



RafflesKvB.

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9 July 2007

**Inquiry into the Higher Education Support Amendment
(Extending FEE-HELP for VET Diploma and Advanced Diploma Courses)
Bill 2007**

To: Committee Secretary
Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education Committee
Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

INTRODUCTION

1. Raffles KvB Institute Pty Ltd has been operating as a Vocational Education and Training college in most fields of design for thirty years. These courses are accredited or approved by the NSW VETAB.
2. For the last fourteen years it has also been offering a *Bachelor of Arts (Visual Communication)* degree accredited by the Higher Education Directorate of the NSW Department of Education and Training. Thus Raffles KvB is a genuine dual-sector institution.
3. The *BA (Vis. Comm.)* has recently been re-accredited together with the new degrees of
 - *Associate Degree of Visual Communication;*
 - *Associate Degree of Design;*
 - *Master of Design.*

FEE-HELP

4. Raffles KvB is approved by DEST as a Higher Education Provider so that our local degree students can access FEE-HELP. This creates an anomaly for some potential students who apply for admission here but fail to comply with one of our standard admission requirements in that they lack a portfolio in the visual arts or design, or have not completed the Higher School Certificate or its equivalent. Students would probably not progress very far in the degree program if they lack the aptitude for design (which the portfolio, for instance, is intended to demonstrate).

What we suggest to them in such cases is that they first enrol in a *VET Diploma* or *Advanced Diploma* for which they pay a relatively high fee. We could

- reduce the fee, but we are a commercial enterprise as well as an educational institution, or
- admit such applicants into the degree with provisional matriculation.

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However, the extension of FEE-HELP for *VET Diploma* and *Advanced Diploma* courses would make our approach more affordable for local applicants.

5. An anomaly which would arise for us (and a financial benefit for such students) is that they would then be able to get a much less expensive degree if they then progress from the *VET Diploma* or the *Advanced Diploma* with substantial advanced standing into our degree program!

CREDIT TRANSFER

6. We have wrestled with credit transfer, advanced standing and recognition of prior learning issues for many years. While we have so far satisfied External Review Panels from the NSW Department of Education and Training, we still seek further enlightenment.


We observe that credit transfer must be

- fair to the student
 - financially: too little adds to the fee burden;
 - educationally: too much can result in subsequent failures;
- faithful to the
 - standards of the discipline: VET students often have more finely honed technical and practical skills;
 - context of higher education: VET students sometimes view the theoretical subjects as superfluous to their career goals rather than providing the conceptual framework for their development.

7. A solution in practice is for academic staff to be aware of the different processes in the two sectors, particularly in relation to assessment. In many ways there has been a healthy emphasis on assessment techniques in VET, particularly competency based assessment, and in a variety of contexts. Where this is married to the emphasis on higher cognitive processes in undergraduate studies, then both VET and HE students can learn from each other. We find this particularly in the major integrative project which is the capstone subject in the undergraduate program.

8. Flowing from this is the complicated process of correlating the number of hours in a VET Diploma or Advanced Diploma with an appropriate credit point allowance in a related higher education program. This has been complicated in recent years with the Training Package preoccupation with output rather than input. Two subjects, one from VET and one in HE, with the same title and objectives, can have very little educational equivalence, and yet we do try to make tertiary education a seamless garment tailored both to individual wants and community needs.

Signed:



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Provost,
Raffles KvB

