areas usually served by the other.

5.7 Industry and the Commonwealth Government are both opposed to universities using their powers to self-accredit courses as a means to by-pass the Australian Recognition Framework (ARF) and offer VET programs.<sup>6</sup>

*[I]f a university wants to offer a vocational education and training qualification, in comparable terms or cooperatively with a TAFE system, then it has to do so under the same regime. It needs to do so in accordance with national training packages. It needs to do so by demonstrating to the state training recognition authorities that it is an appropriate training provider to deliver that training.<sup>7</sup> [Mr Mark Paterson, Chief Executive, Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry]*

5.8 TAFE and other VET providers are unlikely to face a serious threat from universities choosing to enter the VET market. In most cases, universities lack the industry links and experience to offer viable VET programs under the rules of the VET system. However, there are benefits available to both sectors and their students from collaboration and better articulation.

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2 ANTA, *Exhibit No. 29*, Table A5, page 38. (Reproduced as Appendix VI) Percentages are calculated from the enrolment figures in this Table. Published statistics are for the VET sector as a whole but the overwhelming majority of VET enrolments at these AQF levels are in TAFE; and see, Mr Tony Greer, First Assistant Secretary, VET Division, DEETYA, *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 667.

3 Mr Michael Gallagher, First Assistant Secretary, Higher Education Division, DEETYA, *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 672, and Mr Tony Hamilton, Executive Director, AVCC, *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 689-90.

4 Mr Stuart Hamilton, Executive Director, AVCC, *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 682.

5 Mr Roderick Manns, Assistant Secretary, VET Reform Branch, DEETYA, *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 671.

6 *ibid.*

7 *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 429 and see *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 23.

## **Should TAFE offer degrees?**

5.9 Several witnesses from the TAFE sector proposed that TAFE should be able to offer vocational degrees in areas they consider not to be well served by the universities. Most advocates of TAFE degrees did not see the proposal encroaching onto university territory but creating new ground to meet unfulfilled requirements.

*These are degrees which would meet the requirements of the Australian Standards framework at the appropriate level, would be industry driven, recognising that the higher education sector has different accreditation and curriculum models to those in the TAFE sector, and that these would be different in their emphasis. They would be vocational. They would go through an accreditation system through the Australian Standards framework level, and so therefore would be seen as distinct from the sorts of bachelor degrees that one would get from the higher ed sector.*<sup>8</sup> [Mr Ian Robertson, Research Coordinator, Box Hill Institute of TAFE, Vic]

5.10 The provision of vocational degrees was also proposed as a means of enhancing the status of vocational education, particularly in secondary schools where the higher education pathway is the most heavily promoted.<sup>9</sup> The Committee could not sanction the development of TAFE degrees for this reason alone. It would be wrong to pander to the biases and inadequacies in careers education and guidance by creating a new category of vocational degrees rather than addressing the issue of providing young people with comprehensive information on the full range of career and education pathways available to them. Careers and education guidance in relation to TAFE is addressed in Chapter 4.

5.11 It was generally acknowledged that there is an inadequately met need for higher level vocationally related education and training in some areas.<sup>10</sup> Views from TAFE on TAFE offering vocational degrees were not unanimous but the large majority favoured better articulation and collaborative arrangements between TAFE institutes and universities in preference to TAFE offering degree courses in its own right. Articulation and collaboration between TAFE and higher education are important issues and are discussed later in this chapter.

5.12 The Committee does not favour TAFE institutes offering degrees in their own right. TAFE's core responsibility is to meet the needs of industry and students by offering high quality vocational education and training. While

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8 *ibid*, p. 280.

9 Mr Aidan O'Leary, Convenor, National TAFE Science Network, *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 620.

10 *see* Mr Barrie Baker, Director, South West Institute of TAFE, Vic, *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 346; and Mr Charles Wilkins, President, Victorian Association of Directors of TAFE Institutes, *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 305

there is limited substantive evidence on the subject, the Committee's informed view is that the effort required to meet and maintain accreditation standards to offer degrees to a very small proportion of students risks diverting TAFE's attention from its central role to the detriment of its main clients.

## **Articulation**

5.13 'Articulation' refers to the flow of students between TAFE and higher education and the system of credit transfer which facilitates that flow for students wishing to move from one sector to the other. The issue is vitally important to about 12,000 TAFE students admitted each year to bachelor courses at universities and probably many more who may have been discouraged from enrolling in a university course when they were refused sufficient credit for TAFE studies already undertaken. A much larger number of university students 'reverse articulate' into TAFE courses.

### ***Why improve articulation?***

5.14 From the students' point of view, articulation is perhaps the most important issue at the interface between TAFE and higher education. There seems to be an increasing tendency for students to 'mix and match' by moving from one sector to another, in both directions and without necessarily completing an award before transferring.<sup>11</sup> Consequently students are exerting pressure on the system to improve articulation arrangements.

5.15 Governments, at both State and Federal levels, also have a significant interest in promoting effective articulation between TAFE and universities in both directions. Without clear, consistent and equitable articulation arrangements Governments will fund places for, and pay support to, students who already know what they are being taught and who could otherwise complete their desired qualification earlier. Sub-optimal articulation arrangements waste public and private resources and impose high opportunity costs on students.

### ***TAFE to university***

5.16 Australia has a large and diverse higher education sector. It should easily be able to offer a range of courses which articulate with TAFE diploma and advanced diploma courses where the needs of students and employers require more theoretical content than the TAFE courses provide. As a sector, it already does so but the pathways are often obscure and credit transfer difficult to negotiate. Unfortunately for many students, higher education has been very slow to put in place consistent and transparent articulation arrangements for students moving from TAFE into higher education.

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11 *see Transcript of Evidence*, p. 688.

## **Admissions to university from TAFE**

5.17 Several studies have established that students admitted to university on the basis of their TAFE results perform as well as the general population of students.<sup>12</sup> A NSW study has shown that while the number of applications to universities from TAFE students has risen the proportion of these students receiving offers of university places has also risen, improving their relative position against school leaver applicants.

*It would appear that universities responded to the need to fill more places in the face of falling demand by accepting more applicants from the pool of non-school leavers. Had they taken more school leavers the TER requirements for entry to courses would have fallen even more than they did.*<sup>13</sup> [Don Lewis]

5.18 However, it is clearly harder for TAFE graduates to gain places in the older, more established universities. This is partly due to the fact that there is more competition for these places but also the attitude and policies of those institutions.

*...Melbourne's intake of TAFE graduates is the lowest of all large universities, and its rate of rejection of applicants with any TAFE background is the highest. The market strengths of Melbourne and an admissions philosophy in which the tertiary entrance score is central tend to lock TAFE applicants out, whether they hold completed or incomplete awards.*<sup>14</sup> [Richard Teese]

*[In NSW] it appears that former TAFE students do relatively well (compared to other applicants and to former TAFE students applying to other universities) in the smaller, newer and country-based universities and have more difficulty in gaining admission to the larger, older and Sydney-based universities.*<sup>15</sup> [Don Lewis]

5.19 Falling demand for university places by school leavers, who traditionally make up the bulk of university admissions, is creating more higher education opportunities for TAFE students. However, these places are more likely to be offered by the newer, predominantly regional universities.

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12 see Ramsey, E; Tranter, D; Kain, M; Sumner, R; University of South Australia, *Cross-sectoral Linkages: A Case Study*, DEETYA, 1997, pp. 76-81; and see, Cohen, R; Stone S; *University Admissions Procedures for NSW TAFE Graduates*, DEETYA, 1997, p. 25.

13 *Procedures and Outcomes for NSW and ACT Universities*, DEETYA, 1997, p. 85.

14 *Seamless Education and Training*, Research report for the Ministerial Review on the Provision of Technical and Further Education in the Melbourne Metropolitan Area. (1997), p.14.

15 *Procedures and Outcomes for NSW and ACT Universities*, DEETYA, 1997, p. 85.

## **Credit transfer**

5.20 Despite the slow progress, considerable effort in improving articulation arrangements has been invested by individual TAFE institutes, universities and the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Credit Transfer Committee. There is now an internet webpage which presents information from the Credit Transfer Project on which universities offer general credit for TAFE studies and in which subjects.<sup>16</sup> These national schemes supplement many local and bilateral arrangements made between universities and TAFE.<sup>17</sup>

5.21 Perhaps the major obstacle to rapid progress on credit transfer has been the diversity of course offerings in both TAFE and higher education. Diversity, which is one of the great strengths of the Australian tertiary system, has added great complexity to the credit transfer task. In particular, it has meant rigidly applying a standard credit transfer formula for articulation from TAFE to university would be an inappropriate solution.<sup>18</sup>

*The learning domains of TAFE and universities do not meet in a clean, neat seam but in a complex, multi-layered and ragged pattern due to deep differences in the relationship across different disciplines.*<sup>19</sup> [University of South Australia]

5.22 Even allowing for the complexity of the task, there is considerable evidence from the TAFE sector that individual universities have been unnecessarily conservative in their approach to negotiating articulation arrangements with TAFE.

*The Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee established a group to work on credit transfer arrangements, but many universities, in particular the sandstones, have not endorsed the findings of their own committees. They have not participated in those particular findings. Not surprisingly, though, some universities are much more generous in recognising their own associate degrees.*<sup>20</sup> [Mr Aidan O'Leary, Convenor, National TAFE Science Network]

5.23 The conservative stance on credit transfer of some Australian universities is not necessarily shared by their overseas peers. The Melbourne Institute of Textiles told the Committee that its articulation arrangements with international institutions preceded local arrangements. The Melbourne Institute of Textiles and the Canberra Institute of Technology both reported

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16 [www.avcc.edu.au/avcc/actp](http://www.avcc.edu.au/avcc/actp)

17 Dr Tony Haydon, Director, Credit Transfer and Cross Sectoral Issues, AVCC, *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 682.

18 see Mr Stuart Hamilton, Executive Director, AVCC, *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 685.

19 *Submission No. 21*, p. 2.

20 *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 616

that the existence of their international links provided useful leverage in negotiating credit transfer arrangements with Australian universities.<sup>21</sup>

5.24 TAFE institutes are already promoting their articulated pathways to students as a way to attract enrolments. However, the Committee thinks that universities should also be making information on credit transfer readily available to enrolling students so that they are made aware that credit transfer arrangements exist for which they may be encouraged to apply.

#### **5.25 Recommendation 5.1**

**The Committee recommends that the Minister for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs require universities to include in faculty handbooks and other promotional material, information about their credit transfer policies. Such information should include where students can obtain further details on credit transfer available for specific TAFE courses and how to apply.**

#### **Dual awards**

5.26 A major advantage of improved articulation from TAFE to university is that it can dramatically increase the course options available to students. In some fields there are distinct advantages for students, and ultimately for their employers, if they are able to combine the practical elements of a course done at TAFE with theoretical knowledge acquired at university. Dual award courses which combine study in both sectors and recognise achievement with an award from each are becoming more popular with students.

*We currently have two dual awards [with Monash University], accounting and tourism, so graduates from our programs can go straight into the Monash programs with maximum recognition and move through very quickly to their degrees, so they come out with...an award from us, and also one from the university, which is very useful when they are marketing themselves in the workplace.<sup>22</sup>*

[Mrs Elizabeth Nicholls, Director, Central Gippsland Institute of TAFE]

5.27 Dual awards are usually negotiated on a bilateral basis between a TAFE institute and a university. They are typically industry recognised two year TAFE diplomas which articulate into university degrees in a related field with usually one, and sometimes up to two, years credit granted towards the degree. Dual awards which combine industry requirements with maximum

21 Ms Christine Cookson, Director and Chief Executive Officer, Melbourne Institute of Textiles, *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 363. and Mr Peter Veenker, Chief Executive and Director, Canberra Institute of Technology, *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 417.

22 *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 265.

credit transfer are being enthusiastically pursued by TAFE because of the benefits they offer to TAFE students.

*The benefit...is that the students are getting the closer links to industry in the practical vocational, and they are also getting the academic, the research. That goes to the heart of the difference between TAFE and higher ed — the ability to look at it in a wider picture. Thinking young workers today need both, and that is why I think that in four years they get a bit of the best of both in that model.*<sup>23</sup> [Ms Christine Cookson, Director and Chief Executive Officer, Melbourne Institute of Textiles]

5.28 TAFE's part in the tertiary system as the 'open' education provider ensures that almost anyone with the interest can commence a diploma program regardless of their prior educational background and achievement. Through a dual award course or other articulated pathway, students who demonstrate sufficient capacity can earn the opportunity to enter higher education if that is their aspiration. It is an important social and economic 'second chance'. However, dual awards and improved articulation offer students much more than a backdoor entry to university. They are creating a kaleidoscope of educational opportunities to meet almost any individual need.

5.29 The Committee enthusiastically supports the development of dual awards and other articulated pathways from TAFE to university. There is great potential for TAFE to enjoy enhanced status as an equal partner in the provision of desirable dual award programs. Another major advantage is that the vocational emphases on the initial TAFE awards ensures that TAFE is not distracted from its primary purpose as an industry responsive vocational education and training provider.

5.30 Unfortunately, there is an old problem made more apparent by the rapidly growing diversity of education and training opportunities available to people through TAFE and its partnerships with universities. People need a way to navigate the system, to find out what is offered, who offers it and where it leads. Guidance is currently inadequate. The issue of career and education guidance is covered in Chapter 4.

## ***University to TAFE***

5.31 Estimates on the number of university graduates enrolling in TAFE are not precise. Unlike the higher education sector which records the bases of students' admissions, admission to most TAFE courses is not conditional on prior educational achievement.<sup>24</sup> Information on prior educational

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23 *ibid*, p. 364.

24 Dr Tony Haydon, Director, Credit Transfer and Cross Sectoral Issues, AVCC, *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 692.



achievement is voluntarily provided by TAFE students and a large proportion of students do not divulge this information.<sup>25</sup>

5.32 It is important to understand why former university students enrol in TAFE because this should have a major influence on the type of articulation arrangements which TAFE institutes offer. The needs of university graduates enrolling in TAFE are likely to be different from those of students who have partially completed a university qualification. The limited available evidence suggests that there are similar numbers in each category.<sup>26</sup>

### **Higher education graduates**

5.33 A recent survey of South Australian TAFE graduates<sup>27</sup> confirmed that higher education graduates who attend TAFE shortly after graduation are more likely to report employment related reasons for undertaking the course.<sup>28</sup> A larger proportion, about 75 per cent of the survey sample, were attending TAFE five years or more after obtaining their higher qualification.<sup>29</sup> Therefore TAFE training for higher education graduates is often more than an 'add on' to recently completed higher education<sup>30</sup> and, with over 35 per cent of the sample reporting prior TAFE studies,<sup>31</sup> there is some 'life-long learning' evident.

5.34 Over 76 per cent of those surveyed stated 'to gain practical skills not obtained in my higher qualification' as a reason for undertaking their course.<sup>32</sup> Most higher education graduates apparently view their TAFE studies as something quite separate from their higher qualification. Consequently their requirements and expectations of articulation between the sectors, and of credit transfer in particular, are quite different to students going the other way.

5.35 Credit transfer does not seem to be particularly important to this group. Only 14 per cent of the South Australian survey sample indicated that they had received credit from prior studies while most respondents thought the issue was irrelevant as the fields of study were different.<sup>33</sup> Fewer than 20 per cent of those who received some credit would not have enrolled if it had not been granted.<sup>34</sup> However, TAFE NSW is piloting a program for university graduates where advanced standing of up to 75 per cent of a TAFE course is offered to university graduates studying in an area which correlates strongly with their university studies.<sup>35</sup>

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25 In 1996 the level of prior educational achievement was not known for 43 per cent of students. *see* NCVER, *Exhibit No. 24*, p. 21.

26 NCVER, *Exhibit No. 46 — Covering Letter*.

27 Werner, M C, *Issues regarding higher education graduates in vocational education and training*, NCVER, April 1998, *Exhibit No. 46*.

28 NCVER, *Exhibit No. 46*, p. 43.

29 *ibid*, p. 31.

30 *ibid*, p. 32.

31 *ibid*, p. 29.

32 *ibid*, p. 39.

33 170 enrolments of 1215 responses, *ibid*, pp. 26 & 40.

34 *ibid*, p. 40.

35 NSW TAFE, *Submission No. 98*, p. 18.

### **Students who have partially completed higher education**

5.36 Information on TAFE students who have partially completed a higher education course is quite inadequate. There are perhaps as many as 40,000 such students.<sup>36</sup>

*[T]here are those...who have got a partly completed university qualification and have, if you like, dropped out, for all sorts of reasons, ranging from not coping through to not being able to afford to continue university, and who turn to TAFE as a better provider of the sorts of qualifications that will get them a job in a shorter time. I would like to know the figure for how many of those there are and I do not. NCVER cannot tell me.<sup>37</sup> [Dr Tony Haydon, Director, Credit Transfer and Cross Sectoral Issues, AVCC]*

5.37 While research conducted in Victoria in 1995 indicates that it would be wrong to assume that these TAFE students are all 'drop-outs' or failures from higher education almost nothing is known about their requirements and expectations upon entering TAFE.<sup>38</sup> However it is reasonable to assume that credit transfer is much more significant to the non-completers than to the graduates already in possession of their higher qualification. Credit transfer from university to TAFE can be just as problematic for the student as it is from TAFE to university.

*[I]n its most developed, one might say, fundamentalist form, competency based training can take the form in some TAFE institutes, which I will not name, of saying that they cannot assume that a university student knows something on the basis of what a university says; that they will have to test the competencies. So that kind of potential stand-off between the two sectors is lurking in the background — it always has been.<sup>39</sup> [Dr Tony Haydon, Director, Credit Transfer and Cross Sectoral Issues, AVCC]*

5.38 Although limited to only one State, the South Australian survey of TAFE graduates confirms the existence of problems in credit transfer or recognition of prior learning for university studies. Of those students who had sought recognition of prior learning many had formed negative impressions of the administrative process and the expense of trying to obtain it.<sup>40</sup> It is not unreasonable for them to conclude that the arrangements exist to discourage, rather than encourage, articulation between the sectors.

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36 NCVER, *Exhibit No. 46 — Covering Letter*.

37 *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 693.

38 *see* NCVER, *Exhibit No. 46*, p. 16.

39 *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 684.

40 NCVER, *Exhibit No. 46*, p. 60.

## **Statistical collections**

5.39 The Committee's examination of articulation between university and TAFE has revealed plainly that there is a dearth of reliable statistical information relating to student movement within the tertiary education system. Particular deficiencies in the statistical collections from TAFE and higher education which have been brought to the Committee's attention are that:

- admissions to university on the basis of TAFE studies do not distinguish between completed and partially completed TAFE courses;<sup>41</sup>
- a collection is needed on students entering TAFE which distinguishes between those with completed or partially completed higher education backgrounds and which also indicates what each group is pursuing in TAFE;<sup>42</sup> and
- the high proportion of TAFE students who chose not to provide information diminishes the usefulness of the information.

5.40 The Committee acknowledges that without set admission requirements upon which to base the statistical collection the TAFE statistics are necessarily collected on what amounts to a voluntary basis. Inevitably this leads to shortcomings in the data collected. However, the additional information sought has a legitimate and valuable purpose and the burden borne by each sector in collecting it would be minimal.

### **5.41 Recommendation 5.2**

**The Committee recommends that the Minister for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs:**

- **require universities to collect data on admissions to university on the basis of TAFE studies. A distinction between completed and partially completed TAFE courses should be sought; and**
- **seek to amend the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard to include, and so require the National Centre for Vocational Education Research to maintain, a statistical collection which distinguishes between students entering TAFE with completed or partially completed higher education backgrounds. Such data collected should identify courses undertaken by each group so as to provide a better understanding of their respective needs and career preferences.**

41 AVCC, *Submission No. 81.1*; and see Dr Tony Haydon, Director, Credit Transfer and Cross Sectoral Issues, AVCC, *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 687.

42 AVCC, *Submission No. 81.1*; and see Dr Tony Haydon, Director, Credit Transfer and Cross Sectoral Issues, AVCC, *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 692-3 and NCVER, *Exhibit No. 46*, p. 6.

## **Multi-sector institutions**

5.42 There are several dual and multi-sector models. Dual sector institutions comprise elements of the TAFE and higher education sectors. There are also examples of independent institutions from different sectors sharing campuses and providing joint programs and there are a handful of institutions providing integrated higher education and VET programs serving niche markets.

5.43 An example of a dual sector institution providing integrated VET and higher education programs is the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts which is a centre of excellence under the auspices of the otherwise single sector Edith Cowan University. It is an atypical arrangement. Within the limits imposed by the two systems, it is a workable adaptation of the most appropriate features of higher education and VET program delivery to best meet the needs of the Academy and its students.

### ***Dual sector institutions***

5.44 Dual sector institutions provide higher education and VET programs at the one institution and their existence is yet another manifestation of the diversity in Australian tertiary education. There are several dual sector institutions in Victoria, RMIT, Swinburne University of Technology, Victoria University of Technology and the University of Ballarat but even these do not share a common organisational model. The Northern Territory University is a dual sector institution.

5.45 The Northern Territory University lists a number of benefits arising from its dual sector operation to its students, the institution and its region.<sup>43</sup> For students the benefits are the same as for improved articulation arrangements generally but many of the benefits accruing to the institution and the region are related to the diseconomies of operating separate TAFE and higher education institutions to serve a small isolated population. Separate TAFE and higher education provision would not make much sense given the Northern Territory's small population and its distribution.

5.46 The diseconomies of separate provision to a small and diverse population base do not apply in metropolitan Melbourne so there the argument in favour of dual sector provision relies heavily on the existence of better articulation between the sectors. The Victorian metropolitan dual sector institutions have enrolled proportionately more TAFE students in higher education than single sector institutions. In 1996, 12.8 per cent of Swinburne's higher education intake had a TAFE background, at VUT the figure was 11.3

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43 *Submission No. 62, p. 2.*

per cent and at RMIT it was 8.7 per cent, compared to the Victorian average of 7.2 per cent.<sup>44</sup>

5.47 Overall, the larger, single sector universities provide more higher education places for students from TAFE than do the dual sector institutions. In 1996, 7.6 per cent of Monash University's and 7.8 per cent of Deakin University's student intake came from a TAFE background which was slightly over the State average. However, Monash and Deakin, respectively, enrolled 21.8 per cent and 19.5 per cent of all students with a TAFE background compared to 17.1 per cent for RMIT, 14.1 per cent for VUT and 10.4 per cent for Swinburne.<sup>45</sup> As most single sector universities are relatively recent converts to articulation their performance compared to dual sector institutions should improve rapidly.

5.48 Dual sector institutions do not, by virtue of their dual sector status, automatically adopt similar policies and practices for the admission of TAFE students to their higher education programs.

*RMIT is the biggest target for students who hold complete or incomplete TAFE qualifications (including Advanced Certificate and Associate Diploma). But given its market position...it is able to be very selective in its response to this diverse group. Nearly 60% of all applicants with this background are not offered a place.*

*VUT and Swinburne, on the other hand, offer places to as many individuals with a TAFE background as those who apply. Though all three institutions are multi-sectoral, this fact in itself does not imply uniform levels of openness towards TAFE applicants. Market position, know-how and policy emphasis would all appear to moderate institutional behaviour towards this client group.<sup>46</sup> [Richard Teese]*

5.49 There is also a view that TAFE suffers from the lack of a separate identity within dual sector institutions. It was a common reservation expressed in submissions and by witnesses both inside and outside TAFE, particularly in Victoria but also in other States. Much more serious concerns were expressed

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44 *Ministerial Review on the provision of Technical and Further Education in the Melbourne Metropolitan Area, Options Paper*, August 1997, p. 24; and see Teese R, *Seamless Education and Training*, Research report for the Ministerial Review on the Provision of Technical and Further Education in the Melbourne Metropolitan Area, (1997).

45 *Ministerial Review on the provision of Technical and Further Education in the Melbourne Metropolitan Area, Options Paper*, August 1997, p. 26; and see Teese R, *Seamless Education and Training* Research report for the Ministerial Review on the Provision of Technical and Further Education in the Melbourne Metropolitan Area, (1997).

46 *Seamless Education and Training* Research report for the Ministerial Review on the Provision of Technical and Further Education in the Melbourne Metropolitan Area. (1997), Chapter 1.

about a potential tendency for dual sector institutions to concentrate on the diploma and advanced diploma end of TAFE.

*The regrettable thing about the pattern at RMIT has been that the VET effort has been shifted towards the higher level qualifications — the diplomas and advanced diplomas — and away from the traditional heartland of TAFE, which is the certificate level programs. It is the certificate level programs that actually appeal to that majority of the Australian population that do not have, do not want, cannot get, a university degree. It is those programs which are also the basis of the second chance education role which TAFE still has.*<sup>47</sup> [Mr Terry Moran, Chief Executive Officer, ANTA]

5.50 Similarly, the Committee is not comfortable that Swinburne University of Technology saw mergers with TAFE more as a takeover than an amalgamation. Both Swinburne's submission and its Vice-Chancellor's presentation to the Committee argued strongly in favour of Swinburne's control of vocational education and training throughout Eastern Melbourne.<sup>48</sup> The Victorian Government has declared a strong preference for dual sector provision of post-secondary education. The Victorian Government decided to merge Eastern Institute of TAFE with Swinburne just prior to the Committee holding public hearings in Melbourne. Box Hill Institute of TAFE, which is also in Swinburne's sights, survives for the time being as a stand alone institute.<sup>49</sup>

*My prediction [in relation to the merger of Eastern TAFE and Swinburne University of Technology] is that at particularly the lower end of TAFE, if you like, the most precious end of TAFE... Certainly the community service obligations and the entry level TAFE courses will, at best, suffer. At worst, in some cases — for example, at RMIT — those courses are simply not economical for the institution to run and they are not run.*<sup>50</sup> [Ms Patricia Forward, Federal TAFE President (National) and Vice-President TAFE (Victorian Branch), Australian Education Union]

5.51 Dual sector institutions along Victorian lines are very popular with the institutions' chief executives but the Committee did not encounter much enthusiasm for the model elsewhere.

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47 *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 655.

48 *see Submission No. 39*, pp. 9-12; *Transcript of Evidence*, pp. 370-382.

49 *Submission No. 39*, pp. 9-11.

50 *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 389.

## **Shared campuses**

5.52 It is becoming increasingly common for new educational campuses to be established which co-locate facilities from two or more educational institutions representing two or more educational sectors on one site. The significant difference from a dual sector institution is that a shared campus arrangement involves separate autonomous institutions sharing a site and perhaps, but not necessarily, sharing some assets, facilities and services.

5.53 As with the dual sector institutions no one model applies across all the existing co-location arrangements. NSW offers two illustrative examples at Ourimbah on the Central Coast and Nirimba in Western Sydney but several similar shared campuses also exist elsewhere in NSW and around Australia.

5.54 The Central Coast Campus at Ourimbah is a joint development between the University of Newcastle, the Hunter Institute of Technology (TAFE), the Central Coast Community College (ACE) and the Central Coast Music Conservatorium.<sup>51</sup> The campus has an integrated single management, with only one set of buildings, one library, one set of laboratories etc, which all institutions on the site share. There are joint programs designed in collaboration between TAFE and the university leading to dual awards in hospitality and welfare studies. There is also some cross sectoral teaching with TAFE delivering some of the hospitality skills components to the higher education students. The capital savings in the provision of joint infrastructure are significant and in this case amount to about \$45 million or nearly 50 per cent over the cost of providing it separately.<sup>52</sup>

5.55 The Nirimba Education Precinct is a different co-location arrangement to the Central Coast Campus at Ourimbah. The University of Western Sydney, the Western Sydney Institute of TAFE and both a State and Catholic secondary college share the site. Unlike the Central Coast Campus only some land is jointly held and each institution has its own buildings. Some facilities are shared and there is collaboration between TAFE and the university and between the tertiary and secondary sectors enabling secondary students access to TAFE and higher education programs.<sup>53</sup> A similar joint development has occurred at Coffs Harbour involving the Southern Cross University, the North Coast Institute of TAFE and the secondary sector.<sup>54</sup>

5.56 The co-location of educational institutions has a lot to commend it particularly in regional areas where infrastructure savings make both higher education and TAFE provision more economically viable. The consolidation of students onto one campus has the potential to enrich the quality of student

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51 NSW TAFE, *Submission No. 98*, p. 16.

52 Professor Leslie Eastcott, Pro Vice-Chancellor and Director, Central Coast Campus, University of Newcastle, *Transcript of Evidence*, pp. 481-2.

53 NSW TAFE, *Submission No. 98*, p. 16; and see Professor Brian Mackenzie, Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic Affairs, University of Western Sydney, *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 538.

54 TAFE NSW, *Submission No. 98*, p. 16; and see Mr Lionel Phelps, Executive Chair, Coffs Harbour Education Campus, *Submission No. 3, Transcript of Evidence*, p. 515.

life by enhancing the viability of a wider range of student clubs and societies.<sup>55</sup> More importantly, co-location helps to break down the isolation of educational institutions and can have the effect of broadening people's horizons. For example, people enrolling for short courses become aware of the existence of other programs in TAFE and higher education and are inspired to continue their education further.<sup>56</sup>

5.57 Co-location can also benefit articulation arrangements and allow the development of more effective dual award programs. Articulated study programs developed between the North Coast Institute of TAFE and Southern Cross University at the Coffs Harbour Education Campus have been subsequently offered by the TAFE and university at their other stand-alone campuses in the region.<sup>57</sup> Some programs have also been adopted by other TAFE institutes which then feed into the Southern Cross degree program creating new opportunities for TAFE students across the State.<sup>58</sup>

5.58 Monash University and Casey Institute of TAFE have co-located campuses at Berwick in Melbourne. At Berwick they offer dual award programs "in which students take concurrently, not successively, a university degree and a TAFE associate diploma or certificate so that the benefits of articulation are actually compressed."<sup>59</sup> Griffith University and the Gold Coast Institute of TAFE are also offering this type of dual award.

5.59 Another important feature of shared campus arrangements is that whatever the degree of shared infrastructure the co-located institutions remain financially and administratively independent of each other. This quarantines the funding streams and revenues of the TAFE components from those for higher education. For example, a TAFE institute and a university might share a library and its running expenses but each institution would decide independently what to buy for the library's collection to meet the needs of its own students. The risk that TAFE requirements might be subordinated to those of higher education, as is alleged to have occurred in some dual sector institutions, is avoided. It is a protection that TAFE institutes already sharing campuses seem to appreciate.

*We are two separate organisations [Wodonga Institute of TAFE and Latrobe University's Albury-Wodonga Campus] with our own markets, and we protect that. We have the one library. We have the one student association. My institute provides all of the student services—counselling, finance,*

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55 Professor John Chipman, Vice-Chancellor and President, Central Queensland University, *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 565.

56 Professor Leslie Eastcott, Pro Vice-Chancellor and Director, Central Coast Campus, University of Newcastle, *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 486.

57 Professor Barry Conyngham, Vice-Chancellor, Southern Cross University, *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 523.

58 Mr Lionel Phelps, Executive Chair, Coffs Harbour Education Campus, *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 523.

59 Professor John Chipman, Vice-Chancellor and President, Central Queensland University, *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 565.



*course information, Koori liaison, disabilities services, the whole range of things—and the university pays for that. So in terms of the infrastructure sharing, I think it is a fantastic model. But I...would fight to ensure that our image of TAFE is always visible.*<sup>60</sup> [Mr Geoffrey Smith, Director, Wodonga Institute of TAFE]

5.60 The other great advantage of maintaining the financial and administrative separation of a TAFE and university sharing a site is that it allows each institution to develop and maintain its external relationships according to its mission and unencumbered by secondary obligations. This is particularly important for TAFE and its links to industry through Institute Councils and industry developed training packages. TAFE's links to government and its resultant community service obligations are, like its direct industry links, not entirely consistent with the much higher degree of institutional autonomy enjoyed by Australian universities. This conflict is experienced by existing dual sector institutions and is discussed further with other funding and administration issues in Chapter 6.

### ***A preferred model?***

5.61 It is apparent to the Committee that the co-location of TAFE and higher education institutions on shared campuses potentially offers the same benefits to students and taxpayers without some of the risks TAFE seems to face in dual sector institutions under one administration. The evidence presented to the Committee suggested that co-location models ought to be preferred over those that combine higher education and TAFE under one administration. However, there is very little substantive information available on the effects that institutional models have on the provision of TAFE and higher education programs.

5.62 Given Australia's experience with such a wide variety of single and multi-sector models the Committee believes that it is now time that some research was done on the strengths and weaknesses inherent in each institutional model and the risks and benefits each model presents for the provision of programs in the TAFE and higher education sectors. The Committee believes this information is needed to better inform State and Commonwealth policy on the formation and funding of institutions and new campuses. The Committee does not envisage that the research would lead to the rigid adoption of a preferred institutional model to be applied regardless of local and institutional circumstances.

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60 *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 312.

### 5.63 Recommendation 5.3

**The Committee recommends that the Minister for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs commission research into the strengths and weaknesses inherent in the different single and multi-sector institutional models. Such research should include the risks and benefits each institutional model presents for the provision of programs in the TAFE and higher education sectors.**

## Collaboration

5.64 The most obvious areas for collaboration between TAFE and universities are in the provision of articulated courses and dual awards and, where appropriate, the sharing of physical facilities, services and resources. These topics are treated separately in this chapter. However, there are other areas where collaboration or alliances between TAFE and universities can lead to better outcomes for both sectors.

5.65 The cultural difference between the older and newer universities is again apparent with the newer universities being much more open minded about the range of collaborative projects which can be undertaken with TAFE and their potential benefits to both sectors.

## Research

5.66 TAFE and universities already collaborate on research into VET related subjects. Also there is potential for TAFE and universities to collaborate on applied research projects, particularly in areas where TAFE has “developed capabilities which can contribute effectively to the solution of ‘real-world’ research problems”.<sup>61</sup> TAFE institutes which include this type of capacity by virtue of their specialist facilities include the Melbourne Institute of Textiles,<sup>62</sup> which is being merged with RMIT, and Casey Institute of TAFE.<sup>63</sup>

5.67 The closer proximity of TAFE and universities to each other on shared campuses and in dual sector institutions should enhance collaboration on applied research projects. The Committee sees collaborative research as a niche activity for parts of the TAFE sector which will help enhance the status

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61 RMIT, *Submission No. 66*, p. 9.

62 Ms Christine Cookson, Director and Chief Executive Officer, Melbourne Institute of Textiles, *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 357.

63 Mr Charles Wilkins, President, Victorian Association of Directors of TAFE Institutes, *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 303; Mr Wilkins is also Director and Chief Executive of Casey Institute of TAFE, *see Submission No. 50*.

of TAFE as a whole. TAFE's emerging role in research is covered in more detail in Chapter 4.

### ***Professional and para-professional training***

5.68 Traditionally the responsibility for training and educating people for professional and para-professional occupations has been split between universities and TAFE respectively. Examples exist throughout the health industry: registered and enrolled nurses; dentistry and para-dental occupations; and medicine and para-medical occupations but other examples exist in areas such as business studies and engineering. Collaboration between TAFE and universities on the education and training of people for these occupational groups can achieve resource savings and result in better quality graduates of both TAFE and higher education programs.

*We are now working very closely with the Adelaide University in the School of Dentistry to establish an Australian Centre for Oral Health. To me, that highlights the best features of collaboration — recognising that there are differences in para-professional and professional training but that both lots of training can be enhanced when people are working together. The idea is that the dental assistants, dental hygienists, dental therapists, dental technicians and dentists will train together. They will then recognise each other's strengths and train as a team. When they start working, they can work as a team.*<sup>64</sup> [Ms Virginia Batty, Director, Torrens Valley Institute of TAFE, SA]

5.69 A similar collaborative arrangement in oral health is also being considered in Western Australia between TAFE, the University of Western Australia and Curtin University. The same parties in Western Australia have also collaborated on a materials engineering facility, the Advanced Manufacturing Technologies Centre, where joint engineering programs are offered.<sup>65</sup>

### ***Benefits of collaboration for TAFE***

5.70 The Committee endorses collaborative research and teaching arrangements between the TAFE and higher education sector. They achieve economies and can provide better learning environments for students by recognising the respective roles and strengths of each sector while preserving the fundamental differences and the autonomy of each. Universities achieve savings and access to practical knowledge and skills which can contribute to their achievements. TAFE gains enhanced standing and a higher profile but its

64 *Transcript of Evidence*, pp. 111-112.

65 University of Western Australia, *Submission No. 50*, p. 4; and see *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 42; and see Mr Duncan Ord, Acting Director, Western Australia Academy of Performing Arts, *Transcript of Evidence*, p. 12.

main vocational mission is not diminished when it participates as an equal partner with higher education.

5.71 The barriers to these collaborative research and teaching arrangements between TAFE and higher education exist on two levels. The first is an attitudinal one which exists mainly on the university side and is strongest among the older metropolitan universities, those usually referred to as the 'sandstones' or 'group of eight'. It is the Committee's view that the universities are free, within the very broad parameters set by the Parliaments which create and fund them, to pursue their own educational priorities. The reticence of a few universities to participate with TAFE in the development of new learning opportunities is not really a problem while the majority of universities are keen to be players.

5.72 The second barrier to the growth of collaborative ventures and the sharing of facilities is an administrative and financial one created by the differences in the way the two sectors are funded and managed. These issues are not easily resolved but the growing variety of collaborative ventures and shared facilities shows that they are being overcome in practice. The issue is examined in more detail in Chapter 6.

5.73 The Committee believes that the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments should act to realise the educational benefits and resource savings available by sharing infrastructure, subject to the outcome of the research proposed in recommendation 5.3.

#### **5.74 Recommendation 5.4**

**The Committee recommends that the Minister for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs negotiate with the appropriate State and Territory Ministers to establish arrangements:**

- **which, where there is scope to provide joint infrastructure, favour proposals for capital works for TAFE and higher education where both sectors share or have access to facilities on equal terms; and**
- **where facilities for professional and para-professional training are involved, favour proposals which bring both together on the one site.**