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Tasmanian Building and
Construction Industry
Training Board

2 Castray Esplanade, Battery Point
PO Box 105, Sandy Bay Tas 7006
email@tbcitb.com.au
Telephone (03) 6223 7804
Facsimile (03) 6234 6327

National VET Research and Evaluation Program

Proposal Coversheet

Category (Please indicate A, B or C)	B
Research area Please indicate number and name, eg. Area 4: Teaching and learning	8 Unmet student demand in VET
Proposal title No more than 10 words	Evaluating Alternative Training Frameworks for Small Building and Construction Contractors
Organisation details Name and address of the organisation/s submitting the proposal	Tasmanian Building and Construction Industry Training Board PO Box 105, Sandy Bay, Tasmania 7005
Contact details Name, title, address and contact numbers (phone, fax, email) of the person NCVER should contact in relation to the expression of interest	Peter Coad, Executive Director, TBCITB PO Box 105, Sandy Bay, Tasmania 7005 Phone (03) 6223 7804, Fax (03) 6234 6327 email@tbcitb.com.au
Principal researcher(s) details Name and organisation	Fred Lijauco, Research and Development Manager, TBCITB
Proposed budget (excluding GST)	$32,120
ABN	96 626 370 475
Is this organisation registered for GST	Yes/No

Proposal

1. Background

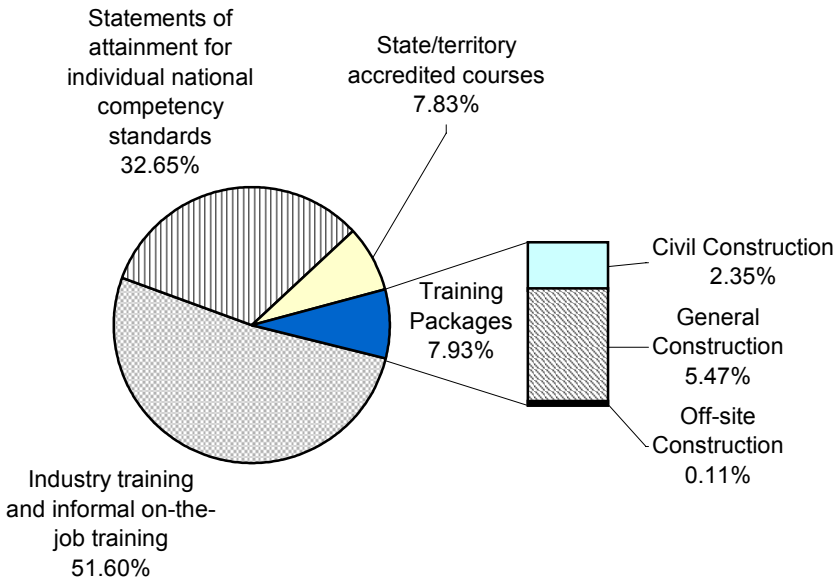
In its report *Training Packages – Successes, Issues and Challenges in Implementation released in 2002*, the Australian National Training Authority found that where there has been successful implementation of the Training Packages, flexibility has been the key factor in achieving the following outcomes:

- New and improved industry practice
- Enthusiasm about Training Packages from a number of key groups
- Increased levels of coverage by formal training
- Effective use of the Packages by both industry and individual employers
- Increased relevance and better meeting of workplace needs
- Registered training organisations becoming increasingly responsive to learner and employer needs
- More efficient and accurate reporting of activity in the vocational education and training sector

The research also identified a need for clear models for practitioners to adapt for particular situations, modes and contexts.

By contrast, recent findings of the Royal Commission into the Building and Construction Industry show only 8 percent people entering the industry use the existing construction Training Packages (see Figure 1).

Fig 1. Entry Level Training in the Australian Construction Industry (Proportion of participants as at March 2002)



Source: Building and Construction Royal Commission, National Centre for Vocational Education Research, National Building and Construction Industry Skills Initiative

In many workshops and consultations, building and construction industry training boards have identified the issues underlying those figures including:

- Range, relevance and structure of the training. There is a need for more versatile career pathways for apprentices including a training framework that meets the needs of small businesses and specialist contractors. Those pathways should cover meaningful pre-employment training programs and a range of options that link the apprenticeship to higher qualifications.

- Changing make-up of the industry. The specialised nature of enterprises makes it difficult for them to provide broader training as required by the national construction Training Packages, which lacked the needed flexibility.

- Continuity, volume and type of work. Understandably, there has been reluctance for long term commitment i.e. to employ and train an apprentice for four years when it is difficult enough to foresee work for the next 12 months. With the industry having a strong preference for direct employment of apprentices, group training schemes can only assist to a point in this regard.

2. Research purpose statement

The research aims to develop a framework to implement the Training Packages in such a way that balance between relevance of training to small businesses (and to the broader industry) is achieved at a more affordable cost so that the Packages are used effectively and widely in the building and construction industry.

Specific objectives include:

- To consult widely with, seek the cooperation of and establish the needs of employers, majority of which are small businesses regarding entry level training.

- To determine the guiding principles and set up for packaging competencies into Australian Qualifications Framework qualifications that would address those training needs.

- To assess the socioeconomic advantages and disadvantages of each framework (the Construction Training Australia framework and the TBCITB framework) for packaging competencies in the construction Training Packages. Detailed criteria and benchmarks will be developed in that regard.

- To develop an optimum packaging framework and implementation guide for the industry.

- To develop a broad strategy to market that optimum framework to industry stakeholders.

- To complement the review and development of construction Training Packages.

3. Research questions

Why are majority of people entering the building and construction industry not taking up the Training Packages?

Why are many small building and construction contractors not taking up the construction Training Packages?

What features are students and building and construction industry contractors looking for in Training Packages?

What packaging framework will best suit those features so that more students and industry contractors use the construction Training Packages to gain meaningful skills?

4. Methodology

Stage 1: Initial research (May 2003)

Industry stakeholders will be consulted to **confirm scope and details of project activities** as well as their commitment and involvement. The Board will facilitate the study.

A **review of past studies and current issues and programs** will be carried out. That review will include an analysis of the experience of apprentices, employers and industry practitioners. Findings on key factors affecting entry level training in the building and construction industry will be collected, including lessons from other industries.

Information sheets, questionnaires, log books and report forms will be designed for apprentices, supervisors, trainers and employers who will participate in the study. Criteria for evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of the frameworks will be developed and agreed upon for the project.

A representative **sample of small employers** covering the civil, general and off-site construction in metropolitan and regional areas will be prepared. A similar **sample of medium to large employers** will also be prepared.

Three independent **external resource persons** (from industry, trainers and researchers in other states/territories) will be invited to comment on the mechanics and outcomes of the study.

Stage 2: Field research (June to August 2003)

Detailed **interviews of small employers** will be conducted. **Case studies in larger employers** will be carried out. All activities will be logged using weekly diaries complemented by formal **feedback from trainers, assessors and supervisors**.

Stage 3: Application of research outcomes (August to October 2003)

The preliminary outcomes of the interviews and case studies will be presented in a **conference of apprentice employers in Tasmania**. Representatives from apprenticeship centers, group employers, training providers and training authorities will be invited to the conference. INTERIM REPORT

The **validation process** will also involve sending out a discussion paper outlining the outcomes of the research and conference to about 200 construction businesses on the mainland. That process should provide feedback on and acceptance or otherwise of the packaging frameworks based on agreed criteria. It would also offset any skewing from the sampling in the research. DRAFT FINAL REPORT

The **final report recommendations** will be available to national and state/territory industry training organisations for their consideration. The **final research outcomes** will be presented at state/territory and national conferences organised by state/territory training authorities, industry training organisations and industry associations. FINAL REPORT

Regular key industry forums will also be used as an opportunity to **benchmark agreed industry positions** that will come out of the research. **Areas for further research** regarding other key factors affecting entry level training will be identified and pursued. The study will complement available input to the **review of construction Training Packages** and assist in building a knowledge base for their continuing development.

5. Timetable

May to October 2003

6. Staff allocation

The chief executive officer of the Construction Industry Training Advisory Board (NSW) and the executive director the Tasmanian Building and Construction Industry Training Board will jointly chair the project steering committee. The TBCITB's research and development manager will coordinate the project.

7. Budget

Budget Item	Description	$
Research personnel	$1,000 x 12 weeks	12,000
General administrative support	$800 x 12 weeks x 0.2	1,920
Data gathering and processing	$800 x 4 weeks	3,200
Research support materials including log books and forms		5,000
Preparation and documentation of reports		4,000
Travel and accommodation		6,000
Subtotal *(excluding GST)*		32,120
GST		3,212
Total *(including GST)*		**35,332**

In addition, Construction Industry Training Boards will contribute in kind and cash toward the other costs associated with the project including project management, media launches, industry conference and workshops, information kit including pamphlets, newsletters and posters, electronic publications as well as audit fees, legal cost, preparation of agreements, etc.

8. Related research

Date completed	Research project title	Funding source
June 2002	Apprentice Barriers Survey	TBCITB
December 2000	Training Needs Project	TBCITB
June 1997	Options for Entry Level Training in the Building and Construction Industry	TBCITB
July 1994	The Employment of Apprentices and Trainees in the Tasmanian Building and Construction Industry	TBCITB

9. Quality assurance

The project steering committee will consist of representatives from:

- Australian National Training Authority
- ACT Building and Construction Industry Training Council
- Building and Construction Industry Training Council (WA)
- Construction Training Australia
- Construction Industry Training Advisory Board (NSW)
- Construction Industry Training Board (SA)
- Construction Training Board (NT)
- Construction Training Queensland
- Tasmanian Building and Construction Industry Training Board

Industry members (enterprises, associations, training boards and external resource persons) will have ample opportunities to provide input to the research and ensure outcomes represent their needs and recommendations.

10. Risk Management Plan

Category	Risk	Likelihood*	Impact*	Management strategies
Staff	Critical staff become unavailable	Low	High	Project agreements as well as the make up of the project steering committee will ensure the required personnel are available to the project.
Methodology	Sample difficult to recruit	Low	High	The TBCITB's database (4,000 entries) and marketing consultant will be available to the project. Past research and workshops eg 250 contractors in May 2002, attracted sufficient numbers.

11. Researcher(s) expertise/experience

The TBCITB will engaged suitably qualified consultants to conduct the research. External resource persons from industry, government and academia will be selected from nominations by project committee members.