

# What makes for effective partnerships between employers and Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)?

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Research Questions:

1. Why do employers train their workers and what factors affect the extent of training?
2. What are the choices that employers make about training methods and sources of training?
3. What is the nature of training partnerships between employers and registered training organisations? What factors create and sustain these partnerships?
4. What are the key changes in employer training and in partnerships with RTOs, over the past 20 years?

# Research method

## Whole project

- Two online surveys, one of employers (n=173) and of RTOs (n=107);
- Semi-structured interviews with 9 employers and 9 RTOs who were in partnership with each other.
- Reference group of 12 representatives of key stakeholder groups and recommended experts in the area.



## Interview component

The relevant managers in the enterprises and their RTO partner organisation were interviewed separately about the same training partnership.

*Questions for both parties explored employers' motivations for training, the types of training and employee groups being trained, benefits to both parties, and a series of questions about the partnership processes.*

# What types of employers use national recognised training, and why?

## **WHAT TYPES?**

- Have multiple sites;
- Have a diverse employment structure;
- Are affected by regulation and licensing;
- Are expanding their operations;
- Are in industries where use of technology is increasing rapidly.

## **WHY?**

- Allows systematisation across sites;
- Offers quality assurance;
- Provides upskilling;
- Allows for multi-skilling for expansion.

# How did partnerships begin? (Interviews)

- Revival of a previous partnership (two)
- Employer's dissatisfaction with a previous partnership (two)
- A formal tender for a panel of trainers
- Discussions about one apprentice led to the whole program being developed
- A minor provision of training that grew (two: one grew because of the availability of more state government funding).



**Some employers had exclusive arrangements with their partnering RTO while others preferred to 'spread the risk' around several RTOs**

# Main reasons why RTOs involve themselves in industry partnerships (survey)

- (over 80% agreement) To align with industry requirements; to keep up to date with industry needs.
- (75-80% agreement) Because employers asked us to assist; to bring in additional revenue; to provide staff with stronger links with industry.
- (60 – 75% agreement) To build additional capability in our staff; to find future employers for our students.

Profit was not a key driver, but maintaining a revenue base was.

# Main findings about satisfaction

- In general, satisfaction on both sides was quite high.
- Employers were less satisfied with their partnering RTOs' performance than RTOs were with their own performance;
- TAFE Institutes were more realistic about their own shortcomings than private RTOS were. In the survey, TAFE cited legal and contractual arrangements as the lowest area of capability (44% satisfaction). With 'Marketing and project management' at 66% satisfaction;
- Employers rated RTOs' flexibility with staffing, willingness to experiment and willingness to make changes to off-the-job training lowest - but still 60%-70% satisfaction.



# Industry partnerships – from the interviews



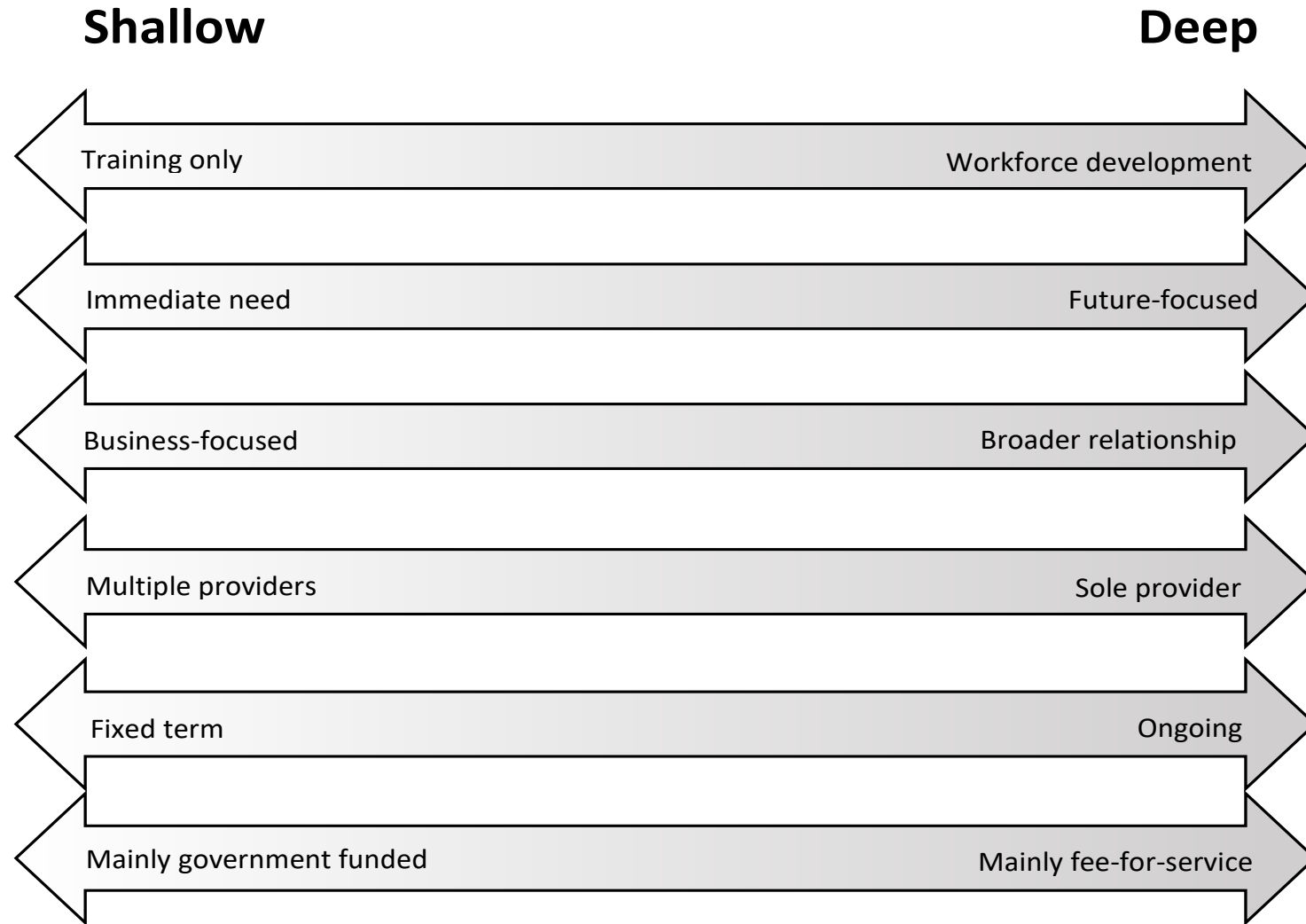


# Industry partnerships (Interviews, contd.)

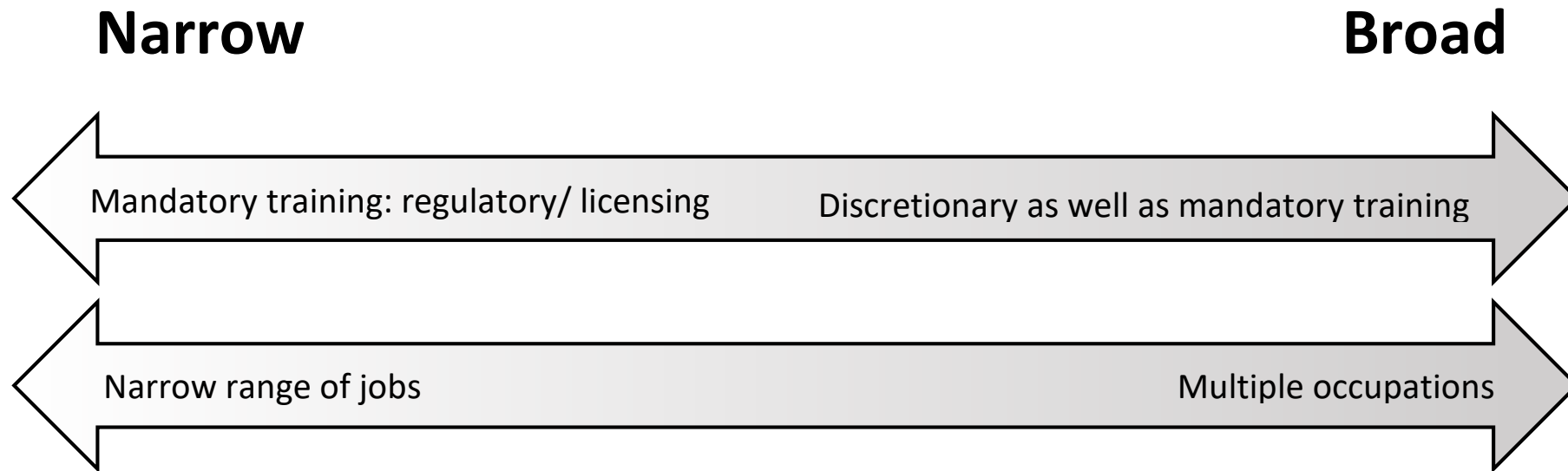


# 'Traditional' versus 'Innovative' partnerships: (3 measures)

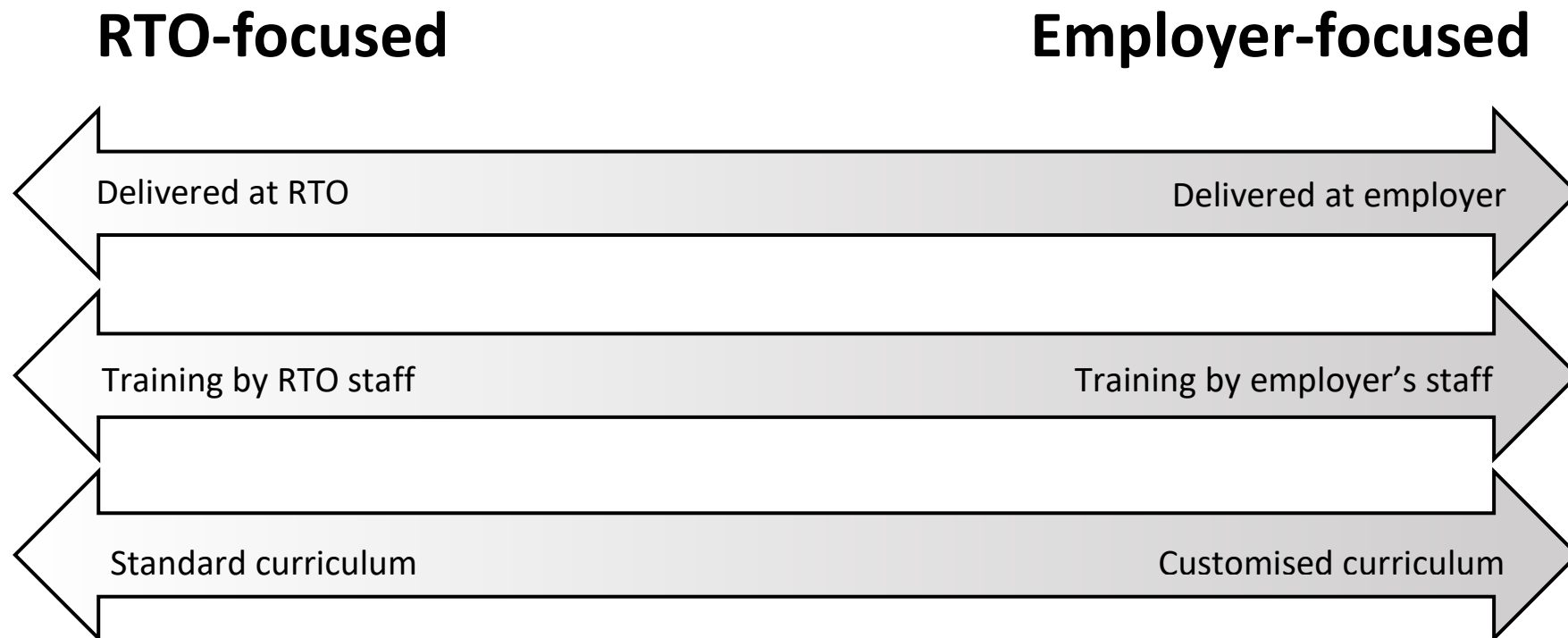
## (1) Nature of partnership



## *(2) Coverage of training*



### *(3) Training delivery*



## Partnership between Elders Australia and Wodonga TAFE



**Chris Howie**  
National Livestock Manager  
Elders Australia



**Graham Hart**  
General Manager, Education and Training  
Wodonga TAFE

*Graham and Chris will talk about the partnership established between Elders Australia and Wodonga Institute of TAFE. The partnership involves the delivery of a customised version of the Certificate IV in Agriculture to new and existing stock and station agents employed by Elders across Australia.*

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/8675865107718756354>



# Success factors for long-term partnerships

- Values alignment;
- Trust;
- Personal connections;
- Communication.
- Single point of contact;
- Flexibility;
- Understanding of business needs;
- Government funding.



# VET teachers as the VET system navigator



# More information?

- Project web page: Available via RAVE research group web page
- <https://federation.edu.au/faculties-and-schools/faculty-of-education-and-arts/research/fea-research-groups/rave-researching-adult-and-vocational-education>
- Report and Good Practice Guide published on NCVER web site [www.ncver.edu.au](http://www.ncver.edu.au) or direct at : <http://ow.ly/Kyuj30d4WYS>
- Full webinar at <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/8675865107718756354>
- Contact Erica Smith [e.smith@federation.edu.au](mailto:e.smith@federation.edu.au)