



Enterprise Registered Training Organisations: Their operations, contributions and challenges

Research project report

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November 2015

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INTRODUCTION

This is an overview of a national research project which set out to evaluate the benefits, challenges and outcomes for all stakeholders of the delivery of vocational education and training (VET) qualifications delivered through work. It was undertaken through a study of Enterprise Registered Training Organisations (Enterprise RTOs), since they are the ‘heaviest users’ of nationally recognised training. Enterprise RTOs are companies and other organisations (such as government departments) which are registered as training providers to deliver qualifications to their own workers.

The project had four research questions:

- What are the benefits and challenges for companies associated with training through their own Enterprise RTO?
- What are the benefits and challenges for workers associated with Enterprise RTOs?
- What is the equivalence of workplace-delivered qualifications among companies and with qualifications delivered in educational institutions?
- How do Enterprise RTOs help us to understand the extent and nature of an emerging, alternative employer-based VET system?

Why are enterprise RTOs an important phenomenon? The offering of qualifications by Enterprise RTOs and other companies offering nationally recognised training to their workers has been shown to confer many benefits, as discussed below in the literature review. However there are also some potential risks, which have been little investigated. The qualifications offered by RTOs have in the past been missing from the national VET data collection, AVETMISS, because they do not attract public funding. So, at the moment, public policy lacks a proper evidence base for decisions in this area, and other companies have insufficient evidence for decisions about involvement in the Enterprise RTO system. The project aimed to help provide an evidence base for these and other purposes.

The project intended to be of benefit at several levels as described below:

- For workers, the research set out to examine whether the availability of qualifications through Enterprise RTOs offers the chance of a high-quality qualification and improved career prospects and life chances.
- For companies, the research hoped to provide firm evidence about the outcomes for their workers and quality features of their training compared with other companies and with institutional-based qualifications. It will assist them to improve their practices in this area, thus contributing to improved economic performance and productivity.
- For industries and for Australia, the research set out to build an evidence base about the efficacy of this type of training which will assist the shaping of government policy.

The project

The project was funded by the Australian Research Council and by the Enterprise RTO Association (ERTOA). Eight enterprise RTOs also joined the project as industry partners, with a ninth joining in the final year of the project. The research was undertaken between 2012 and 2014.

The partner organisations for the project were as follows:

- Abigroup
- DP World
- Foxtel
- NSW Rural Fire Service
- Queensland Rail
- State Transit NSW
- Uniting Community Care
- Western Health

Calvary Care also joined the project in the latter stages, and made a valuable contribution.

We formed a project reference group consisting of some representatives from our industry partners and other relevant national organisations. Due to the changes in the VET sector over the life of the project, not all reference group members continued with the project. Annual meetings of the reference group took place, and members also commented on key documents such as the survey instruments. Additional meetings took place with ERTOA. The research team met many times during the lifetime of the project.

This report

The project explains, by phase, how the project was carried out and what was found in each phase. The Appendices provide illustrative data from each phase. The final section of the main report presents some theoretical models developed and proposed from the research.

Literature review

A brief overview follows of the limited literature on enterprise RTOs at the time of the commencement of the project.

Qualifications-based training and Enterprise RTOs

The use of nationally recognised (qualifications-based) training by enterprises in Australia has grown significantly in recent years. Estimates by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research suggest that up to 25 per cent of employers provide nationally recognised, or qualification-based, training to their employees (Cully, 2005). In most cases, employers partner with external registered training organisations, including TAFE Institutes or private training providers, to deliver training and award qualifications to their employees. Enterprises gain significant benefits from providing such training. These include the ability to attract high quality staff (i.e. as ‘employer of choice’), accessing government funding to defray the costs of training provision, the integration of training with everyday work and the confidence to be sure that workers are trained to a recognised standard (Smith, Pickersgill, Smith and Rushbrook, 2005).

A relatively small, but growing, group of enterprises decide to become Enterprise RTOs, able to deliver qualifications and parts of qualifications (‘skill sets’), which are awarded as Statements of Attainment to their workers, in their own right. There is little scholarly literature on Enterprise RTOs, although some general vocational education and training (VET) literature discusses instances of training within Enterprise RTOs as part of a broader

discussion.

The process of becoming an Enterprise RTO is an onerous process for enterprises and those that take the step to become an Enterprise RTO are likely do so to meet specialised skill needs for their workforce or a need to train large numbers of workers to a high standard of quality. They perceive the possibility for greater customisation of training and more control over delivery (Enterprise RTO Association, 2009b). They are likely to be larger enterprises working in industry sectors characterised by relatively slow organisational or technological change (Smith *et al*, 2005). In many cases Enterprise RTOs offer training via traineeships, a form of apprenticeship, enrolling large proportions of their new and sometimes existing workers (Smith, Comyn, Brennan Kemmis & Smith 2009). Some commentators believe that traineeships are not of high quality and that employers adopt them only to attract employer incentives (Snell and Hart, 2007); however there is little empirical evidence to support this view, although in the 1990s, before the advent of the Australian Quality Training Framework, there was evidence that this was happening (e.g. Schofield, 1999).

Benefits and challenges for companies

Of the four research questions, this is the one that has been researched to the greatest extent, but even so no specific targeted study has been carried out in this area.

Enterprises have been shown to gain benefits from being an RTO in their own right. These include the ability to deliver qualifications to large groups of workers quickly and in a manner that is customised to the enterprise's own needs and requirements; the ability, through their increased knowledge of the national VET system, to seek available government funding for training and use this funding to develop their own training infrastructure; and the ability gain revenue and sometimes supply-chain benefits by training workers from other organisations such as subcontractors or suppliers to ensure the quality of work performed by these organisations (Smith and Smith, 2009a; Enterprise RTO Association, 2009a). They also have a stream of workers ready to move onto higher-level training and promotional positions (Smith *et al*, 2009a).

Another feature of Enterprise RTOs is their ability to shape their approach to human resource management around the awarding of national qualifications, creating more innovative ways of managing and developing people (Smith and Smith, 2007).

Enterprise RTOs also face some challenges, particularly the complexity of obtaining and retaining registration as an RTO, often under different arrangements in different States and Territories (although this problem is about to be solved with the advent of the National VET Regulator), and the potential distraction from the core business of the enterprise. Some enterprises abandon their RTO status but in some cases continue to engage with the national system (Smith *et al*, 2005). A similar scheme has been trialled in the UK (Pricewaterhouse-Coopers LLP, 2008) with similar benefits and challenges identified to the Australian system.

Benefits and challenges for workers

The benefits to workers are in many ways the same as those to companies. Workers receive qualifications free of charge, they develop useful skills and they can progress to higher level positions and higher level qualifications. For many workers particularly in industries which do not have longstanding qualifications, such as cleaning and meat processing, the opportunity to gain a qualification is a major event for an individual (Smith, Comyn, Brennan

Kemmis & Smith, 2009). Smith (2006) argues that delivery of qualifications through work removes many of the barriers for women to gain VET qualifications which had been identified by Butler & Ferrier (2000). Smith & Smith (2011) argue that the availability of qualifications through work has broader social inclusion potential. Few challenges have been identified in existing research, apart from a conference paper by two of the research team (Smith & Smith, 2009b). While previous research has involved interviews with workers, there has been no large-scale quantitative research with workers who have undertaken such training. They are not captured in the national VET data collection and therefore their voice has not been heard.

Equivalence of qualifications

This issue goes to the heart of the integrity of Enterprise RTO delivery of qualifications, yet no research has been carried out into the equivalence of qualifications gained through Enterprise RTOs with those gained in the institutional system - at TAFE or private RTOs. While the written curriculum is identical in all modes of delivery of VET in Australia, since it consists of national Training Packages, the delivered curriculum and assessment may vary widely among training providers. Smith & Smith (2009b) consider that the curriculum might be overly customised but that this issue has not been empirically researched. Wheelahan & Moodie (2011) express some concern about potential quality problems that might arise from possible lack of expertise among trainers in Enterprise RTOs, but did not research the issue specifically.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank our Partner Organisations who worked with us through the project, at a time when there was constant change in the VET sector and also in their own organisations.

We would like to acknowledge the assistance of the late Ros Brennan Kemmis of Charles Sturt University, who undertook one of the case studies, and of Beth Costa of Deakin University, who undertook much of the statistical work. We would also like to thank research assistants Kerrie Scott, Sally Burt, Morgan Wise and Simone Bartrum, who all assisted with the project at different times.

WHAT WE DID AND WHAT WE FOUND IN THE RESEARCH

Overview of the research

Table 1 provides a snapshot of the research and is followed by an account of each phase's method and findings.

The period 2012-2014 was a very volatile time in the national VET system and also in some States/Territories. Thus the method needed to be adjusted somewhat as the project proceeded. Moreover, it became apparent that enterprise RTOs were also affected by restructuring activities both in industry, and in the public sector, that affected their parent organisations. These changes affected the enterprise RTOs that were involved with the project, and sometimes led to the need to adjust the method.

Table 1: Project phases and participants

Phase	Activity	Numbers of participants
Phase 1	ERTO survey #1 Comparison of survey findings with 2003 survey from earlier project, and 2011 survey by ERTOA	83 ERTOs responded
Phase 2 (a) and 3	Case studies – 9 Surveys of employee and volunteer learners in case study companies	9 case studies in 3 States Employee survey-103 responses from 5 companies Volunteer – 66 responses from one organisation (Note: Very small numbers were obtained from two other ERTOs, but samples were too small to analyse)
Phase 2 (b)	Comparison of training delivery between different provider types	13 qualification/skill set comparisons undertaken
Phase 4	ERTO survey #2	66 ERTOs responded
Phase 5 (a)	International comparison with England	8 people interviewed, from 3 companies and 2 national bodies
Phase 5 (b)	Stakeholder Forum	8 participants registered

Over 90 people (managers, trainers and workers) were interviewed or participated in focus groups during the research in the case studies.

Phase 1 – Survey of Enterprise RTOs

What we did

In 2012, after consultation with the project's partner organisation, the Enterprise Registered Training Organisation Association, and the Reference Group, a survey of Enterprise Registered Training Organisations was undertaken. 83 of the 235 Enterprise RTOs responded to the survey and the results were analysed and compared with the data collected by ERTOA in its 2011 survey and by a survey conducted in 2003 as part of another project (Smith et al, 2005).

What we found

Appendix 1 provides the quantitative data from Survey 1 of ERTOS

The organisations: Survey 1 confirmed the large scale of most enterprise RTOs. About 50 per cent of the respondent organisations operated across 10 or more sites in Australia and 50 per cent of them operated in more than one state. Only slightly over 10 per cent of the respondent organisations operated from a single site. Over one third (39 per cent) of the respondents were part of an international operation and most of these had their headquarters in Australia.

Industry sector: Over two thirds of the respondent enterprise RTOs in Survey 1 were to be found in just four sectors: Health and community services, government administration and defence, transport and storage, and manufacturing.

About the enterprise RTOs: Most of the responding organisations reported that they had undergone significant expansion in their businesses in the previous five years (2007-12), as might be expected in the years of the resources boom. About two-thirds of respondents reported that they had expanded their business operations, and this was reflected in the growth of employee numbers with about 60 per cent reporting that the number of permanent employees in their organisations had grown. In line with the growth of the business, the respondent enterprise RTOs also reported that their use of technology had increased over the previous five years and this was also reflected in their organisation's use of technology. About two thirds of enterprise RTOs felt that the use of technology had increased steadily and nearly a quarter that it had increased rapidly. The increased uptake of technology fed into increased skill requirements in the organisations, with over 95 per cent responding that skills needs had increased – 30 per cent saying that they had increased rapidly.

Workforce structure: As noted above, the enterprise RTOs tended to be large organisations. Only 18 per cent of the organisations surveyed had fewer than 500 employees, with 36 per cent employing more than 5000 employees and 11 per cent more than 30,000. In Survey 2, 43 per cent of respondents had more than 5000 employees. Most of the workers in the enterprise RTOs were employed on a permanent basis either full-time or part-time; across the sample on average 82 per cent of workers were employed permanently. On average about a quarter of employees were casual and about 20 per cent were employed through labour hire companies.

Training in the enterprise RTOs: As the enterprise RTOs were large organisations supporting a dedicated training arm devoted to nationally recognised training, it is not surprising that they support significant numbers of training staff. On average, the enterprise RTOs in the sample employed ten training staff to teach nationally recognised training, and nearly 60 workplace instructors. However, these figures varied widely, with one enterprise RTO reporting employing 400 dedicated training staff and 2900 workplace instructors. Enterprise RTOs seemed to be well resourced for their training activities. In terms of management of the RTO and the training function, over half of the enterprise RTOs surveyed said that their RTO was overseen by a dedicated senior manager with 17 per cent responding that the activities of their RTO were managed through a Learning and Development Committee.

The most common Training Packages delivered by the enterprise RTOs reflected the industry sectors in which they were congregated, the top five being:

- Public Safety;
- Transport and Logistics;
- Community Services;
- Business Services; and
- Resources and Infrastructure.

Involvement in Training Package development: The enterprise RTOs played a major role in the development process for the relevant Training Packages, with 25 per cent of them providing people to sit on national committees for Training Package development, 16 per cent commenting on drafts and 35 per cent sending people to attend consultations. Only 22 per cent of enterprise RTOs reported no involvement in Training Package development. As might be expected, the provision of nationally recognised training constituted a major element of training delivered in enterprise RTOs, with 45 per cent of responding organisations stating that such training comprised over half of their training activities.

Appendix 2 compares the findings of Survey 1 from other surveys of enterprise RTOs

Some points from this comparison over time are as follows:

- Certificates II and III were the most frequently awarded qualifications in both 2003 and 2011;
- At least 75% of enterprises intended to renew their RTO registration in both 2003 and 2011, which suggests ongoing benefits of RTO registration to both enterprises and employees.
- Enterprise RTOs were more likely in 2011 to provide training to individuals outside the enterprise compared to 2003.
- Flexibility and control in training and assessment delivery and the ability to develop and deliver enterprise-relevant training were key business drivers of enterprise RTO registration in both 2003 and 2011.
- With regards to organisational change over the previous five years, in 2012 enterprises were more likely to have experienced increases in total workforce, technology use and skill needs of both the industry and enterprise compared to 2003.
- The proportion of enterprise RTOs involved in the development and review of national training packages increased slightly over time; also the nature of involvement deepened over the 10 year period. Enterprises were more likely to have representation

on national steering committees and less likely to attend consultations in 2012 compared to 2003.

- More than three quarters of sampled enterprise RTOs purchased training from either a TAFE or RTO in 2003 and 2012. Nearly half of enterprise RTOs in 2012 additionally purchased training from suppliers.

Phase 2(a) and Phase 3 – Case studies in Enterprise RTOs

What we did

A total of nine case studies were undertaken as part of the research project. In each case an initial visit took place, with a follow up visit or telephone conversation intended to elicit more information on developments since the initial visit, and to pursue lines of inquiry that had emerged from the first visits and the surveys. The first visits were mainly undertaken in the period late 2012 to early 2013 and comprised a series of interviews with:

- Operational managers;
- Senior HR/HRD managers;
- RTO manager and staff;
- RTO trainers;
- Workers who were learners in the RTO.

Second visits took place 18 months to two years later, mainly in late 2014, and were shorter, including only RTO Managers and permanent training and/or HR staff. In one instance the first and second visits were combined in one visit in late 2014.

The case study companies were in the following industry areas:

- Civil construction
- Transport systems (2)
- Health and community care (3)
- Waterfront
- Fire services
- Media sales

Also, a survey was distributed online and in hard copy to employees who had completed training through the Enterprise RTO at these companies. The survey, based partly on the NCVET learner satisfaction survey, asked learners about their background, their learning experience at the Enterprise RTO, the interaction between their learning and their work and the benefits they derived from the training. Six companies managed to obtain returns from their workers; one of these six surveyed volunteers only. The results were collated for analysis and ERTOs were sent their own results compared with the aggregated results from all five organisations whose surveys were of workers, not volunteers. As the survey numbers were a little disappointing, we also asked our case study companies for summary data from their 'AQTF' employer and learner surveys, and although some were very helpful, the data were often for different years and at different levels of detail, so we were not able to undertake a cross-case analysis.

What we found

Case study findings

In addition, some organisations took part in the survey of employees and/or provided summary data from 'AQTF' learner and/or employer survey questionnaires. This analysis, however, does not include those data.

The nature of the ERTOs

Most of the ERTOs investigated were small units, often embedded in other larger departments with the companies such as the HR departments. The RTOs generally had a very clear identity within the companies, headed usually by an RTO Manager and employing a small number of permanent training and administrative staff. In most cases, much of the work of the RTO was performed by a much larger number of workplace trainers. In some cases, workplace trainers attached to the RTO numbered in the hundreds. The workplace trainers were situated in the operational arms of the companies and were contracted to spend part of their working time performing training and assessment tasks for their RTO. All workplace trainers were qualified with the latest version of the Cert IV TAE and the correct vocational qualifications for the programs on which they taught. In one case, a health service, the RTO acted as broker, bringing in subject matter specialists to teach the course that the RTO offered to the company.

In most cases, RTOs had been established for some time in their companies, typically up to 12 years before the first visits took place. In some cases, RTOs had at one time fallen into abeyance but had been resurrected by the companies at a later date. The sense from all the company case studies was that companies had a long standing and strong commitment to the work of the RTO and understood the essential nature of the training offered through the RTO to the continuation of the business operations.

The Scopes of Registration of the RTOs were usually very limited. Amongst the cases, two offered more than ten qualifications but most offered less than five. In most cases, the training activities of the RTO were focused on one or two qualifications. The RTOs only training staff of the companies of which they were a part. There was one exception to this, a community service, which admitted non-employees to their telephone counselling course as a form of recruitment of volunteer counsellors. None of the RTOs appeared to have plans to open up training to non-employees of their companies.

The limited scope and company orientation of the RTOs was reflected in the reasons why the companies had established their RTOs in the first place. In general, the results from the case studies showed that the most important reasons for the establishment and continuation of the RTOs included:

- Meeting safety and other licencing and regulatory training requirements;
- Controlling the content and quality of the training delivered to employees;
- That there were no external RTOs capable of delivering training that met the requirements of the company;
- Enhancing recruitment by offering training.

Although funding was an issue that the RTOs had to grapple with, it was not viewed as a

reason for the establishment of the RTOs in the first place. Many staff argued that the existence of state or federal funding for training helped RTOs press the case for their continuation within their companies, but funding was not the main reason for the existence. In most cases, the RTOs received only very limited funding from state or federal governments, and funding had dropped in most States with the advent of more contestability in VET markets in recent years. It was clear that companies valued their RTOs for the training they delivered rather than the funding they acquired.

The nature of training delivery and assessment

Training delivery, in most of the cases, was very practical, with a significant element of the training delivered in the working situation. In most cases, training was aimed at new employees, and the training courses were preceded by an induction process which established the basic parameters of employee behaviour in the workplace. Thus, in the case of the stevedoring company, new stevedores underwent a one week off the job induction program focusing on safe working practices. The formal training for the Cert II in Stevedoring only began after this induction was complete. In the call centre company, new employees in the call centre underwent a lengthy 6 week induction, most of which was conducted off-line to train the employees in the basic skills of telephone customer contact. In this case, the induction training also formed part of the formal training for the Cert II in Customer Contact delivered by the RTO. This embedding of formal training in either the induction process or the working environment in some cases led to employees being unable to distinguish between training and work.

The preference amongst many ERTOS was for training to be delivered as much as possible in the workplace, so that the skills were learned in as realistic an environment as possible. Often this meant that over 80 per cent of the training was delivered in the workplace setting. However, all the RTOs also included some off the job training which usually covered the 'theory' aspect of the training. In many cases, this part of the training was delivered in a fairly traditional, classroom based environment with an emphasis on face to face delivery rather than more modern blended or on-line methods. In some cases, RTOs had developed more innovative styles of delivery which suited the cohort of learners. The rural fire service, for instance, had invested significantly in the production of on-line learning materials for the Cert II in Public Safety which was delivered to volunteer fire fighters across the State. The use of a blended delivery approach suited the dispersed nature of the learner cohort and ensured consistency of learning in crucial safety related issues. The community organisation, with a relatively large suite of courses that were delivered, had also developed on-line distance learning material for some of their courses, especially in the area of Financial Counselling. Again, this approach suited the dispersed nature of the learner cohort. In many cases, the RTOs were dealing with cohorts of learners with lower literacy and numeracy skills. RTOs had to develop training strategies tailored to these lower basic skills levels such as the use of visual presentation rather than text based learning materials. The lower basic skills level of so many of the learners goes some way to account for the popularity of more traditional, face to face teaching where the use of simpler forms of training delivery were possible.

Assessment was an area of training delivery that the RTOs focused on in particular. In general, because of the strict regulatory requirements of the work covered by much of the training delivered through their RTOs, assessment was rigorous and very well designed and applied. A key reason for the existence of many of the RTOs in the first place was the need

for employers to ensure that all new workers were thoroughly trained in the safety and other regulatory aspects of the jobs and the emphasis that the companies placed on high quality performance from their employees. This nexus of quality and compliance, created the need for a strong assessment regime that tested the competence of learners very thoroughly and ensured that all employees could operate at a high standard after training. In general, the emphasis on assessment was on practical demonstration of competence in the workplace. The demonstration of competence and observation of workplace skills was often conducted by supervisors or by trainers who had not been responsible for the training of the learners to ensure a high level of objectivity in assessment. In many cases this demonstration and observation approach was supplemented by written tests. However, the lower literacy and numeracy skills of many of the learners trained in the companies compelled the RTOs to use testing methods that did not require high levels of these skills, such as the use of oral questioning as opposed to written answer tests.

The RTOs systematically collected feedback from their learners via evaluation. All the RTOs carried out the minimum required for national compliance (Employer and Learner 'AQTF' Questionnaires) but most went further, with comprehensive student evaluation of training and of trainers built into the delivery of the qualifications. In most cases evaluation was carried out after the delivery of each unit of competence in the qualification. In one case, Foxtel, the company collected performance data as part of the routine operation of call centres and this information was made available to trainers who could track the impact of the training directly on the performance of the learners.

In general, the RTOs felt that the skills which they developed in their training were not transferable to other companies. Although the qualifications were nationally recognised, the training was usually quite heavily customised by the RTOs to suit the particular conditions of the company. This is not surprising given that one of the major reasons cited by companies for the establishment of an RTO was the ability to control the training that employees received and to ensure that the training suited the needs of the company. Thus, whilst recognition of prior learning (RPL) was often available from RTOs, the use of RPL was quite limited, and RTOs preferred to re-train workers who might already have received training in the industry.

Benefits and challenges for workers

The major benefit for workers undergoing training in the RTOs was the acquisition of a post-school qualification. In some cases, the learners who were trained in the RTOs were people who did not possess post-compulsory qualifications, had often left school in Years 9 or 10 and demonstrated lower levels of literacy and numeracy. For these workers, the gaining of a qualification was a major benefit and a step forward in their education and their labour market prospects.

However, not all workers trained in the RTOs had lower levels of educational attainment. Employees trained in some of the RTOs (for example, the TV company call centre) were often university graduates. For these workers, gaining a specific qualification was usually a necessity to work in the industry and, thus, improved their internal promotion prospects in the company and also their currency on the broader labour market.

Learners often mentioned that they welcomed the fact that in the RTO they were being trained by trainers who had actual work experience of the workplaces in which they worked. Thus, the learners felt that the trainers in the RTO were credible experts in the fields in which

they were being trained and that, therefore, the training was of a high quality. Workers also mentioned that they felt that the conduct of much of the training in the workplace added credibility and authenticity to their learning. However, the embedded nature of many parts of the training carried out by the RTOs also led to feelings amongst some learners that there was little difference between the training and the work; and, in some cases, they were not sure whether or when they were undertaking training or simply working, as the two blended into one.

Workers also mentioned that the provision of training in the company by the RTO had significant advantages over studying through an external RTO, as training was always conducted in work time and at their work sites. There was no question of being required to travel to a training institution, thus making it very easy for them to embark on study.

In some cases learners expressed the view that they were not sure about the standing of the qualification, as it was earned through their work and in their own company. Some also saw the disadvantages of learning in the RTO as opposed to the greater exposure that they would have gained to workers from other organisations if they had undertaken the training through an external RTO. In general, however, learners seemed to have few concerns about their training within the RTO, and were very positively disposed to the training they received.

Benefits and challenges for companies

There were a number of benefits identified by the ERTOS. The key benefit was that because of RTO, the companies had control over the form and delivery of the training that they provided for their workers. In contrast to using an external RTO, the companies were able to deliver the training at a pace which suited both the learners and the requirements of the company e.g. the use of downtime for training. The training was also, to some extent, customised to meet the specific requirements of the companies which ensured that the workers received the specific training that jobs in the company required.

In this way, companies were able to assure themselves of the competencies of the workers. In many cases, this level of assurance was critical for companies, especially for those operating in industries where health and safety requirements were paramount, such as stevedoring and civil construction. The focus on the competencies of the workers was also reflected in the rigorous approach that the RTOs took to assessment. Because the companies were insistent on assuring the competencies of the learners, the RTOs were required to take a strong approach to assessment and not pass learners who did not meet the high standards that the companies demanded. In addition they tended to have rigorous validation approaches, particularly as so many were multi-site.

Although the availability of finance was not regarded by RTO managers as a very important reason for the existence of RTOs in their companies, nevertheless it was true that the RTOs felt that the in-house delivery of training could be cheaper for the companies than using an external RTO, although the costs of maintaining the RTO were considerable. The existence of government funding for training, where it was available, was an added incentive for companies to invest in establishing and maintaining an RTO but it was clear, that even where government funding was forthcoming, companies were still convinced that there were financial benefits to them in running their own RTOs.

For many RTOs the provision of nationally recognised training for workers was also a means of promoting the company in a tight labour market. At the time of the initial case study visits

in 2012, the mining boom was still creating skills and labour shortages in many industries. The existence of an RTO and the provision of accredited training for employees mean that the companies could project themselves as ‘employers of choice’ in a competitive labour market.

A major concern for all the RTOs was the extent of the effort required to maintain registration as an RTO and meeting the compliance requirements of state governments and the national regulator, ASQA. The RTOs were very small operations by comparison with most private RTOs but had to meet the same compliance requirements as larger and stand-alone RTOs. This meant that the job of the RTO Manager was very much taken up by ensuring that the RTO met not only the requirements of the company for skilled workers but also the standards of operation required by regulating bodies. In many cases, the work of compliance brought in other staff not working directly in the RTO, such as finance and human resource specialists who had a role to play in ensuring and monitoring compliance. Nevertheless, despite the effort required to maintain compliance, the RTOs managed their systems well and often devised quite innovative approaches to quality control in their operations. The knowledge of RTO Managers of their compliance requirements and the operations of the national VET system as whole was often very impressive.

A challenge acknowledged by all the RTOs in the study was the perceived need to justify their ongoing existence to senior managers. In most cases, RTO managers and staff were concerned with proving to their companies that they provided a valuable service and that they justified the investments that companies made in maintaining their operations. Thus, the RTOs were often quite scrupulous in their collection of learner feedback and in their plotting of the success of the learners in their workplaces so that they could produce evidence for senior managers that the RTOs were making an important contribution to the health of the company and to the business. In some cases, RTOs collected evidence about the financial impact of their operation, keen to demonstrate that they covered at least part of the expense of running the RTOs with government funding and grants. However, it also appeared to be the case that the companies generally placed great value on the operations of the respective RTOs. Many had been in existence for ten years or more demonstrating a solid commitment on behalf of management groups to the work of the RTOs and the importance of high quality training. In four cases, however, at the time of the second visit the RTOs mentioned reviews of their RTO. In three cases, the organisation itself had changed its nature, merging with other bodies, so that two RTOs needed to be merged or an organisation without an RTO had merged with the organisation that had an RTO.

Summary

There are a number of conclusions to be drawn about the operations of Enterprise RTOs from the case studies:

- The RTOs were small in terms of scope of registration, but performed vital roles in their organisations by providing high quality training to workers and ensuring that the companies’ workforces met the skills requirements of their industries;
- The RTOs were highly focused on the needs of the organisations of which they were a part. The companies did not view the provision of training as a mainstream business activity (hence they did not provide training to other organisations) but rather as a source of competitive advantage in product and labour markets;

- RTOs were not established by organisations primarily to take advantage of funding opportunities. The reason for the establishment of RTOs were to enable companies to control and contextualise training for the workers rather than to generate profits;
- The awarding of qualifications through the workplace by the RTOs was very popular with workers. For many workers the gaining of a qualification was the first post-school qualification they have acquired, and was highly valued by them.

Two case studies (de-identified) are provided as examples, at Appendices 3a and 3b

Survey findings

Who were the learners and what were they studying? The largest number of qualifications among our respondents were the Certificate III in Customer Contact (31 per cent of respondent), the Certificate II in Rail Infrastructure (24 per cent) the Certificate IV in Civil Construction (11 per cent) and the Certificate III in Driving Operations. (10 per cent) These accounted for three-quarters of all respondents. Most of the respondents were working full-time for their employers but 13 per cent were working part-time. Just over 80 per cent were male and just under 30 per cent were from a non-English speaking background; over 90 per cent were aged 25 or over, with a third of those aged 45 or over. One-third of respondents had only achieved Year 10 or less at school, although 9 per cent had bachelor's degrees or higher.

Two-thirds (65 per cent) said that the main reason that they undertook the training was that it was a requirement of the job, and nearly half of these were learning as part of a traineeship, but nearly 20 per cent said it was to gain extra skills.

Method of delivery as experienced by the learners: Learners were asked to select as many options as applied from a list of training delivery modes. Nearly 90 per cent said that face-to-face learning was involved; 35 per cent mentioned printed learning materials; and 33 per cent ticked on the job coaching or mentoring. 28 per cent mentioned on-the-job practice. Interestingly, only half (51 per cent) said that they had been assessed for RPL, although 76 per cent said they had relevant experience and skills prior to starting the training.

Satisfaction: Only one person said he or she had not achieved the main reason for training, and only three said they would not recommend the training to other people. Almost 60 per cent said that the training helped them to do their job better, and 26 per cent felt more secure in their job as a result of the training (multiple answers were permitted).

With relation to their experience of the learning and assessment, fifteen statements (derived from a standard learner survey utilised by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research) were provided for learners to provide responses on a five-point Likert scale. These included items such as 'My trainers had a thorough knowledge of the area' and 'My trainers treated me with respect'. In almost each instance, nearly all of the respondents said that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Statements about generic skills development received the largest number of neutral or 'disagree/strongly disagree' responses with the development of written communication ranked worst (29 per cent in those three categories) and next to that, development of problem solving skills (15 per cent). Assessment related

statements received generally favourable responses, but compared with the training delivery statements, people were more likely to select ‘agree’ for assessment statements rather than ‘strongly agree’.

Outcomes: Just over three-quarters of the respondents were in the same occupation they had been in at the start of the training. Almost one-quarter had gone on to study other qualifications, and nearly half of those were at Certificate IV level. Learners were asked to identify ‘personal benefits’ from a provided list. They were able to choose as many as they liked. Over three-quarters reported that the training had ‘advanced my skills generally’, 43 per cent reported a growth in confidence, and 41 per cent ‘satisfaction of achievement’.

Appendix 4 provides the quantitative data from the survey of learners

Phase 2(b) – Comparison of training delivery among different provider types

What we did

In this phase we identified institutional RTOs (one TAFE and one non-TAFE for each) that delivered the same qualifications/skill sets as the qualifications/skill sets that had been investigated at the case study Enterprise RTOs. Interviews were conducted with course co-ordinators (or an equivalent) at these institutional RTOs. These interviews took place during 2014. In many cases, appropriate RTOs were extremely difficult to identify and access. In itself this illustrated the fact that Enterprise RTOs are often providing qualifications in industry or occupational areas where there is little alternative provision. For each qualification, we wrote comparisons of aspects of the delivery of the qualification, across the three types of training provider.

What we found

Three examples of comparisons of training delivery across provider type are provided as examples, at Appendices 5a, 5b and 5c

Based on an initial analysis of these three comparisons, there was considerable variety in the modes of delivery both across the ERTOS in the comparisons studies, and across the different type of qualifications. The ERTOS usually delivered the qualifications in large cohorts to groups of new workers in specific key positions in their organisations. Therefore it was important for workers to succeed in their training, and for the company to persevere with the learners. For two of the qualifications, the TAFE and private providers tended to deliver to cohorts of workers from companies and delivery and therefore were quite similar to ERTOS delivery; while for the third (financial counselling) the TAFE and non-TAFE providers delivered to individual learners.

In terms of assessment, the ERTOS did not offer Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) while

the other providers did. Moderation tended to be quite rigorous in the ERTOS as there was a need to be sure that there was consistency among workers across different sites.

The ERTOS received little funding, and funding had diminished over the years. The other providers received some funding although again this was diminishing, or in one case lost.

Collection of feedback from learners and from workplace managers was common in the ERTOS and the private providers but was less common in the TAFE providers.

There is a great deal more analysis to be undertaken of these comparisons.

Phase 4 – Second survey of Enterprise RTOs

What we did

A second survey of Enterprise RTOs in July 2014 gathered additional information to the first project survey and other data that can be compared with that collected in 2012 to identify changes in certain aspects of Enterprise RTOs. Survey 2 (2014) added some sections that had not been covered in Survey 1: literacy and numeracy issues, detailed information about training and assessment methods, detailed funding questions, delivery to non-workers and purchasing of training for other RTOs, questions about gathering of feedback and evaluation, and training for casual workers (as the questions relating to the latter issue in Survey 1 in 2012 had proved too complex to gain meaningful data). We also included questions about the operations of the RTO itself within the companies.

What we found

The enterprise RTOs delivered a range of qualifications/skill sets to learners. Most (88.7%) delivered a full qualification or qualifications rather than a particular skill set/s (11.3%). The survey includes a number of qualitative questions which have yet to be analysed. The main quantitative findings follow.

Overview: The demographic profile of the 2014 sample of 66 enterprises which completed the survey was similar to the 2012 sample of responding enterprises (N = 83). Most were capital-city based (92.5%) and over 90% had more than one site, with over half having more than ten branches or sites. Nearly half had international operations (43.9%) and of those, nearly four-fifths (79.3%) were headquartered in Australia. The four most common industry areas were: Health and community services, Transport and storage, Emergency services, and Government administration and defence. These accounted for over half of the responding organisations. Two-thirds of responding organisations had more than 200 workers, but there was a sizeable minority (18.5%) with 500 or fewer workers. 24 delivered training to volunteers.

Literacy and numeracy issues: Across all respondents, the job for which learners were most frequently trained required a moderate to high level of literacy (responses of 6 or above out of a scale of 10) (62.6%) and numeracy (63.1%). The learners in those jobs were reported, on average to have literacy skills slightly below the job requirements (58.5% of responses of 6 showing above out of 10) and similarly with numeracy (51%). In general, numeracy capabilities were shown as being higher than literacy capabilities, with only 4.7% of ERTOS

reporting learners having numeracy capabilities of 4 and below out of 10, while 10.8% of ERTOs reported literacy capabilities of 4 or below.

Training and assessment: Again answering for the most commonly delivered qualification, respondents were asked about how training was delivered, on a continuum of 1 (entirely as a part of normal work) to 10 (entirely in a training room). The mode (most common) response was 5 out of 10 (23.4%) with 15.6% responding 6 out of 10. The other most common response was 3 out of 10 (18.6%). Only one respondent said the qualification was delivered entirely as a part of normal work, and two respondents said it was entirely in the training room. Responses about assessment have yet to be properly analysed, but nearly four-fifths of respondents said that over three-quarters of their workers passed first time, with only very few learners failing or being asked to withdraw. We asked about consequences for workers in the latter categories but have yet to analyse those responses. Three-quarters of respondents had a recognition or celebration process for workers. Responses about type of ceremony have yet to be analysed.

Feedback, evaluations and knowledge-sharing: All enterprises who responded in 2014 sought feedback from their business units about the training staff received from the ERTOs. From a list of provided choices, 60.6% said they gathered feedback through formal written evaluations, 6.1% through formal verbal feedback and 13.6% through informal feedback. 19.6% said 'other' (responses yet to be analysed). Most ERTOs exchanged information about their RTO operations with other ERTOs; two-thirds with ERTOs in the same industry area (69.7%), and 52.3% with ERTOs in other industry areas.

Provision of training to external people: Almost half of enterprises (46.9%) said that they provided accredited training to external learners. Only one-fifth were individuals while four-fifths were sent for training by companies. Of the latter, three-quarters (74.1%) were from companies within the enterprise's supply chain. However, provision to external people was minor; four-fifths of companies reported that training delivered to external learners comprised less than 25% of all accredited training delivered.

Using external RTOs: Enterprises often used external RTOs to provide nationally recognised training (70.8%) as well as delivering it themselves. Of those providing more information about this, it seemed that for the first-mentioned qualification among a list of four, this was most frequently delivered onsite (55.6%) rather than at the RTO (31.1%) with 13.3% responding 'other' (e.g. a mixture of the two). Training was most commonly delivered entirely by external RTO staff (55% in the first-named qualification). These responses are yet to be further analysed. A qualitative question on reasons for using external RTOs has yet to be analysed.

Funding: Respondents asked what government funding they received, using a provided list. Nearly half (48.5%) had received Commonwealth employment incentives; a quarter had received NWDF funding and 6.1% WELL funding. 22.7% responded 'other' but the responses have yet to be analysed. At a State/Territory level, 21.2% had received Payroll Tax exemptions and 19.7% other funding (yet to be analysed). While we sought responses about the effects of funding changes, these responses have yet to be analysed.

Availability of qualifications/skills sets training to non-standard employees: Two thirds (62.1%) of enterprises employed casual workers, although in most cases (75.0%) these workers represented less than 25% of the total workforce. Two thirds of the enterprises with casual workers indicated that nationally-recognised training was available to their casual

staff; however for three-quarters of respondents, less than 25% of the casual workforce had received NRT from the ERTO. When casual workers did receive training it was most likely to be because it was a mandatory requirement of the job (40.0%). For one-quarter of cases, the company had requested they do it, or the workers themselves had requested it (16.0%). Casual workers who completed NRT training usually undertook this in paid work time (76.0%) with 24% saying that it was normally in the workers' own time. Sixty percent of the responding organisations employed sub-contractors, (but mostly as a minor part of their operations). Provision of NRT to sub-contractors was less common than provision of NRT to casual workers, with only two-fifths of the 39 enterprises that employed sub-contractors making NRT available to these employees.

The RTO itself: On average, enterprises allocated 56 full-time equivalent staff members to administrative workload generated by VET sector regulatory compliance requirements, and in 34.4% of enterprises this represented less than 25% of the total administrative workload for all training activities. Within enterprises, RTOs tended to be highly visible, with one-fifth of respondents indicating the RTO was extremely visible (10 out of a scale of 10) and three-fifths giving a score of between 6 and 10. Only 1.5% believed the RTO had no exposure within the enterprise. Just under half of the RTOs conducted cost/benefit analyses of providing NRT for staff, while 74.2% compared the cost of in-house training as opposed to using an external training provider. Three quarters said that they trained workers or volunteers who used their skills with other employers.

Changes to ERTOs over time were common among the enterprises surveyed in 2014. More than half (63.6%) of the ERTOs had experienced structural changes in the previous five years, and 75.4% had experienced leadership changes to their ERTO in that time.

Appendix 6 provides the quantitative data from Survey 2 of ERTOs

Phase 5 – International comparison and stakeholder forum

What we did

In 2014, interviews took place in the UK to undertake a comparison with what had, at the start of the project, seemed to be a similar initiative. It turned out that the situation had shifted over the past five years.

The people and companies that were involved in the comparison study were as follows:

- A VET system expert currently working for an association of private providers;
- The body that oversees apprenticeships (the Skills Funding Agency)
- Three employers: one was both an Awarding Body and an apprenticeship 'direct grant' employer, and the other two were direct grant employers only.

In June 2015 a Stakeholder Forum was convened, with attendees invited by the Enterprise RTO Association. These attendees were representatives of Enterprise RTOs and board members of the Enterprise RTO Association. The purpose of the forum was to receive feedback on the findings, to provide advice on further data analysis, and to help draw out implications for policy, practice, and theory.

What we found

International Comparison

In England, companies could become somewhat like Australian Enterprise RTOs in two major ways: by becoming an Awarding Body (meaning they actually ‘owned’ the qualifications that they delivered, as well as delivering them); or by becoming ‘direct grant’ employers of apprentices, responsible for overseeing all three components involved in the English apprenticeship system. The following lists show what employers said about the benefits and challenges of their involvement.

Expressed benefits of these links with the English VET system:

- ‘Employer of choice’ argument;
- A way of making seemingly (or initially) less attractive work more attractive;
- Creating a career path and a source of senior manager talent;
- Empowerment;
- Standardisation and quality;
- Ability to secure better service from training providers (If outsource components);
- Ability to enforce stricter training and assessment processes within the company because of the external quality system,

Some major concerns expressed by employers:

- The amount of red tape needed to undertake either of these two roles;
- The sheer complexity of the VET system
- The reputational risk to the whole company if anything goes wrong;
- The presence of two auditing bodies for the direct grant employers (OfSTED for the training provider activities, and the Awarding Body, in the case of Direct Grant employers).

Appendix 7 provides a fuller description of the findings from the international comparison

National Stakeholder Forum

The main reaction from participants was that the findings were consistent with their experience, and confirmed for them the quality, value and rigour of enterprise RTOs’ training and assessment practice. The forum participants did not see it as a problem that the research showed workers sometimes did not know when their training related to accredited qualifications.

The key policy implication that participants derived from the findings of the study, and also from their own experience in the ERTO environment, was the need for ERTOs to be treated differently from TAFE and other RTOs. Some of the attendees felt that in fact the ERTO

model was the 'purest' form of VET in that it was training that companies undertook to improve the workplace competency of workers. The fact that research on training destinations of learners in institutional RTOs indicates that very few workers end up in areas in which they have been trained raised the question of whether or not most of the formal occupational or industry-specific training should happen once the individual is in employment.

Beyond this, the stakeholders felt that there were no major policy implications for the study that were specifically related to enterprise RTOs but that the findings could be used to improve and make comment on issues of policy, to improve procedures in enterprise RTOs, and to develop products to assist enterprise RTOs.

Theoretical models

While there is still much data analysis to undertake, we propose two theoretical models which are explained below, and also note the need for a new model that represents enterprise RTOs as an ‘alternative VET system’.

Model 1: Visibility of RTO and formality of training

We became interested in the visibility of Enterprise RTOs within their organisations and also in the formality or informality of training. These issues surfaced strongly in the case studies. We developed the following simple model (Figure 1) and were able to place our case studies on this matrix. It was our initial impression from the data that the more successful enterprise RTOs carried out training that was more formalised, and their RTOs had a strong identity with the parent company (i.e. the shaded quadrant)

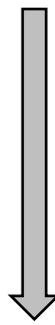
		RTO visibility 	
		Low	High
Formality of training 	Low		
	High		

Figure 1: Visibility of ERTOS within companies, and formality of training

However, further analysis of the data needs to take place before the model can be confirmed, or it can be established whether these two features are linked or can occur independently. This model was presented at the National Stakeholder Forum and while it was accepted as descriptively correct, it was felt it would not be of much practical utility.

Model 2: Engagement-extension-integration model of nationally-recognised training in enterprises

Figure 2 (overleaf) was developed during an earlier project (Smith et al, 2005). That project looked at enterprises that purchased nationally-recognised training as well as enterprise RTOs. The model shows the facilitators and obstacles to engagement with such training at

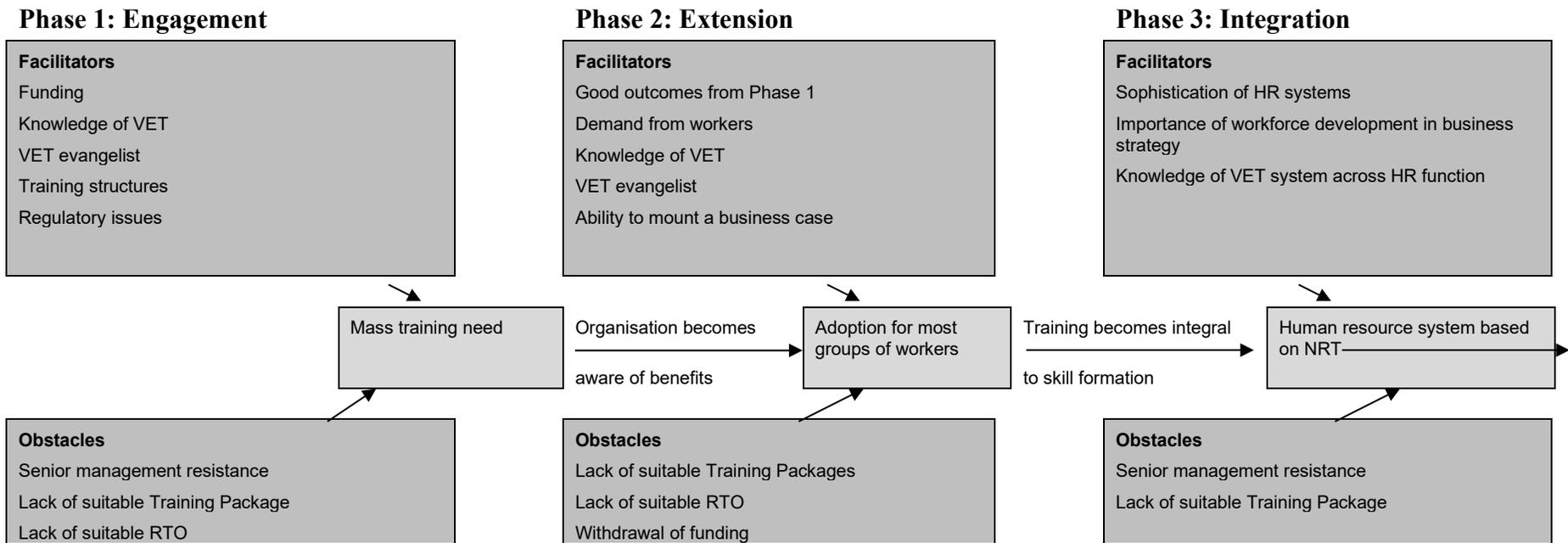


Figure 2: Progressive development of nationally recognised training in enterprises, with facilitators and barriers

From Smith, E., Pickersgill, R., Smith, A. & Rushbrook, P. (2005). *Enterprises' commitment to nationally recognised training for existing workers*. Adelaide: NCVET, p. 50

three different stages. The project confirmed the first two stages, but found no evidence of Stage 3 in any of the case study sites. Thus we felt there has been a shift in ten years away from integration into HR systems. Again, further analysis of the data are required before this can be confirmed.

This model was also presented at the National Stakeholder Forum. There was more interest in Figure 2. The VET evangelist in Phase 1 of the model was recognised by participants, who stated that in any new initiative there is a champion to start it off, who may later step away. It was felt that the model might need to refer to what happens when the champion (the VET evangelist) moves away in the second phase. The Phase 3 Integration component was supported to an extent by participants who suggested that the sophisticated HR systems might allude to the inclusion of training outcomes in the appraisal process. Outcomes of training could be used as evidence to support applications for promotion. Thus the Forum led us to question whether we should dismiss this stage to the extent that we had done. Another interesting comment was that the model was incomplete and could be improved by capturing another phase (Phase 4: 'Disintegration') which would occur once it ceased to want to continue as an RTO. It was felt that for ERTOS to be adequately represented in the model, more prominence needed to be given to the impact of regulatory frameworks and quality assurance standards on ERTOS delivery, relating both to the VET sector but also to the relevant industry and occupational areas.

'An alternative VET system'

- How do Enterprise RTOs help us to understand the extent and nature of an emerging, alternative employer-based VET system?

This, the fourth research question of the project, has not yet been answered. The sections in the case studies on 'identified implications' begin to provide some data towards this question; and the comments of the National Stakeholder Forum on the project findings indicate some potential tensions between the research data and the views of the sector, which are of relevance to this question.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Enterprise RTO Survey #1: Quantitative Data

ERTO Data 2012 (N =83)

16 November 2012

SECTION ONE: YOUR ORGANISATION

Question 2: Is the head office of the company (or its Australian arm) located in a:

	N	%
Capital city	76	91.6
Regional city	5	6.0
Small town	2	2.4
Total	83	100.0

Question 3: Is your organisation:

	N	%
Single site	9	10.8
Multi-site up to 9 branches	25	30.1
Multi-site 10 or more branches	45	54.2
Other	4	4.8
Total	83	100.0

* 'Other' responses: Across Victoria; Branches, Contact Centres and Corporate sites; Across hundreds of sites. We operate in 100 countries Globally.

Question 4a: Does your organisation have sites in other states?

	N	%
Yes	43*	51.8
No	40	48.2
Total	83	100.0

* Mean was 6 other states

Question 5a: Does your organisation have international operations?

	N	%
Yes	32	38.6
No	50	60.2
Total	82	98.8

Question 5b: If yes, is the head office in Australia or overseas?

	N	%
Australia	39	47.0
Overseas	9	10.8
Total	48	57.8

SECTION TWO**Question 7: In what sort of industry is the major activity of your company?**

	N	%
Agriculture, Forestry and fishing	4	4.8
Manufacturing	7	8.4
Construction	3	3.6
Retail Trade	4	4.8
Transport & Storage	10	12.0
Finance and/or Insurance	4	4.8
Education	1	1.2
Health and Community Services	20	24.1
Mining	4	4.8
Electricity, Gas and Water Supply	2	2.4
Wholesale Trade	1	1.2
Accommodation, Cafes & Restaurants	1	1.2
Communication Services	2	2.4
Government Administration & Defence	18	21.7
Total	81	97.6

SECTION THREE: ABOUT THE ORGANISATION**Question 8: Over the last five years (mid 2007-mid 2012), has your organisation:**

	N	%
Expanded its business operations	55	66.3
Stayed about the same	21	25.3
Reduced its operations	6	7.2
Total	82	98.8

Question 9: Over the last five years has the number of permanent employees in your organisation:

	N	%
Increased	50	60.2
Stayed about the same	21	25.3
Declined	10	12.0
Total	81	97.6

Question 10: over the last five years, in your opinion, has the use of technology in your industry:

	N	%
Increased rapidly	19	22.9
Increased steadily	56	67.5
Undergone no real change	7	8.4
Declined	0	0.0
Total	82	98.8

Question 11: Over the last five years, in your opinion, have the skill needs of your industry:

	N	%
Increased rapidly	20	24.1
Increased steadily	62	74.7
Undergone no real change	0	0.0
Declined	0	0.0
Total	82	98.8

Question 12: Over the last five years, in your opinion, have the skill needs of your organisation:

	N	%
Increased rapidly	25	30.1
Increased steadily	54	65.1
Undergone no real change	3	3.6
Declined	0	0.0
Total	82	98.8

SECTION FOUR: WORKFORCE STRUCTURE

Question 13: What is the approximate total workforce of your enterprise?

	N	%
Less than 500	15	18.1
500 to <1000	5	6.0
1000 to <2000	14	16.9
2000 to <5000	19	22.9
5000 to <10, 000	13	15.7
10, 000 to <20, 000	6	7.2
20, 000 to < 30, 000	2	2.4
More than 30, 000	9	10.8
Total	83	100.0

Question 14: What types of employment contracts are held by the different categories of employees of the enterprise?

	Min %	Max %	M %
Front-line employees			
Percentage full-time permanent contract	10	100	60
Percentage full-time casual contract	0	30	8
Percentage part-time permanent contract	5	70	22
Percentage part-time casual contract	0	90	16
Percentage contract/labour hire	1	100	19
Front-line team leaders/supervisors			
Percentage full-time permanent contract	3	100	60
Percentage full-time casual contract	0	20	13
Percentage part-time permanent contract	1	50	17
Percentage part-time casual contract	-	-	-
Percentage contract/labour hire	1	20	8
Middle managers			
Percentage full-time permanent contract	2	100	65
Percentage full-time casual contract	-	-	-
Percentage part-time permanent contract	1	20	10
Percentage part-time casual contract	-	-	-
Percentage contract/labour hire	1	15	7
Senior managers and executive staff			
Percentage full-time permanent contract	-	-	-
Percentage full-time casual contract	-	-	-
Percentage part-time permanent contract	1	80	24
Percentage part-time casual contract	-	-	-
Percentage contract/labour hire	2	5	4
Non-production employees			
Percentage full-time permanent contract	1	100	59
Percentage full-time casual contract	0	10	4
Percentage part-time permanent contract	4	100	24
Percentage part-time casual contract	0	20	10
Percentage contract/labour hire	1	40	15

Note: 35 participants (42.2%) indicated that data on employee contract types were not readily available

Question 15: Does your organisation operate:

	N	%
Continuous operation	43	51.8
Shifts covering at least 12 hrs daily	7	8.4
Standard business hours	15	18.1
Monday - Sunday	5	6.0
Other	9	10.8
Total	79	95.2

* 'Other' hours of operation:

Mix of continuous operation and standard business hours

Mixture of shifts and standard hours

Monday to Friday with Saturdays in some sites

Standard business hours +shifts + weekends (ports, airports, mail, etc)

Volunteers mainly patrol on weekends/public holidays. Other operational service operate 24/7

We cover pretty well the full range of these options depending on the particular sites operations

A combination of standard business hours, customer required hours and manufacturing required hours. It is determined by the project.

All of the above

All of the above depending upon location and site

Depends what parts of the organisation. Some are 24/7, some office hours.

SECTION FIVE: TRAINING ACTIVITIES**Question 16: Approximately how many training staff are involved with the delivery of nationally recognised training?**

	Min	Max	M
Senior training staff	1	400	10
Dedicated workplace trainers	0	2900	57
Subject matter experts	0	10, 800	341

Question 17. Which training packages do you deliver? (Please list up to ten that you deliver most frequently)

Training package 1

	N	%
Automotive industry retail, service and repair AUR	3	3.6
Aviation AVI	1	1.2
Business service BSB	5	6.0
Food processing FDF	3	3.6
Transport and logistics TLI	10	12.0
Community services CHC	10	12.0
Correctional services CSC	1	1.2

Health HLT	7	8.4
Water industry NWP	1	1.2
Manufactured mineral products PMC	2	2.4
National public services PSP	1	1.2
Public safety PUA	12	14.5
Racing industry RGR	1	1.2
Resources and infrastructure industry RII	5	6.0
Training and education TAE	1	1.2
Training and assessment TAA	2	2.4
Transmission, distribution and retail sector UET	2	2.4
Agriculture, horticulture and conservation and land management AHC	2	2.4
Retail services SIR	3	3.6
Telecommunications ICT	1	1.2
Local government LGA	1	1.2
Wholesale WRW	1	1.2
Entertainment CUE	1	1.2
Financial services FNS	2	2.4
Forest and forest products FPI	1	1.2
Tourism, hospitality and events SIT	1	1.2
Public sector PSP	1	1.2
Laboratory operations MSL	1	1.2
Total	82	98.8

Training package 2

	N	%
Automotive industry retail, service and repair AUR	1	1.2
Aviation AVI	1	1.2
Business service BSB	11	13.3
Food processing FDF	1	1.2
Transport and logistics TLI	2	2.4
Community services CHC	3	3.6
Health HLT	5	6.0
Water industry NWP	1	1.2
Public safety PUA	2	2.4
Resources and infrastructure industry RII	3	3.6
Training and education TAE	3	3.6
Local government LGA	1	1.2
Financial services FNS	3	3.6
Tourism, hospitality and events SIT	2	2.4
Electrotechnology UEE	1	1.2
Construction, plumbing and services CPC	1	1.2

Laboratory operations MSL	1	1.2
Australian meat industry MTM	2	2.4
Chemical, hydrocarbons and refining PMA	1	1.2
Total	45	54.2

Focus of each training package

	Major focus		Minor focus		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Training package 1	79	95.2	2	2.4	81	97.6
Training package 2	21	25.3	25	30.1	46	55.4
Training package 3	7	8.4	13	15.7	20	24.1
Training package 4	5	6.0	5	6.0	10	12.0
Training package 5	2	2.4	1	1.2	3	3.6
Training package 6	2	2.4	0	0.0	2	2.4
Training package 7	0	0.0	2	2.4	2	2.4
Training package 8	1	1.2	0	0.0	1	1.2
Training package 9	1	1.2	0	0.0	1	1.2
Training package 10	1	1.2	0	0.0	1	1.2

Question 18: What has been the involvement of you, or staff in your organisation, in the development or review of national Training Packages in your industry areas?

	N	%
No involvement	19	22.9
On national steering committee	21	25.3
Commented on drafts	13	15.7
Attended consultation	29	34.9
Total	82	98.8

Question 19: What proportion of total training in the organisation is accredited training provided by the RTO?

	N	%
Not able to answer	3	3.6
0-25%	32	38.6
26-50%	10	12.0
51-75%	23	27.7
> 75%	14	16.9
Total	82	98.8

Question 20: Does your organisation purchase/pay for training for your employees from any of the following external providers?

	TAFE institute NRT ¹		TAFE Institute Other training		Private RTO NRT ¹		Private RTO Other training		Suppliers NRT ¹		Suppliers Other training	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
No	17	20.5	33	39.8	11	13.3	22	26.5	32	38.6	20	24.1
Sometimes	39	47.0	18	21.7	46	55.4	31	37.3	16	19.3	26	31.3
Yes	16	19.3	4	4.8	15	18.1	9	10.8	8	9.6	14	16.9
Total	72	86.7	55	66.3	72	86.7	62	74.7	56	67.5	60	72.3

Note: ¹ Nationally Recognised Training

Other external providers which organisations purchase/pay for training (n = 7):

- Partner with AIM to deliver Diploma in Government for our Emerging Leaders Program
- Private company (non RTO) – other training
- Private contractors
- Training ‘in partnership’ on site delivery
- Universities
- Specialised training
- Professional bodies (non RTO)

Question 21: Who is responsible for approving and overseeing the way in which the RTO’s training is delivered?

	N	%
A higher level corporate committee	7	8.4
Formal corporate Learning and Development committee	14	16.9
Team meetings of RTO/Learning and Development staff	17	20.5
Senior manager in RTO function	33	39.8
Senior manager in Learning and Development function	12	14.5
Total	83	100.0

Appendix 2: Comparison of Survey 1 (2012) findings with the 2003 survey and ERTOA 2011 survey

METHOD

This paper reports on the initial survey findings and provides a comparison of current findings with data from two previous Australian studies of enterprise RTOs.¹ The aim is to examine changes in the profile of enterprise RTOs and their use of VET qualifications within the Australian context over a ten year period. A summary of the comparison studies and their samples are presented in Table 1 and briefly discussed below.

Table 1: Comparison studies and samples

Study	No. Respondents	Response Rate (%)	Name used in Results section
Enterprises' commitment to nationally recognised training for existing workers (Smith et al. 2005)	51	26.2	2003
2011 National profile survey of enterprise RTOs (ERTOA, 2011)	126	52.0	2011
How do qualifications delivered by enterprises contribute to improved skill levels and other benefits for companies, workers and the nation? (Survey 1, current project)	83	35.7	2012

Participants and procedure

The purpose of the phase one quantitative survey was to provide a current profile of enterprise RTOs, including their workforce and use of VET qualifications. Additionally, survey findings were used to establish the 'typicality' of enterprises involved in the project's phase two case study.

An email invitation containing a link to an online survey was sent to the 235 current enterprise RTOs listed on the ERTOA national database in August 2012. Surveys were completed by Training or Human Resource Managers and returned electronically. The initial response rate was low; 59 surveys were returned indicating a 25% response rate. Follow up telephone and/or email contact was made with a number of enterprise RTOs from two industries with the lowest response rate (Government Administration and Defence; Property and Business) in an effort to increase the size and representativeness of the sample. This follow up resulted in an additional 25 responses, providing a total sample of 84 and an overall response rate of 35.7%. One respondent was subsequently dropped as they were identified as representing a non-enterprise RTO.

¹ A survey was conducted in 2003 as part of the "Enterprises' commitment to nationally recognised training for existing workers" study (Smith et al. 2005) and the second survey used for comparison was one conducted by the Enterprise Registered Training Organisation Association in 2011.

The final sample was generally representative of the industry distribution within the target population (see Table 2). Several industries were overrepresented in the sample and included: Finance and Insurance; Construction; Manufacturing; Health and Community; and Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing. Industries underrepresented in the sample were: Electricity, Gas and Water; Government Administration and Defence; Retail; and Wholesale Trade.

Table 2: Population and study sample industry representation according to ANZSIC classifications

	Population		2012 Survey Response	
	No.	%	No.	%
Accommodation, cafes, etc	2	0.9	1	1.2
Agriculture, forestry, fishing	6	2.6	4	4.8
Community services ¹	2	0.9	-	-
Construction	4	1.7	3	3.6
Cultural & Recreational ¹	8	3.5	-	-
Electricity, Gas & Water	11	4.8	2	2.4
Finance & Insurance	9	3.9	4	4.8
Government Admin and Defence	58	25.1	18	21.7
Health and Community	45	19.5	20	24.1
Manufacturing	11	4.8	7	8.4
Mining	10	4.3	4	4.8
Personal and Other ¹	5	2.2	-	-
Property & Business ¹	11	4.8	-	-
Retail	16	6.9	4	4.8
Transport & Storage	25	10.8	10	12.0
Wholesale trade	8	3.5	1	1.2
Education ²	-	-	1	1.2
Communication ²	-	-	2	2.4
Industry not identified	4	0.0	2	2.4
TOTAL	235	100.2	83	100.0

Notes. ¹ ANZSIC Industry categories not included in survey; ² Industry categories included in survey not ANZSIC classification.

Measures

2012 Study

The 2012 quantitative survey collected information about enterprise RTOs, their workforce and use of VET qualifications and was designed to build on survey questions asked in the previous 2003 and 2011 studies. Questions were developed from surveys used in the 2003 and/or 2011 surveys, advice from the project reference group and the prior research experience and enterprise knowledge of the research team. The survey contained 21 questions and consisted of five sections: The Organisation; Industry Area; About the Organisation; Workforce Structure; and Training Activities.

Comparison Studies

2003 Study

Smith, Pickersgill, Smith and Rushbrook (2005) examined Australian enterprises' use of nationally recognised training for existing employees in a large mixed-method study. A mail survey of the 195 enterprise RTOs on the National Training Information Service listing was conducted in November 2003; 51 surveys were returned for a 26.2% response rate.

The 59-item survey instrument focused on enterprises' use of nationally recognised training for existing employees and contained five sections: The organisation and its staff; Use of apprenticeships and traineeships; Training structures and practices; Involvement with nationally recognised training; Experience as an RTO.

2011 Study

An Australian national survey of enterprise RTOs was undertaken in 2011 by the Enterprise RTO Association (ERTOAs) to identify: characteristics of enterprise RTOs; accredited training and assessment activities delivered by enterprise RTOs; and characteristics of the workforce engaged with enterprise RTOs delivery of accredited training and assessment. An online survey of RTOs listed on the training.gov.au database as being an enterprise RTO was conducted in July 2011. Surveys were distributed via email to the contact person of 241 enterprise RTOs; 126 responses were received for a 52% response rate. The quantitative survey instrument contained 19 questions that related to: Workforce size; Training and assessment activities of the enterprise; and RTO status within the enterprise.

ANALYSIS

Descriptive frequency counts and percentages of the data were calculated. Data from the 2003 and 2011 studies were compared with the current 2012 data. The survey instruments used in each study elicited similar information about enterprise RTOs however differences in the specific questions asked and the response formats used impacted the comparisons that were possible.

RESULTS

This section begins with a profile of the most recent 2012 sample of enterprise RTOs. Key differences between the three sample groups are presented next. Specifically, cross tabulations comparing the 2003 data with the 2011 ERTOA data, followed by comparison of the 2003 and 2012 data are presented.

Enterprise RTOs in 2012

A profile of the 2012 sample is shown in Table 3. The head office of nearly all of the 83 enterprises (91.6%) was located in a capital city. Just over half (54.2%) were large multi-site enterprises with ten or more branches, 51.8% had sites in more than one Australian state and 38.6% operated internationally. The workforce size of enterprises varied within the sample; 22.9% of enterprises employed between 2,000 and 4,999 employees, 18.1% had a small workforce of less than 500, while 10.8% employed more than 30,000 employees. Just over half (51.8%) of all enterprises operated continuously, and a further 18.1% operated standard business hours.

Most enterprises (75.9%) had some involvement in the development or review of national

training packages within their industry; 34.9% attended consultation while 25.3% of enterprises had representation on national steering committees. Of the RTOs surveyed, 38.6% indicated that they provided less than 25% of the total training within their enterprise. Only a small proportion of enterprises (16.9%) provided more than 75% of the total training. Staff with responsibility for training provided by the RTO was, most frequently, a senior manager in an RTO function (39.8%), followed by team meetings of both RTO and learning and/or development staff (20.5%).

The survey also asked about the proportion and nature of employment contracts for categories of employees (i.e. full time, part time, casual). The data collected was inadequate for analysis. The project's second survey of enterprise RTOs will be used to collect better data in this area.

Table 3: Profile of enterprise RTOs in 2012

		2012 Sample	
		No.	%
Total Respondents		83	
Head office location	Capital city	76	91.6
	Regional city	5	6.0
	Small town	2	2.4
	Remote area	0	0.0
Company size	Single site	9	10.8
	Multi-site up to 9 branches	25	30.1
	Multi-site 10 or more branches	45	54.2
	Other	4	4.8
Has sites in other states		43	51.8
Has international operations		32	38.6
Total workforce	0 – 500	15	18.1
	500 – 999	5	6.0
	1000 – 1,999	14	16.9
	2000 – 4,999	19	22.9
	5000 – 9,999	13	15.7
	10,000 – 19,999	6	7.2
	20,000 – 29,999	2	2.4
	30,000 -	9	10.8
Hours of operation	Continuous	43	51.8
	Shifts covering at least 12 hours daily	7	8.4
	Standard business hours	15	18.1
	Monday – Sunday	5	6.0
	Other	9	10.8
Involvement in development or review of national Training Packages	No involvement	19	22.9
	On national steering committee	21	25.3
	Commented on drafts	13	15.7

	Attended consultation	29	34.9
Proportion of total training that is accredited training provided by RTO	Unable to answer	3	3.6
	0 – 25%	32	38.6
	26 – 50%	10	12.0
	51 – 75%	23	27.7
	76 – 100%	14	16.9
Responsibility for approving and overseeing training delivery	A higher level corporate committee	7	8.4
	Formal corporate L&D committee	14	16.9
	Team meetings of RTO/L&D staff	17	20.5
	Senior manager in RTO function	33	39.8
	Senior manager in L&D function	12	14.5

Training activities in 2012

Respondents were asked about the training staff within their enterprise who delivered nationally recognised training. On average, 10 senior training staff, 57 dedicated workplace trainers and 341 subject matter experts delivered training within the sampled enterprises.

Respondents were asked to list the training packages their enterprise delivered, and could list up to 10 most that were delivered most frequently. The training packages delivered in 2012 are shown in Table 4. Business Service, Transport and Logistics and Public Safety were the training packages most frequently delivered by organisations, while a further nine training packages were each delivered by only one organisation.

Table 4: Training packages delivered in 2012

Code	Title	No.*	%#
BSB07	Business service	21	25
TLI10	Transport and logistics	18	22
PUA12	Public Safety	15	18
CHC08	Community services	15	18
HLT07	Health	14	17
RII09	Resources and infrastructure	10	12
TAE10	Training and education	7	8
FNS10	Financial services	5	6
SIT12	Tourism, hospitality and events	5	6
AUR12	Automotive industry retail, service and repair	4	5
FDF10	Food processing	4	5
SIR07	Retail services	3	4
PSP12	Public sector	3	4
TAA04	Training and assessment	2	2
UET12	Transmission, distribution and rail sector	2	2
AHC10	Agriculture, horticulture and conservation and land management	2	2

PMC10	Manufactured mineral products	2	2
AVI08	Aviation	2	2
LGA04	Local government	2	2
NWP07	Water industry	2	2
CUE03	Entertainment	2	2
MSL09	Laboratory operations	2	2
UEE	Electrotechnology	2	2
CPC	Construction, Plumbing and services	2	2
MTM	Australian meat industry	2	2
CPP	Property services	2	2
	Information and communication technology	2	2
MEM	Metal and engineering	2	2
PSP	National public services	1	1
CSC12	Correctional services	1	1
ICT10	Integrated telecommunications	1	1
WRW01	Wholesale	1	1
PMA	Chemical, hydrocarbons and refining	1	1
RGR08	Racing industry	1	1
FPI11	Forest and forest products	1	1
MSA	Manufacturing	1	1
TDM	Maritime	1	1

Notes. *Respondents were asked to list the training packages their enterprise delivered and could list up to 10 that the enterprise delivered most frequently. # Does not add to 100 as respondents could provide more than one response.

A little over half (54.2%) of surveyed enterprises frequently delivered two training packages, 19 (22.9%) enterprises delivered three or more packages, while one (1.2%) enterprise frequently delivered 10 training packages.

Comparisons among survey data - Enterprise RTOs in 2003 and 2011

Qualifications awarded

In 2003 respondents rank ordered six qualification levels (Certificate I, Certificate II, Certificate III, Certificate IV, Diploma, Advanced Diploma) according to the frequency with which they were awarded. Enterprises most frequently awarded Certificate II followed by Certificate III qualifications. The qualifications that were least often awarded were Diplomas and Advanced Diplomas.

In 2011 respondents were asked to indicate the average number of qualifications at each level that their enterprise awarded. Certificate II was the most frequently awarded qualification, with an average of 200 qualifications awarded by enterprises, followed by Certificate III (average of 143 qualifications awarded). In 2011 enterprises were least likely to award Certificate I (average of 3 awarded) followed by Advanced Diploma (average of 19 awarded) qualifications.

Commitment to RTO registration

Enterprises' commitment to maintaining their RTO registration remained consistent between 2003 and 2011 (see Table 5). The proportion of enterprises with a short-term commitment of renewing their registration only in the next audit increased from 9.8% in 2003 to 20.8% in 2011.

Table 5: Enterprises' intentions to renew RTO registration in 2003 and 2011

	2003 Sample (N = 51)		2011 Sample ¹ (N=126)	
	No.	%	N	%
^a No	2	3.9	0	0.0
^b Yes, indefinitely	42	82.4	90	75.0
^c Yes, initially only in next audit	5	9.8	25	20.8
^d Unsure	2	3.9	5	4.2
Total	51	100.0	120	95.2

Note. ¹Survey item responses were recoded to enable comparison across samples. ^a2011 survey item response: *The enterprise intends to discontinue its registration as an RTO when its current period of registration ends*; ^b2011 survey item responses: *The enterprise has a strong commitment to accredited training and the long term future of the RTO seems assured and Enterprise senior managers and business units generally agree that the RTO adds value to the enterprises and supports its continued operations*; ^c2011 survey item responses: *Enterprise senior managers and business units generally recognised the value of RTO status, but the concerns around sustainability in terms of issues such as cost, resourcing, return-on-investment and the risks of non-compliance. There is some disagreement about the value of the RTO but there is no immediate threat to its continued operations*; ^d2011 survey item responses: *There is a general feeling among enterprise senior managers and business units that the RTO does not add real value to the enterprise and its continued operations need to be reviewed and justified. Enterprise senior managers and business units regard the RTO as a complex non-core activity and its future is uncertain.*

Provision of training to individuals outside the organisation in 2003 and 2011

Enterprises' provision of training to outside organisations and individuals in 2003 is shown in Table 6, and the number of enterprises who provide training to outside individuals in 2011 is shown in Table 7. The number of enterprises that provided training to outside individuals increased from 2003 to 2011.

Table 6: Enterprises' provision of training to outside organisations and individuals in 2003

	Outside Organisations		Outside Individuals	
	No.	%	No.	%
None	31	60.8	33	64.7
A little	12	23.5	5	9.8
A great deal	6	11.8	4	7.8
Total	49	96.1	42	82.4

Note. Respondents were asked if their enterprise provided nationally recognised training to outside organisations or individuals.

Table 7: Number of enterprises who provided training to outside individuals in 2011

	No.	%
Yes	49	38.9
No	60	47.6
Total	109	86.5

Note. Respondents were asked if their enterprise RTO provided accredited training to persons who were not employees of their organisation during 2010.

Business drivers of RTO registration in 2003 and 2011

The 2003 survey asked respondents to list the three most important reasons their enterprise became an RTO; in 2011 respondents rated the influence of 14 different business drivers on the decision to seek and maintain RTO registration. The same business drivers in 2003 and 2011 were major influences on enterprise RTOs' decision to become an RTO. Specifically, flexibility and control in the delivery of training and assessment was considered a major driver by 55% of respondents in 2003 and 74% in 2011. Additionally, 37% of respondents in 2003 and 83% in 2011 similarly reported as important the ability to develop and deliver training relevant to the needs of the enterprise.

Size of enterprise in 2003, 2011 and 2012

In each study respondents were asked to indicate the total number of employees their enterprise employed (see Table 8). Of those who responded in each survey, comparison of the data suggests a decrease in the number of small enterprise RTOs over time. In 2003 35.5% of surveyed enterprise RTOs employed less than 500 workers which decreased to 18.0% for those surveyed in 2011. The proportion of medium-sized enterprise RTOs who responded in the three surveys appears to have also increased; most notably the proportion of enterprises with 2000 to 4,999 employees was 13.7% in 2003, 14.8% in 2011 and 22.9% in 2012. Simultaneously, the proportion of large enterprise RTOs with greater than 30,000 employees who responded rose from 3.9% in 2003 to 6.6% in 2011 and 10.8% in 2012.

Table 8: Number of employees in 2003, 2011 and 2012

	2003 Sample ¹ (N=51)		2011 Sample ² (N = 126)		2012 Sample ² (N = 83)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
0 – 500	18	35.3	22	18.0	15	18.1
500 – 999	4	7.8	16	13.1	5	6.0
1000 – 1,999	9	17.6	24	19.7	14	16.9
2000 – 4,999	7	13.7	18	14.8	19	22.9
5000 – 9,999	4	7.8	21	17.2	13	15.7
10,000 – 19,999	3	5.9	8	6.6	6	7.2
20,000 – 29,999	0	0.0	5	4.1	2	2.4
30,000 -	2	3.9	8	6.6	9	10.8
TOTAL	47	92.2	122	96.8	83	100.0

Note. ¹Continuous variable of total number of employees recoded to form categories; respondents were asked specifically about the number of employees in Australia. ²Respondents were asked the approximate total workforce of their enterprise and selected one category from: *less than 500; 500 to < 1,000; 1,000 to < 2,000; 2,000 to < 5,000; 5,000 to < 10,000; 10,000 to < 30,000; more than 30,000.*

Organisational Change in 2003 and 2012

In 2003 and 2012 respondents were asked about changes relating to organisation size, technology use and skill needs (see Table 9). In 2003 and 2012 enterprises reported a similar rate of expansion, while the proportion of enterprises that had reduced their operations decreased over the ten year period between studies, from 13.7% in 2003 to 7.2% in 2012. In 2012 enterprises were more likely to have increased their number of permanent employees

(60.2%) than decreased their workforce (12.0%) in comparison to 2003 (47.1% increased and 23.5% decreased number of permanent employees).

Changes in the use of technology appears to have slowed slightly across the ten year period. The proportion of enterprises that experienced a rapid rise in technology use within their industry declined from 27.5% in 2003 to 22.9% in 2012; in contrast, those reporting a steady increase in technology use rose from 58.8% in 2003 to 67.5% in 2012. The increase in technology use was associated with a corresponding increase in the skill needs of industries. Most notably, those reporting a steady increase in industry skill needs rose from 68% to 74.7% over the ten year period. The proportion of enterprises that experienced a rapid increase in skill needs was 22% in 2003 compared with 30.1% in 2012.

Table 9: Rate of organisational and industry change over the previous five years in 2003 and 2012

	2003 Sample (N = 51)		2012 Sample (N = 83)	
	No.	%	No.	%
Size of organisation				
Expanded	32	62.7	55	66.3
Stayed about the same	12	23.5	21	25.3
Reduced operations	7	13.7	6	7.2
Number of permanent employees				
Increased	24	47.1	50	60.2
Stayed about the same	15	29.4	21	25.3
Declined	12	23.5	10	12.0
Industry's use of technology				
Increased rapidly	14	27.5	19	22.9
Increased steadily	30	58.8	56	67.5
No real change	7	13.7	7	8.4
Declined	0	0.0	0	0.0
Industry skill needs				
Increased rapidly	11	22.0	20	24.1
Increased steadily	34	68.0	62	74.7
No real change	5	10.0	0	0.0
Declined	0	0.0	0	0.0
Organisation skill needs				
Increased rapidly	11	22.0	25	30.1
Increased steadily	34	68.0	54	65.1
No real change	5	10.0	3	3.6
Declined	0	0.0	0	0.0

Note. In both surveys, respondents selected one option for each area of organisational and industry change.

Involvement in National Training Package development and review in 2003 and 2012

As can be seen in Table 10, the proportion of enterprises having no involvement in the development and review of national Training Packages in their industry area has decreased slightly over the past 10 years. In particular, the proportion of enterprises with representation on national steering committees has increased from 10% in 2003 to 25.3% in 2012. However fewer ERTOS commented on draft reviews (15.7%) and attended consultations (34.9%) in 2012 than in 2003 (18.0% commented on drafts; 48.0% attended consultation).

Table 10: Enterprise RTOs' level of involvement in development and review of national Training Packages in 2003 and 2012

	2003 Sample ¹ (N = 51)		2012 Sample ² (N = 83)	
	No.	%	No.	%
No involvement	12	24.0	19	22.9
On national steering committee	10	19.6	21	25.3
Commented on drafts	23	45.1	13	15.7
Attended consultation	24	47.1	29	34.9
TOTAL	69		82	98.8

Notes. Respondents were asked about their, or staff in their enterprise, involvement in the development or review of national Training Packages in their industry areas. ¹Respondents could select more than one option; therefore total per cent cannot be calculated. ²Respondents could select only one option.

Industry distribution in 2003 and 2012

There were some differences in the industry distribution of enterprise RTOs in 2003 compared with 2012 (see Table 11). In particular, the proportion of enterprises in government administration and defence who responded rose from 4.0% to 21.7% between 2003 and 2012, as did those from health and community. Fewer enterprise RTOs in the retail and manufacturing industries were represented in the 2012 sample.

Table 11: Enterprise industry distribution in 2003 and 2012

	2003 Sample ¹ (N = 51)		2012 Sample ² (N=83)	
	No.	%	No.	%
Accommodation, cafes, etc	5	10.0	1	1.2
Agriculture, forestry, fishing	3	6.0	4	4.8
Construction	1	2.0	3	3.6
Cultural & Recreational	2	4.0	0	0.0
Electricity, Gas & Water	1	2.0	2	2.4
Finance & Insurance	3	6.0	4	4.8
Government Admin and Defence	2	4.0	18	21.7
Health and Community	6	12.0	20	24.1
Manufacturing	7	14.0	7	8.4
Mining	3	6.0	4	4.8
Personal and Other	2	4.0	0	0.0
Retail	6	12.0	4	4.8
Transport & Storage	6	12.0	10	12.0
Wholesale trade	0	0.0	1	1.2
Education	0	0.0	1	1.2
Communication	3	6.0	2	2.4
Industry not identified	1	2.0	2	2.4
TOTAL	51	100.0	83	100.0

Notes. ¹Respondents stated the industry sector of their organisation; responses were recoded according to ANZSIC codes. ²Respondents selected one of 17ANZSIC coded industries that was the major activity of their company.

Purchasing of training in 2003 and 2012

In 2003 and 2012 respondents were asked whether their enterprise paid for training for their employees. The majority of enterprise RTOs at both time points purchased training from a TAFE (79.6% in 2003; 78.9% in 2012) and an RTO (88.2% in 2003; 88.0% in 2012). In addition, 49.4% of enterprises in 2012 purchased training for their employees from equipment and product suppliers.

Number of training packages delivered in 2003 and 2012

In 2003 respondents were asked to indicate the total number of training packages their enterprise had on its scope of registration; in 2012 respondents listed up to 10 training packages their enterprise delivered most frequently (see Table 12). Similar proportions of enterprises in 2003 (52.9%) and 2012 (54.2%) delivered up to two training packages. While the proportion of enterprises that delivered six or more training packages was higher in 2003 (25.4%) compared with 2012 (3.6%), this is likely due to differences in the survey questions.

Table 12: Number of training packages delivered in 2003 and 2012

	2003 Sample ¹		2012 Sample ²	
	No.	%	No.	%
1-2 Training Packages	27	52.9	45	54.2
3-5 Training Packages	9	17.6	19	22.9
6-9 Training Packages	9	17.6	2	2.4
> 9 Training Packages	4	7.8	1	1.2
TOTAL	49	96.1	82	98.8

Note. ¹ Respondents indicated the number of training packages and non-training package qualifications on their enterprise's scope of registration. ² Respondents listed the training packages their enterprise delivered, up to a maximum of 10.

Summary of results over the 10 year period

- Certificate II and III were the most frequently awarded qualifications in 2003 and 2011; Advanced Diploma level qualifications were infrequently awarded at both time points.
- At least 75% of enterprises intended to renew their RTO registration in 2003 and 2011, which suggests ongoing benefits of RTO registration to both enterprises and employees.
- Enterprise RTOs were more likely in 2011 to provide training to individuals outside the enterprise compared to 2003.
- Flexibility and control in training and assessment delivery and the ability to develop and deliver enterprise-relevant training were key business drivers of enterprise RTO registration in both 2003 and 2011.
- With regards to organisational change over the previous five years, in 2012 enterprises were more likely to have experienced increases in total workforce, technology use and skill needs of both the industry and enterprise compared to 2003.
- The proportion of enterprise RTOs involved in the development and review of national training packages increased slightly over time; however the nature of involvement deepened over the 10 year period. Enterprises were more likely to have representation on national steering committees and less likely to attend consultations in 2012 compared to 2003.
- More than three quarters of sampled enterprise RTOs purchased training from either a TAFE or RTO in 2003 and 2012. Nearly half of enterprise RTOs in 2012 additionally purchased training from suppliers.

Appendix 3a: TV Co case study

Background

Visit 1 January 2013

TV Company RTO was a separate business arm of TV Co, a Pay TV company. TV Co had about 2500 employees and was at the time engaged in a takeover of Televisual, another major Pay TV company with 600,000 customers, in a different State. TV Co call centre was based in a capital city and over half of TV Co's employees worked there. The TV Co call centre was purpose-built and was a light, bright and attractive environment. There were separate teams for the main functions, for example: sales, retention (to try to retain customers who wanted to disconnect), 'honeymoon' (to check whether newer customers were happy), 'change/moving home' and technical support. The company brought out many new products meaning that the representatives had to attend upselling and memorise the new information; as a backstop they needed to know how to access relevant knowledge on the products. As with all call centre work the work was high pressure, time sensitive and closely monitored. Team leaders listened into a proportion of calls to check quality and time spent away from the phones was not encouraged although there were short daily briefing meetings daily. The company as a whole operated 24/7, and the call centre operated seven days a week, 7.00 am-11.00pm.

Labour turnover at TV Co call centre at the time of Visit 1 was around 35%, having fallen slightly in recent times. This was considered normal for the industry. Some departments had higher turnover than others. Call centre workers could earn high salaries as there were generous incentives. They also received free TV Co TV. At least 200 staff began at the call centre every year, with every three years a peak of up to 400 new workers. Nearly all call centre staff were full-time and many had had previous experience at other call centres.

Visit 2 November 2014

At the time of Visit 2, Televisual had been fully integrated with TV Co and they operated as one company. When customers rang TV Co, they could be directed to either of the call centres. However there was some specialisation, although all employees were given training in all matters as a back-up. Inbound sales was based in the original location while outbound sales was based in the new site. The new site had undergone a large recruitment drive and had hired around 220 people in the latter part of 2014. This took the staffing ratio to around 70% at the new site and around 30% in the southern site. The other major change in the previous 18 months was that a new broadband product was being launched by the company.

Research method

The Visit 1 interviews took place face-to-face over one day in January 2013. The Visit 2 interview was carried out by phone in November 2014. The following interviews took place:

TV Co interviewees (pseudonyms)

Name	Job roles
Visit 1: TV Co main office	
Melissa and Gloria	L&D Manager/CEO of the RTO and Quality and compliance leader
Greg	HR Manager of Melbourne and manager of generalist HR team
Bruce and Peter	L& D consultants (trainers)
Matthew	National Manager-Retention
Sophie, Jane	Call centre workers (completed)
John, Nikos & Sarah	Call centre workers (current learners)
Visit 2: Queensland office	
Jennifer	Acting Quality and Compliance Manager

Interviews lasted between 32 and 68 minutes with an average of 45 minutes. They were taped, with permission, and transcribed. Jane and Sophie also completed an employee survey for workers who had completed qualifications. A facilitator guide and a schedule for the six weeks' 'induction training' were provided as background information.

Nature of the RTO including why did they set up the RTO? Structure?

The RTO had been established in 2008 following other models of delivery of nationally-recognised training using partnering RTOs. It only became fully active in early 2011- two years before the visit. The RTO had a separate ABN from the company as a whole because of requirements of the AQTF. Gloria's position was tied to and funded by the RTO while other RTO staff had broader L&D roles. There were 5 trainers at the call centre. The amount of funding received by the RTO was shrinking due to successive government decisions at national and state level. Most of the employees (about 75%) were not eligible for employment incentives as they had higher level qualifications or were on visas. Similarly the government funding for the training was shrinking. However the company was not overly concerned: as the HR manager said 'You've just got to get more and more clever and crafty at being able to actually put a submission together.'

In the 2011 ERTOA survey, the company identified, from provided choices, the following 'business drivers' for being an enterprise RTO;

Major: Accessing external funding; able to deliver customised and relevant training; flexibility and control over training delivery; positive factor in recruitment and retention; boost to employee morale and productivity; assistance in recruiting and retaining high quality L&D staff.

Minor: Too expensive to purchase training from an external RTO; public image;

Not a factor: Licensing requirement; no external RTO in the field; using RTO registration for other training; improving the quality of all training; integration of training into business processes; training records.

The AQTF-related training records and compliance matters were handled by an external

company specialising in RTO administration. This was considered appropriate because of the high volume of learners.

The RTO staff considered that ‘constantly selling the value of the RTO’ was a constant challenge for them. It was described as a ‘PR exercise’. However the senior line manager felt that the RTO did not communicate the value of the RTO sufficiently to other managers.

Visit 2

At the time of Visit 2, the future of the RTO was being evaluated. An evaluation was an annual event but there was a sense that it was a more radical re-evaluation. The other company had not been an RTO and while some staff undertook a Certificate III through an external private provider, it did not have the RTO tradition. Trainers found that they needed to focus on assessment more and had to document everything much more carefully. Jennifer said ‘It was a bit of a learning curve for our staff [in Queensland]... The paperwork side of things was a huge leap for us.’ The merger with TV Co meant that existing staff at Televisual who had not for whatever reason undertaken the Certificate III with the external provider, had another chance to undertake it.

What qualifications are delivered? To whom and why? Use of other RTOs?

The RTO only offered Certificate III in Customer Contact, which was provided for all new call centre representatives, and as mentioned above, for existing staff at the new site. Certificate IV had been offered previously but once all relevant employees had been put through the program the demand was not high enough to sustain the qualification. For the Certificate III, on the other hand, demand was very high. An intake began every three months. All new customer service representatives undertook the training regardless of whether they already had call centre experience or even whether they had the qualification already; it was undertaken ‘regardless of whether anybody’s eligible for funding’, as Melissa put it. It was seen as being necessary to the business; every call centre representative needed to know how to do their job, and this was the way to do it. There did not appear to be any LLN issues; as Jennifer pointed out in Visit 2, the nature of call centre work meant that people were only recruited if they had appropriate LLN and computer literacy skills. She mentioned that when she had been recruited ‘many, many years ago’, she had been required to undertake a typing test

The company had successfully applied for National Workforce Development Funding (as an employer) in conjunction with five external RTOs. The TV Co RTO was not part of this formal application except as deliverer of the Certificate III. The NWDF application was primarily based around training the Queensland staff and included training and assessment qualifications and a range of business, IT and technical qualifications.

Nature of training delivery and assessment, and use of feedback

The discussion that follows is based on information gained at both visits.

Training delivery

The qualification was normally completed within nine to 12 months. The initial training, which was known as ‘induction training’ lasted for six weeks full-time and covered five

units of competency. There was a four-week off the job generic training program covering the following units of competency:

- Use multiple information systems
- Develop product knowledge
- Work effectively with others
- Apply knowledge of the WHS legislation
- Develop product and service knowledge for customer contact

This was reportedly extremely intensive, and the learners generally felt it prepared them well for working on the floor. The trainers mentioned that since TV Co became an RTO this initial training had become much more detailed. After this, the trainees then went onto the floor to the departments for which they had been recruited. This was for two weeks' further training in the 'live environment'. For this period, they were surrounded by support staff-team leaders, 'floor walkers' who were assigned two or three to each group of 12 new staff, and also the training staff periodically visited them.

After their first period of real-call practice they returned to the training room for further sessions of training specific to their departments, and for updates alongside other staff. An 'achievement framework' workshop (which seemed to have been renamed a 'performance framework' workshop in between Visits 1 and 2) was completed after nine months, which was linked to the performance management system. This included the fourth and final 'cluster' of units of competency - in fact, just one, 'utilise a knowledge management system', and also detailed the training received and progress against the units of competency. This was possible because the workers' KPIs were housed in the TV Co knowledge management system, as were other training opportunities.

For the 'induction' training, detailed facilitator manuals were available for the trainers with scripts for them to use. A timetable for the entire six weeks was mapped out, including the final two weeks which were mainly in the 'live environment' but also included revision periods. It was a little unclear about where the second and third clusters of units ('cross-selling' (five units) and 'complaints' (one unit)) were delivered. Jennifer said 'We start pretty much doing the cross-selling and complaints clusters as well [during the induction]'; yet the units were not listed on the induction training schedule.

During Visit 2 a question was asked about details of the delivery mode of a particular unit of competency, to try to get a feel for how the face to face training took place. Jennifer selected the 'Use multiple information systems' unit, and referred to training on the customer database or 'Core' and the 'Central knowhow' database which was a repository of information about TV Co and its system, searchable in a comparable manner to Google.

So it would be delivered in the classroom environment, so they need to be able to use multiple computer systems. They have their own computers, and typically, (I'll just go as if I was training the process). Number one, if it's a new system, I'd get them to read about the system in Central Knowhow so that should they need information they know where to go to find it. So before we even look at it, just have a view. If it's you know let's say about Core, it'll be a definition of what Core is, what you use it for, a bit of other information. Then I would open Core and have Central Knowhow beside me on my screen as well. So I would show them how to use Central Knowhow and Core together. So again it gives them

that hook back to if I need to see it, I know that I can go there and get that information in Central Knowhow.

So I kind of try to use it constantly. I would then demonstrate the process or the system, and then have them practice the system as well, and whilst they're doing that you know there'd be observations to assess that they actually can use the system.

There's a number of questions that we'd ask about the system, or about a process, to gauge their understanding as well, so from an assessment point view.

Apart from the upfront training and occasional subsequent workshops, which generally lasted for two to four hours, it was seen by everyone that the training was embedded in normal work and supervision processes. As Melissa put it

We do all this in the background. For learners - although they get all the information up front and they know where they sit and what units they're doing through their training plans and all the rest of it, they're really - we keep it invisible. It's just part of what they have to do as a job requirement. They just happen to be doing the Cert III in the background.

The Manager-Retention also referred to it 'chugging along in the background'. While this seemed to the management and training staff to be desirable, it seemed to create some confusion among the learners. They reported enjoying the off-the-job training sessions very much indeed, but did not seem clear about the subsequent training. The continuing learners did not know how far they were through their qualification. The continuing learners were not even clear that the induction training was part of the qualification, one saying 'To be honest I haven't done a bit of course work'. Sarah, a continuing learner, said

... at the moment we're not really 100 per cent too sure of like where the structure - like where it's going. Like, yes, we did it within the six weeks but we have no knowledge of if there's going to be any coming up soon or what we can expect to learn.

Nikos, another continuing learner, said

I have no idea what the course is. Like that's how much I know it - like how much information I've received on it. I've no idea what it's called... have no idea who I have to ask if I have any questions, who I need to speak to.

The completed learners seemed a little clearer about the training (although one could not remember if she had actually got a certificate) but there was a sense that they had not really done much. One said

I just felt like nothing was really happening with the Certificate III. It kind of just all came up all of a sudden, and I got my certificate. But I felt like I didn't really do anything to earn it. Because I was just doing my job, and they don't really mention it - it's kind of just in the background - that you'll get your certificate. But you don't - I felt as if it just happened all of a sudden. I got my certificate.

By the time of Visit 2 it had become an established procedure that 'contact visits' were carried out every three months. However only a 15-minute minimum was required; nevertheless, Jennifer said this was quite burdensome - 'it's kind of crazy manic with these

visits' especially if a big intake of workers had occurred. For example in Queensland at the time of Visit 2, there were 150 visits required every three months, meaning that one trainer was undertaking these duties for most of his or her time.

Assessment

During the six-week 'induction' training, the following methods of assessing learners were used, according to Jennifer, in reference to the 'Use multiple information systems' unit of competence:

So typically I would just go to the class, if I wanted to find out this information where would I go, what system would I use, how would I - you know if I wanted to change the customer's service, which tab would I go to first? The other way would be written questioning in their toolkit, so it could be you know you've been on three weeks' leave, you've just come back, which system would you go to, to get the most up to date relevant information about any changes that have occurred whilst you've been away.

Then we'd also observe them in the classroom you know using the systems as well as in their live environment time as well. So whilst they're actually within a training bubble, but a live environment², talking to customers, we'd observe them there as well. So kind of you know watch me, let's do it together, then I'll watch you, and then you know assess them multiple times as well.

So for each of the class we have their assessment workbooks/toolkit. So it's just a varying number of pages of questions or observations that we would do for that particular cluster. So it could be - if it's in induction, we would watch them in sales, it might be to sign up a new customer. So we'd observe and mark that yes they've actually done that. We also have third party reviews in there as well, so there's - so in the case of say a cross-selling or complaints, where they have finished induction and been out on the floor now with their teams for a number of months, we'd round back to the team manager just to get their observations on how they're doing. Are they ready to complete the cross-selling cluster? Have they achieved you know quality calls, have we observed them do specific criteria that we need to within that toolkit? Then we'd sign it all off and mark them as competent and then that toolkit gets saved in their folder.

Jennifer mentioned that she had never had a learner who did not pass. She described a case where a learner had experienced panic during assessments and had written incorrect answers in her workbook. But her performance in class had made it clear that she knew the answers, and therefore with some questioning she was able to correct her answers. As Jennifer said,

It's fairly simple the way that our assessment are built; they really cover the main things that they need to be able to effectively do their day to day jobs.

After the learners went into the call centre as normal workers, and before they returned for their final workshop, assessment became more or less invisible. The trainers received feedback from supervisors including on the job observations and third party evaluation and cross-selling and complaints; and also the trainers listened to phone calls that had been

² The 'live environment' was most likely on the call centre floor; but, also, sometimes calls were routed through to the training room. Learners were introduced gradually to the live environment starting with small periods in Week 2.

deemed to 'exceed a quality benchmark' – presumably meaning they had errors above the permitted benchmark. There did not seem to be agreement about the on-the-job assessment processes. The training staff referred to workbook-based assessment but the continuing learners did not seem to recall this. The completed learners referred only to assessment via paper tests and role-plays, and being monitored on a live call. Also, There seemed to be some confusion among the RTO staff and management about how far the on-the-job coaching and monitoring and feedback provided by team leaders 'counted' for the Certificate III. One of the trainers said

But there's no real direct link between quality monitoring in regards to their results, (relating to the RTO) as such, it's more of a business requirement.

However, it was certainly the case that further training was provided for people whose performance was not up to the required standard. The trainers mentioned one learner who had been provided with two days additional one-to-one training to achieve competence.

RPL available, but was never taken up, as learners were required to undertake the training regardless. This was important, according to Jennifer, so that 'everyone gets the same training so that we have that consistency of process and policy and voice across the board'. One of the learners at the southern site mentioned that he appreciated the chance to be RPL'd even though his application was unsuccessful.

Validation and moderation processes were in place, albeit seemingly not very rigorous. This was perhaps because the facilitator manual did a lot of the work for them. The assessment tasks were, however, validated internally from time to time, in a group with a moderator. Also, the materials were reportedly sent to an external contact who worked in an RTO. For moderation, many of the items had 'right' or 'wrong' answers, which were provided to the trainers, so that when the training team compared outcomes they were consistent.

Graduations or other recognition

No formal graduation ceremonies were held, mainly because learners could finish at varying times and because it was so difficult to pull numbers of works off the phones at the same time. The learners said they would have appreciated an event to mark the end of the program. There was a small celebration at the end of every six-week induction course, at the southern site, but nothing at the end of the Certificate. One said

Even yeah, just something small. Nothing big. Nothing over the top and crazy. Sandwiches, or whatever really.

There was clearly something of a feeling of guilt about this lack. The national HR manager mentioned that in his previous companies, graduation ceremonies had occurred. Jennifer said:

Well I think you know these people have done something for so long, you know it's really a big achievement.... I have known one of the managers to do a bit of a 'Hey everyone, you know such and such has just completed her Cert III, yay.' So there's that, but I really think it would be nice to have that acknowledgment across the board, or even if we sent out an email from our department, you know send a congratulations to the following people who all completed their Cert III this month.

So it might not be a 'get off the phone and come and get your certificate' thing, but there's that acknowledgment somehow that you know they've climbed their mountain and you know they've popped the flag in the ground, they had that achievement.

Visit 2

As Televisual, the new site, had not had an RTO, the second visit provided the opportunity to compare training in a non-ERTO with an ERTO³. Jennifer explained that the in-house trainers had not been used to assessing at RTOs standards and had to amend their delivery and assessment methods to allow a much large emphasis on assessment during the training time. For example, formal observations of a group of 15 took a large amount of time:

Now instead of just walking around the room and observing it's now a documented process where you sit beside them and ...watch them and give them feedback. (Jennifer)

This meant that delivery time had to be carefully managed, and also tended to reduce time that could previously be given to people who needed extra assistance:

But you know sometimes that person that's struggling, you felt like you needed to give them a little more time, rather than someone that's blitzing through (Jennifer)

Transferability of learning

This topic was raised only in Visit 2. Jennifer believed that the learning was not transferable to other companies, as the systems were so specific. In terms of transfer to the workplace this was achieved through the methods of training as the workers were scaffolded into working full-time on calls and monitored afterwards. It was mentioned that the team managers were briefed on the employees' performance during induction so that the managers could be aware of any skill development needs. At the six-week mark after transfer into the call centre, the workers were surveyed about the efficacy of the training to do the job, and asked if they were getting support from their manager, their mentors, and from other people. At the completion of the Cert III, learners were issued with the 'employee survey' and their managers with the 'employer survey'.

Because of the nature of call-centre work, the RTO could also go into the statistics of learners from a particular cohort so in theory the performance of a particular trainer could be evaluated in that way. Sometimes managers gave unsolicited feedback, for example

A manager that - I know recently, from retention [a section] - who sent some stats through for their performers and said 'awesome group, these are their stats, they're doing really well.'

While the training curriculum was managed by the training department – which incorporated the RTO - managers did have some input into the curriculum. Any major changes had to be signed off, although this was generally at a department head level rather than team manager level.

Benefits and challenges for workers

There was no doubt that workers approved of the training. Every person interviewed

³ Of course, the training in the two companies could not necessarily be assumed to be otherwise comparable.

referred not only to the benefits for the workers of having a transferable qualification and skills, but also to the enjoyment experienced by the workers. The workers themselves agreed. Despite some concern about whether they had 'earned' the qualification, all of the learners expressed strong support for the chance of being able to gain a qualification free of charge within working time. Several mentioned the advantages of having the qualification on their resumes. As one said, 'If you've got to be there doing the job anyway, why not get yourself a qualification while you're at it?'

It was seen by all parties as a major benefit that workers were trained by people who had themselves worked in the role of customer service representative (and were required to undertake two days on the phones every three months) and were therefore familiar with the organisation and what would happen in the real working environment. 'Subject matter experts' worked alongside one of the trainers for the entire six week induction period, enabling an alternative viewpoint to be provided and additional scenarios. One worker referred several times to feeling 'refreshed' from attending the follow-up training sessions. The workers referred approvingly to the way in which trainers remained accessible afterwards, since they were in the same building:

Everyone is personable, you know. They don't treat you like an idiot, they speak to you like a person, you've got a question you can ask. Again I had a question, I needed to speak to Peter one of the facilitators because it was just a general question and I seen (sic) him outside of work on his lunch break and asked - had a chat to him and he was happy to explain it to me and that was on his lunch break, you know what I mean?

Workers also mentioned the comfort of being able to email the trainers with a question at any time during and after the training.

The trainers talked about the satisfaction for them, and the advantage for the workers, of being able to pass on advice and strategies that earned large bonuses for the workers. The workers earned a great deal more money than the trainers because of these incentives.

The periods of practice were highly regarded by the learners and they felt that at the conclusion of the qualification they were fully competent. For example, one said

There's a big difference between being on the phones and actually speaking to live customers than hanging out with the people you work with and doing a role-play.

However when asked what might be different had they attended an external RTO they were readily able to identify benefits such as mixing with other people, having a break from the workplace, and bringing back ideas to TV Co. There was extensive experience, among the learners interviewed, of studying in a range of modes and at different levels, including previous work-based qualifications.

Currently there were no onward qualification-based career paths available through TV Co. Workers mentioned that they would appreciate this. The NWDF initiative seemed likely to be able to provide a greater range of qualifications. The HR Manager provided a case study of a career path for one worker who benefited from a time when the Certificate IV was also offered.

We had an employee join us that had previously worked for KFC. They joined us back in 2002. They started obviously on the phones ... They worked their way through a number of different roles in that sense, from a phone facing perspective. They then moved into their

Workforce Planning area. They did their Cert III and Cert IV programs here through us. They've gone on to become a manager in our Workforce Planning Department, in that sense. Prior to that, that employee had never had a qualification externally.

So obviously everything was on the job, and then supplemented with obviously doing these programs. There's someone that's a very talented individual. They've been - they've done extremely well. They've been here over 10 years, in that sense, and do a great job. That's probably the one example that really does come to mind in terms of that. There's a number of different ones of employees that have obviously gone on to become team leaders and call centre managers as well. I think in that sense, I think we've had at least another one that's gone on to become a call centre manager.

Benefits and challenges for organisation and lessons learned

The general consensus among managers and trainers was that the training for new staff would need to be done anyway, and that the Certificate III provided a structured way of making that happen. The AQTF required precision in record-keeping and in training materials that was welcomed. The amount of time spent on compliance activities was regretted but not railed against. Melissa said

'Don't fight the system' is probably the best advice that I could give to an enterprise RTO... at the end of the day it's a system that's legislated... Design your processes around the ASQA requirements, and then make your business model fit that.

The continuous improvement processes required by the AQTF were also helpful as they forced the RTO to use feedback. Evaluation in the RTO could include direct feedback from the workplace, 'rather than just filling in happy sheets' as Melissa put it.

That was the other benefit of being our own RTO as well that the evaluation, rather than just filling in happy sheets, which is all that we would get from a private provider working with us, we have a full evaluation framework in place where not only do we do the happy sheet type evaluation process we also look at the business results once the training hits the floor over a four month period.

While these results were readily available, in the nature of call centres, the Retention Manager puzzled that there was no clear way to show the effects of the qualification as opposed to the training itself.

There were clear advantages in having control over the training provided. As Gloria put it

It's really about having control. Having control over how we choose to structure the program, how we choose to design the assessment tool kits, et cetera.

There was also an advantage in being able to plan training well ahead to take account of future strategic developments in the business.

The managers and trainers all mentioned the fact the TV Co would be seen as an employer of choice because of offering the qualification. In fact, though, the workers interviewed had not been aware of the qualification before joining the organisation although they did view it as a benefit. The retention manager felt that the 'perk' could be marketed better, perhaps packaged together with the other benefits such as free subscriptions to TV Co.

The workers were also asked about their perceptions of the benefits for TV Co. The

continuing learners mentioned that they thought the company might get financial incentives, that there might be a licensing or regulatory requirement for staff to have qualifications, and more generally:

Female: *Because it does better...*

Male: *...yeah, it does better you.*

Female: *...the staff members.*

The completed learners talked about making TV Co look ‘more appealing’, providing the customers with good service, providing staff with opportunities, and not losing staff to full-time study as the qualification could be gained while working.

One advantage of being an enterprise RTO (compared with institutional RTOs) emerged during interviews with the trainers and RTO staff. This was that information was relatively freely shared among enterprise RTOs because they were operating in different industry sectors and not competing for industry business. As Melissa said,

What I found was in the private RTO sector of course it was all very secret. You didn't want to share your materials. But when you're an Enterprise based RTO you've got nothing to hide. It's not like we're competing with anybody. Our IP's not as precious as what it probably was if we were still involved in the private RTO sector. Yeah so we do play with everybody.

The two trainers mentioned that they were about to undertake visits to two airlines to look at the way their sales call centre training was done.

External influences and developments over the period of the research

Funding changes had created some challenges, especially as two jurisdictions were involved. Most of the learners were ‘new hires’ and therefore could still attract commencement and completion funding. Commonwealth incentives at the time of Visit 2. However State funding for training was unpredictable. For example, in one State, the Certificate III had only recently been added to the ‘Cert III guarantee’ list for a short time and due to staffing changes the RTO didn’t apply for the funding and missed out. In the southern state, the funding was still available at the time of Visit 2. In total only about 30% of workers received any form of funding. As Jennifer said this, could affect the viability of the RTO:

So, 70 per cent you know, we're putting through ourselves, so we have to pay those additional fees incurred to have them complete the training. Then once you take in the admin required from an RTO perspective, obviously they're [the company] balancing, they're looking through journals, and time, and ... doing the maths to work out ... as part of the RTO review, monetary wise. It's the value of the certificate, do the people doing it hold it true (sic)? Like do they value what they're receiving? Do they value that certificate, do you know other companies value that certificate? So it's kind of like a full 360 degrees they'll be doing at the moment.

Funding also affected individuals as well as the company. Jennifer mentioned that a few employees had refused to undertake the Certificate II. They were still required to undertake the training and assessment but they were not formally enrolled. Jennifer referred to one worker who said that it was ‘beneath her’ to get a Certificate for something she had been doing in the industry for fifteen years, but others specially said they did not want to use up

their entitlement to Certificate III funding. This had accelerated since mid-2014 with the advent of the ‘Certificate III guarantee’ .

At the time of the second visit the RTO was concerned about the work associated with the unique student identifier. However the concern was tempered by the fact that TV Co worked with a firm called RTO Management Systems which undertook some of the administrative work associated with managing students. As she put it ‘they do a lot of that background admin stuff not the foreground admin stuff.’

Jennifer pointed out that the major influence on the RTO was actually TV Co itself. For example the new broadband product created a need to train everyone in the product.

As a result of the internal review of the RTO, the company was placing more emphasis on receiving feedback from employees about the value of the qualification. Jennifer had instituted a survey of current and past trainees specifically on whether the availability of the qualification had affected their application to work at TV Co, and their attitude towards it. She found that ‘most people weren’t aware that we actually offered it as part of our induction [training] but they were ... pleasantly surprised and happy when they did receive it.’ This information from employees was expected to be useful in advertising for staff or at career expos.

Between visits 1 and 2 it seemed that more emphasis was placed on informing the workers about the certificate qualification. At the induction, on the first day the Certificate III was explained as well as the TV Co RTO operations. The workers were told that ‘it’s not going to cost them anything’. However, Jennifer acknowledged that they needed to keep people better informed in the period between the ‘induction’ training and the ‘performance workshop’ towards the end of the qualification, where the ‘performance’ cluster of units was completed.

Identified implications for the project of the findings of this case study

- The qualification, by all accounts, is extremely appropriate for the job;
- ERTOS are much more easily able to apply the full Kirkpatrick evaluation model because they have access to business data;
- The name ‘induction training’ is inappropriate for in-depth up-front skills training and creates a false impression;
- The ‘embedded and ‘invisible’ model seems to have drawbacks e.g. some workers feel they are not really being trained; and don’t actually know where they are in their qualification;
- The RTO needs to communicate its worth not just to top management but also to other senior managers;
- The progressive loss of funding is seen as a nuisance but is dealt with;
- Graduations or other acknowledgements should take place when the qualification is finished (not just at the conclusion of an initial off-the-job period);
- Workers value the qualification and are grateful that it is free and within work time. They do not generally mind repeating training they have done elsewhere;
- Information exchange among enterprise RTOs appears to be relatively free and friendly.

Appendix 3b: Fire Co case study

Introduction

The Fire Co was established in September 1997 as a successor to various iterations of bush fire brigades that had been operating for more than a century. As well as combating bushfires, the service also provided regular firefighting services in many rural areas. Somebody trained to do the latter was known as a ‘village firefighter’. Larger regional towns also had ‘retained’ firefighters (i.e. from the Fire Brigade, now known as Fire and Rescue).

In 2001 the 114 rural fire districts were consolidated into 52 districts and at the time of the case study, the Service comprised over 2,000 volunteer rural fire brigades across these districts. At the time of the visits, the Fire Co had a total membership of approximately 71,000 volunteers, of which approximately 52,000 were active members. A new database had recently been installed with classifications to identify active from non-active members. Brigades were required to update their registers and the organisation expected that it would take a couple of years before active and non-active member numbers were accurate. In addition, salaried staff were employed to manage the day to day operations of the Service at Headquarters, regional offices and district fire control centres. Paid training officers had a ‘caseload’ of around 50 brigades.

Firefighting had evolved and become more technical over the years. Communications had improved and so, it was stated, firefighters needed to learn not just ‘on the ground’ skills but also an appreciation of how the ‘Command Control Communications’ worked. It was also noted that more people wanted to join the brigades after heavy bushfire seasons like 2012-13 yet it could be argued that the real difference to bushfire outcomes would be made at central level rather than on the ground. Social media were also becoming really important in firefighting.

At the time of the second visit, no major organisational changes had taken place; however, some job role changes had occurred. The Learning and Development/RTO Manager had been promoted to the Group Manager of Corporate Governance, Knowledge, Learning and Research and a new Manager Learning and Development/Executive Officer RTO had been appointed.

Research method

The interviews took place during site visits in a regional town (RT) in March 2013 and at the Head Office (HO) in a capital city in April 2013. Participant interviews took between 29 and 55 minutes, with an average of 42 minutes. Participants were interviewed individually, with the exception of two trainers/volunteers who were interviewed together. The interviews were taped and later transcribed verbatim with the permission of the participants. Interviewees are shown in the table below.

The follow up visit interviews were conducted at the Head Office in December, 2014. Three supervisors/managers were interviewed together. Interviewees are shown in the second table.

Table 1: Visit 1 interviewees

Participant	Job role	Location
1	Learning & Development/RTO Manager	HO
2	Senior Manager	HO
3	Regional Manager	RT
4	Learning & Development Officer	RT
5	Trainer and Rural Fire Service Association which represents volunteers and staff	HO
6	Trainers and Volunteers	RT
7	Employee and Volunteer	HO

Table 2: Visit 2 interviewees

Participant	Job role
1	Supervisor Education and Instructional Design
2	Manager Learning & Development
3	Supervisor Quality and Documentation

Nature of the RTO including why did they set up the RTO? Structure?

The Fire Co became an RTO approximately 10 years previously because being able to provide nationally recognised qualifications to volunteers was seen as value adding for the volunteers. Being an RTO was also viewed as a good risk management approach that ultimately protected the organisation.

[It's] partly a risk management approach ... because all [the training] is nationally validated. If there was a worst case scenario and someone was killed in the fire ground ... the question would be 'were they doing what they were meant to do?' the second question [would be] 'were they trained to do it?' By using nationally endorsed training that actually benchmarks us nationally [we can be confident that] yes they were trained and they were trained to national standards ... it helps support the organisation in that sense. (Learning & Development/ RTO Manager)

The Learning and Development/RTO Manager had been with the organisation for just over four and a half years. He considered that the Fire Co RTO was quite unique.

We're out of the mould ... it takes time for ... auditors ... assessors ... to actually get their head around [that] no we're not a training organisation but we're an RTO ... training is not our core business [but] it's essential to our core business. (Learning & Development/ RTO Manager)

The RTO was located within the Directorate of Membership and Strategic Services of the Fire Co, in the Head Office. Within the RTO there were three streams: compliance, instructional design and development, and training administration. The RTO was responsible for developing the training materials, setting the training policies and guidelines as well as standardising the training processes and procedures.

The Fire Co was divided into four regions, each consisting of a number of fire districts. Each region had a Learning and Development Manager and each district a paid Learning and Development Officer. The regional town office was the head office for the South region and had 20,000 volunteers. It was stated by the South Region's regional manager that around 11-12,000 of these were active members. There were eleven separate zones each with a training structure. It was stated that it took eleven hours to drive from one side of the region to the other.

The regional L&D managers co-ordinated training across their regions, which were very large geographically. At the brigade level there was a training officer, usually a volunteer, who coordinated the training and reported back to the Learning and Development Officer and so on. Training typically took place twice a month in the evenings with perhaps another full day a month. Both the L&D officers and the trainers at brigade level held the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. At the time of the visit people were upgrading from the TAA to the TAE. Training instructors (Rural Fire Instructors levels 1 and 2) had long been part of the scene in the organisation but their role was now formalised in the TAE qualification.

The RTO was said to be viewed positively in the organisation and suited the training structure of the organisation.

A lot of volunteers are out in local communities and in the country ... [if we were not] an RTO and not be able to provide that training locally, [it] would be far more difficult for us to maintain that level of participation ... we can deliver courses at brigade level that are then accredited through the districts and up through the training process ... if there are changes then we can filter that through the organisation fairly effectively as well because we have a network of specific people that are specifically identified to deliver learning and development or training within the organisation. It's a matter of getting to them and then they filter down to the volunteers. (Senior Manager)

The training offered to volunteers by the ERTTO was from the Public Safety Training Package and between the two visits, the training package had been updated from PUA00 to PUA12. The training package update had had implications for the ERTTO, particularly in terms of the assessment. Following a previous audit, the RTO had been informed that when the next training package update occurred, there was a need to update assessment criteria so that performance was mapped to three aspects of the assessment, rather than one aspect as they had been doing. This had involved a lot of administration work in rewriting the assessment tools and the ERTTO had to employ extra staff to assist in completing this task. While most agreed that these changes meant that the assessment was more precise, there was also some frustration about the time, effort and overhead costs that could have been spent on improving the training they provided, such as creating training videos. Between the two visits, the ERTTO had also expanded its scope to include a Diploma in Fire Fighting Management.

In the 2011 ERTTOA survey, the organisation identified, from provided choices, the following 'business drivers' for being an enterprise RTO:

Major: no external RTO in the field; flexibility and control over training delivery; able to deliver customised and relevant training; using RTO registration all training; public image; positive factor in recruitment and retention; boost to employee morale and productivity; assistance in recruiting and retaining high quality L&D staff; improves the quality of all training; better integration of training into business processes;

Minor: too expensive to purchase training from and external RTO; licencing requirement;

Not a factor: Access to external funding; training records.

What qualifications are delivered? To whom and why? Use of other RTOs?

The primary function of the Fire Co RTO was to train volunteer firefighters based on need.

It's just needs based...it's training for the skills they need...at the basic level or then roles they want to perform... [for example] I want to be the driver so I'll go and do a driving course. (Learning & Development/ RTO Manager)

Most of the training offered to the volunteers was from the Public Safety Training Package PUA12. Volunteer firefighters did not start off by enrolling directly into a Certificate II or III in firefighting, rather they undertook training courses, such as Bush Firefighting. These courses had been running for a long time within the service and had well-developed training materials. For example, the Bush Firefighter Training Manual (2003) was over 400 pages long, and included twelve chapters, each with content, photographs, activities, and self-check questions. These courses were mapped to the Training Package.

All new volunteers were put through 'basic training', but there were still some longstanding volunteers that had not done it as they had brought with them skills from their own experiences living on farms etc., according to the Region's regional manager. Generally, though, people remained 'probationary' until they had finished the basic course and then became active members once that was completed. They could then move onto Advanced Firefighter (AF) and further onto 'Group Officer' training so that they could command a number of units in the field.

After completing a certain number of training components, firefighters would qualify for the appropriate Certificate. One volunteer explained this, but also noted that she had not received formal certification:

[The] Cert II is made up of the units you hold. It's not an additional qualification ... it's because I've done those courses that I fall under being a Cert II firefighter. If I had other qualifications I'd be a Cert III firefighter, but I've never received an actual certificate or anything saying I'm a Cert II firefighter. (Employee and Volunteer)

The Certificate II, according to training.gov.au, has four core units and seven electives. The highest level of training was as a village firefighter. Although the training was nationally recognised, it was stated that it was quite customised to the context of firefighting, examples were given of chainsaw operation and of training and assessing. This was, however, seen as an advantage rather than a problem.

The Fire Co RTO also had existing relationships with other RTOs, particularly in delivering needs based training not on its scope, such as Certificate IV in Training and Assessment or

Certificate IV in Frontline Management.

There are a number of qualifications that we use but don't have on our scope. Trainer assessor's probably the best example there...we work with TAFE for that...there's been a long standing relationship with [XXX] TAFE...we also work with other RTOs in the same space. [YYY] is an RTO we work with...on some things like how do you manage compliance. (Learning & Development/ RTO Manager)

Generally such training was also free, as well as accommodation if the course was elsewhere, although one interviewee noted that sometimes it was only certain units that were free, and if one wanted the full qualification one had to pay for the extra units.

The organisation also sometimes provided relevant training to external organisations.

...we do train some fire brigade people in some areas...like chainsaw courses. At our higher level specialist courses ... like emergency management top level incident control areas we train [four other related services] because they all come and are involved in the incident management team that we control...we don't actually deal with individuals, we deal with organisations...take [XXX], one of the power supply companies. We would train their field workers in bushfire awareness because they have to go out into the field to restore power in blacked out fire areas and there's the potential that that may flare up. (Learning & Development/ RTO Manager)

There was also some interaction overseas; for example the Region's L & D manager had provided training to Indonesia.

Nature of training delivery and assessment, and use of feedback

Each of the 52 districts was responsible for training in their specific geographical area. Training was generally delivered at the brigade level by either the brigade volunteer training officer, the district training officer or a small group of volunteers with particular expertise. The trainers usually had a number of years of experience as volunteer firefighters or had specialist skills obtained in their professional working environment and had expressed interest in taking on a training role. The trainers interviewed in the Region had been firefighters for forty and twenty years respectively. One had retired from running an earthmoving business and the other was a hairdressing teacher at TAFE. They explained how the training had become more professional over the past twenty years, even before the RTO was established. Nowadays they spent around 30 to 40 hours a month on their firefighting and training duties,

Generally the instructors have to want to do it because it's an extra burden on the trainer's part from what they generally do...normally they're firefighters in their own brigades and then they participate as the training officer in the brigade or the training officer in a district. (Senior Manager)

At a grass roots level, it's volunteers teaching volunteers...people then move into learning and development roles (they) have obviously got that background...through their volunteering experience, their industry context and industry experience. (Learning & Development/ RTO Manager)

Assessment was carried out at the district level by volunteers or paid training officers who have formal Training and/or Assessment qualifications.

All our instructors and assessors are trained...they're not trained fully in the TAA – they don't have the full certificate but they obviously have the instructor skillset or the assessor skillset or some do have both...some do have the full qualification. (Learning & Development/ RTO Manager)

Assessment always involved a theory and a practical component. People could choose whether to undertake the theory assessment in writing or verbally. An example of a practical assessment follows:

So an overrun is where if they're in a bushfire situation and they find themselves - that the fire's approaching too quickly or the wind's changed or something and they're stuck and they can't go anywhere. So there's a process they need to go through is getting fuels off the vehicle if they have time in the truck, covered over and it's a procedure so as to keep them safe in the vehicle. So that's one of the scenarios they need to do. Put the overhead sprays on, do all their radio communications to say they're in trouble and using all the right call signs and things like that. (Trainer and Volunteer)

It was noted by the Region's L&D officer that firefighters welcomed the rigorous assessment. He explained that this was because the training was extremely practical and was necessary for their safety. As he put it

'I've never heard anyone complaining about that [being assessed on how to operate the equipment]'

However he said that there was always a 'percentage' of people who objected to some parts of the training but that a 'smart instructor' would change the attitude. As he put it 'the ones who whinge...really shouldn't have been there in the first place.'

As much of the training undertaken by the volunteers required a hands on approach, most of the training was conducted face-to-face at designated fire control centres or station brigades over weekends. In the region town, there was a specialised 'hot fire' training centre, about ten kilometres away. This centre provided a site for house fire training as well as bush fire training. And evolved over time to include classrooms and LPG fire and chemical spills training. The facility was used by other organisations such as the CSIRO.

A training timetable was produced at the beginning of each year and volunteers nominated the courses they wished to attend. The training could be conducted at the district, region or State level, depending on the extent of specialisation in the training.

Most of them [courses] tend to be conducted over a Saturday and Sunday for two weekends, normally with a few weeks in between, and then an assessment date [that] normally goes for a day a few weeks after the last weekend, so it gives you some time to finish reading the theory and practice ... the more specialised the course ... the longer timeframe you have between the training and the assessment. (Employee and Volunteer)

Assessment tasks were collected by the Regional L&D Manager and then they 'go up to [the

HO]’ for certification. Generally people were given extra training so that they eventually passed. It was stated by one trainer that if somebody was felt to be not up to standard, the advice they received would be that they couldn’t be guaranteed to be safe. However, this had actually never happened.

Training was generally developed centrally and then rolled out across the organisation using a specific network of suitable trainers, allowing the organisation to appropriately control and maintain the training.

[The head office] develops the material, sets the training policies and guidelines, [the] standard operating procedures about how training runs, how it functions. (Learning & Development/ RTO Manager)

Maintaining control over the training also ensured that volunteers were suitably trained to operate safely, ultimately protecting the organisation.

There’s also the big...safety message. We want people to be as safe as possible in the fire ground. We’ll train you to be safe...you’re not just learning the skills and drill and how to do it, you’re learning how to do it safely. (Learning & Development/ RTO Manager)

Flexibility in the training delivery and assessment was seen as a major benefit by volunteers, given that most volunteers had other commitments.

The approach here is a little bit more...relaxed...if you can’t make the first day of [the] course...[you can] come back to the next course and do it...they take into consideration that you don’t always have the time. (Trainer and RFSU Union Representative)

If you’re not able to complete a certain assessment on a day or something, you can get one arranged for another time. (Employee and Volunteer)

More recently, there had been a move on the part of the Fire Co to deliver some training online to ensure consistency in training and to meet the needs of their volunteers. The e-learning environment also provided opportunity to showcase consistent best practice.

In the move to flexible membership was flexible delivery...there’s also an issue of quality of trainer and instructors and consistency of delivery. Coupled with that there was actually a demand for online (as) everyone else has something online. (Learning & Development/ RTO Manager)

Of the courses there’s probably...30 to 40 per cent that is theory...of that what can be done online...it was really just breaking it up...if they come in with some background knowledge then it’s a better starting point for the practical. (Learning & Development/ RTO Manager)

The advantage of online is it’s always there. People can go back and revisit and refresh...the advantage of using the YouTube clip (is) it can be filmed as best practice so that’s the consistency thing. You might be the best trainer in the world and have an off day and if that’s the only model that the participants are seeing then...(Learning & Development/ RTO Manager)

The aim of the online learning was to deliver the theory components using interactive modules. In future, time spent face-to-face would focus on practical training and practical assessments at the stations.

RPL and RCC was available to volunteers who might already have the necessary skills. According to the Region's L& D officer, this was carried out by a panel of people 'so we don't have that situation where we have just one person making a decision with not a lot of information.' Literacy support was available for people who needed it, according to the Region L&D officer. The trainers said that they would 'sit down one-to-one and get them through that way'. They said that there were quite a few literacy problems, among younger people as well as older. At the second visit interviewees were also asked about potential LLN issues among their volunteers and how the training accounted for this. They advised that the organisation had spent about \$80,000 on educating their trainers with regards to LLN. In addition, they noted that most assessments were designed in a manner that allowed learners to pass, even if they could not read or write very well.

The Region's L&D officer noted that a great strength of the training was that the materials were written by people who were firefighters themselves rather than 'say a public servant just [coming] in and writ[ing] training material, didn't really know anything about fire; then I think the wheels would fall off pretty well.' He gave examples: '[person's name] is still on the fire boats at [XXX] and he's the chief of training. The previous fellow was an ex-airport firefighter'.

Feedback about the training was provided in a number of different ways and included regional training advisory groups, state-wide professional development forums, the Fire Co website or via a brigade officer to the paid L&D officer, filtering up the line. The Fire Co web site was exclusively for volunteers and required a password to enter.

In addition, feedback was provided as a result of occurrences during training and operations. An example was given that sidings for trucks and bulldozers had been provided as standard after it had been realised that during a fire one needed to be able to turn around quickly. There was a system in place for after-action reviews of incidents in which training needs were high priority. As the regional manager said

We take people there, we talk to the firefighter who was on the ground or the firefighting manager on the ground. We walk through the fire and he explains how the fire started, how it went.

The Fire Co also held regular validation meetings with similar emergency services to provide feedback about their training. A pre-assessment validation checklist was used to identify gaps in the training, check training updates and to provide other feedback. The favour was then reciprocated at a later date. Post-assessment validation was conducted once a year by the RTO Quality and Documentation department to ensure that the training met its aims and objectives.

Because the work was high-risk both for volunteers and for the general public who relied on them undertaking their 'job' properly, training was vital. There was a need for people to be able to access training records quickly and accurately so that appropriately trained people could be assigned to different tasks. This was described as part of the services' 'duty of care'.

Benefits and challenges for workers

Having access to free, nationally recognised training qualifications was one benefit mentioned by both the managers and volunteers. This included free travel to and from the training and meals and accommodation as needed. The training was viewed as particularly beneficial for younger volunteers in terms of personal and professional development.

I think younger people do it because...they can gain something out of it...it's a way for recognition and to say thank you...it also means we're able to do more of a variety of roles by giving us different training, so we're able to kind of spread our wings I guess. (Employee and Volunteer)

It was also noted by the volunteers that the advanced and specialist courses were always of very high quality.

Training undertaken in the Fire Co was seen to benefit volunteers in terms of opportunities in the workplace and their overall career. Some of the skills learned in the courses were directly transferable to other workplaces and also provided the opportunity to develop leadership skills and greater knowledge that could be applied in the workplace.

If you do courses here [and] if you go to State Rail, some of the courses you do here give you automatic recognition for their internal courses...there's just a few minor policy or procedure differences that they have to brush up on and then that certificate goes with them. (Trainer and RFSA Union Representative)

It's really helped me with my employment...having my first aid qualifications...I was able to use [that] within my work environment...I've really gained a lot of self-development as well...I would never have done [this] or had the opportunity, financially, to do it. (Employee and Volunteer)

The recent database upgrade also meant that the system had started auto-generating Statements of Attainment and National Certificates II and III. These were believed to be useful additions to volunteers' CVs. Over the previous year, The Fire Co had issued about 67,000 Statements of Attainment and about 340 Certificate IIs.

The Region's trainers found a lot of overlap with their professional work, as one was a trainer and the other had worked on many engineering projects, including overseas. It was interesting to note that one of the regional managers had less faith in the transferability of the training than the actual participants. He said 'there's not a great deal of other jobs that require crew leader training and all that sort of stuff ... incident control.'. Some of the units of competency were of course transferable to other emergency services, although one interviewee noted that all new entrants to the later were put through the same training anyway.

When asked about nationally recognised training as opposed to the training that had long been in place in the organisation and its predecessors, the Region's manager said

I believe that you've got people that are out there that are helping do training, and so become indirectly part of the RTO, that have that sense of pride to keep everything going.

He went on to discuss the transferability of nationally-recognised training:

In the bad old days someone from the fire service in [another State] could come and join here and bring across qualifications that would automatically give them RPL and RCC. It was really hard to map out this is what they've got... how do we translate it across?

He noted that another jurisdiction's fire service had purchased some of the Fire Co's training materials. The advantages of national qualifications would have been evident in the recent major bushfires where volunteers were moved among States to fill needs. The Regional Manager also noted that even within the State it was helpful to have standardised training, for example if a volunteer moved location.

Limited resources or personnel to regularly run necessary training was the main challenge for volunteers. This meant that at times courses were restricted or that volunteers had to travel great distances to attend training.

We're limited in what we can run because we rely on volunteers to run the courses...we have some difficulty getting people to help coordinate and teach on courses...so instead of something being run once a year...it might be once every two years or...you could be travelling a fair distance to attend it...a four hour drive each way...it's very inconvenient. (Employee and Volunteer)

The trainers in the Region noted that there was some resistance among volunteers to the rigid structure involved in the training. One said

I think they have a fear, especially if they are a bit older and they haven't been doing any formal training, I think that's just a little fear of going into a classroom-type situation.

The other said that could be talked around:

If they're a little bit doubtful, should I be doing it, but when they are explained everything, it turns them around completely: I am doing something for my future, maybe.

Benefits and challenges for organisations and lessons learned

Having access to experts and/or reference groups who could advise on fire training in specific geographical areas and contexts was viewed as a major benefit for the organisation.

The provision of accessible, free training to volunteers was viewed as a recruitment and retention strategy for the organisation.

It's also a way for them [Fire Co] to gain recruitment and retention of volunteers. If they didn't offer training, I don't think people would stay around and the State or the Government is not in a position to be able to pay for [the training of] 70 000 paid firefighters...by allowing us to constantly apply for new training and qualifications is a real reason to maintain people. (Employee and Volunteer)

The basic benefit of good training was better performance. One of the trainers said the following about somebody who had undertaken more training as opposed to somebody who had only done the basics:

They're probably more proactive and they are able to work autonomously. They don't need to be directed the entire time, they can see what needs doing so they do it, which frees up the crew leader a little bit.

The new RTO standards had presented some challenges for the organisation in relation to the qualifications required to conduct training. A Diploma was now required for people to be able to train instructors and assessors, which meant that the organisation had to train up some people to Diploma level. In addition, State legislation relating to public service employment had resulted in generic bands of workers who would rotate to different positions each year and so individuals involved in Learning and Development one year, may not be doing this the following year. This had resulted in the organisation needing a number of different people with the necessary Certificate IV in Training and Assessment to be able to conduct training.

Compliance was one challenge for the organisation. Meeting the necessary requirements and standards to maintain registration as an RTO, keeping training materials up to date and keeping abreast of the many changes that take place in VET had led to a new compliance officer position in the head office. As the Region's learning and development officer said, *'We're checking, crosschecking all the time, we have all the paperwork in place to do that.'*

A further challenge related to consistency of training and being able to provide suitable training across the various geographical areas with specific conditions.

...it's different here in this region than what it would be in say the far northern regions of the state...when you're driving off-road up there, the land's different, the character of the land's different, they have different weather conditions and weather patterns. They might not be able to drive through mud for months, whereas we are driving through mud every other week. There are places where they do a lot of sand driving whereas here we don't do a lot of sand driving. (Trainer and RFSA Union Representative)

There was also an issue in inconsistency in opportunities to practice skills, because some brigades had very few call-outs compared with others. In fact, unlike many industries, learning 'on the job' was almost impossible, because of the dangerous nature of the industry. However, some interviewees noted that informal 'on the job' training did take place via mentoring. The Region's L&D officer noted that one way of ensuring consistency when the training and conditions were so different was through consistent assessment across the organisation.

Also, the standard of training was understood to vary quite a lot among brigades. As a regional manager put it:

That really comes back to how interested, how committed the local brigade is. How the training officer within that brigade-who's a volunteer- is and whether they've got the time.

One regional manager said that in his view the system was a little too rigorous, it was 'too cumbersome and restrictive'. He said:

The RPL processes and challenge tests and so forth... They've tended to be too difficult and people aren't game to do some of those sorts of things, which then disenfranchises some of our older volunteers. [They are] very experienced and skilled but mightn't have that ability to fit in with exactly what those challenge tests or other things might be.

He noted that there were also time constraints in rigorous assessments as the trainers were

also volunteers. This same interviewee also felt that the training meant that firefighters were sometimes a little too 'book-related' and cited an example where firefighters ignored advice from a local which would have helped them in a particular instance.

The Fire Co did not receive specific funding for training; however, as a public service organisation, the organisation had been affected by a freeze on staffing and funding. Many volunteers had to be trained on weekends, but trainers could no longer claim overtime. As a result, trainers were accumulating large amounts of time in lieu and had to be covered for long periods of time when they were away.

Identified implications for our project of the findings of this case study

- The Fire Co had on its scope formal units of competency and qualifications from the Public Safety Training Package as they are at the heart of their core business. They had also recently expanded their scope to include Diploma level qualifications.
- Being an enterprise RTO was a good 'risk management' strategy. Providing national accredited training ensured that volunteers were competent and operated safely in the field, ultimately protecting the organisation.
- Assessment was an important way of ensuring consistency and quality.
- Regional panels for RPL and RCC were rigorous and important risk management strategies. However there was also a view that they were over-rigorous and could deter people; they also put an imposition upon the volunteer trainers and assessors.
- The new RTO standards had presented some challenges for the organisation, particularly in relation to the qualifications of people providing training.
- More than three quarters of the workforce were volunteers, totalling approximately 71,000, although almost a third of the volunteers were considered in active members.
- The organisation prided itself on having trainers, assessors and advisors who were experts in their field.
- Training standards were understood to vary because the trainers were also volunteers, however, the move to online learning specifically for the theory components, would provide some consistency.
- Providing access to free, accessible training was seen as one method of recruiting and retaining volunteers.

Appendix 4: Employee Survey: Quantitative data

Name of organisation (pseudonym)

	No.	%
Docks	4	3.9
TV Co	33	32.0
Roadbuild	33	32.0
Rail Co	20	19.4
Bus Co	13	12.6
Total	103	100.0

Qualification/Skill set completed by respondent:

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
Cert III Customer Contact	31	30.6
Cert IV Training and Assessment	5	5.0
Cert II Rail Infrastructure	24	23.8
Apply first Aid, CPR	6	5.8
Straddle Crane Driver	4	4.1
Cert IV civil construction	12	11.9
Plant operator units from Cert III Civil Construction ⁴	9	8.9
Cert III in Driving Operations	10	9.9
Total	101	100.0

¹ Conduct roller operations 1; Conduct civil construction excavator operations 1; Conduct civil construction scraper operations 2; Plant operator 5.

About your training

Question 1: Where did you undertake the qualification/training shown above?

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
NSW	26	25.2
Vic	54	52.4
Qld	20	19.4
WA	3	2.8
ACT	0	0.0
NT	0	0.0
Tas	0	0.0
SA	0	0.0
Total	103	100.0

Question 1a: What was your job in the above organisation when you started the qualification/training?

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
Bus operator	11	11.0
Customer service	11	11.0
Leading hand	6	6.0
Foreman	5	5.0
Labourer	5	5.0
Retention officer	5	5.0
Manager	4	4.0
Supervisor	4	4.0
Tech support	4	4.0
Carpenter	3	3.0
Mobile Plant Operator	3	3.0
Team leader	3	3.0
Call centre operator	2	2.0
Compliance officer	2	2.0
Driver	2	2.0
Lashing and pin man	2	2.0
Plant operator	2	2.0
Resurfacing team leader	2	2.0
Stevedore	2	2.0
Superintendent	2	2.0
Track worker	2	2.0
Admin officer	1	1.0
Assessor	1	1.0
Consultant	1	1.0
Digital learning adviser	1	1.0
Form worker	1	1.0
Foxtel link representative	1	1.0
Learning support team leader	1	1.0
Learning systems adviser	1	1.0
LH operator	1	1.0
Plant & equip coordinator	1	1.0
Protection Officer	1	1.0
Safe Working Compliance Officer	1	1.0
Sales admin	1	1.0
Sales consultant	1	1.0
Scraper operator	1	1.0
Senior training adviser	1	1.0
Track Production Supervisor	1	1.0
Training advisor	1	1.0
Total	100	100.0

Question 2: When did you complete the qualification/training shown above?

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
2004	1	1.0
2005	1	1.0
2008	3	3.0
2009	3	3.0
2010	1	1.0
2011	11	11.0
2012	63	63.0
2013	15	15.0
2014	2	2.0
Total	100	100.0

Question 2a: What was your employment status at the organisation named above at that date? (Please tick one of the following boxes to show the nature of your relationship with the organisation at the time of completion)

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
Full time	89	86.4
Part time (main job)	13	12.6
Part time (not main job)	1	1.0
Total	103	100.0

Question 3: What was your **main** reason for doing the training? (tick one box only)

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
To get a better job or promotion	5	4.9
It was a requirement of my job	67	65.0
I wanted extra skills for my job	20	19.4
To get into another course of study	0	0.0
To improve my general educational skills	3	2.9
To get skills for community/voluntary work	4	3.9
To increase my confidence/self-esteem	0	0.0
To get a job	1	1.0
To develop my existing business	0	0.0
To start my own business	0	0.0
To try for a different career	0	0.0
Other	0	0.0
Total	103	100

Question 4: Did the training help you to achieve your main reason?

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
Yes	98	96.1
No	1	1.0
Partly	1	1.0
Don't know yet	2	2.0
Total	102	100.0

Question 5: Which of the following describes **how** the training was delivered? (you can tick more than one box)

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
Personal/classroom communication	91	88.3
Printed materials	36	35.0
Web-based resources	8	7.8
Videotape, CD or DVD	8	7.8
Online communication	10	9.7
Radio	2	1.9
Television	3	2.9
Video conference	1	1.0
Teleconference	0	0.0
Workshop practical activities	25	24.3
Other-on-the-job coaching/mentoring	34	33.0
Other-on-the-job practice	29	28.2
Other	1	1.0

Question 6: Did you do the training because it was part of an apprenticeship or traineeship?

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
Yes	32	31.4
No	70	68.6
Total	102	100.0

Question 7: Would you recommend the training you have undertaken to other people?

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
Yes	99	97.1
No	3	2.9
Total	102	100.0

Recognition of prior learning

Question 8: Before you started the training, did you have experience and skills related to the training you undertook?

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
Yes	78	75.7
No	25	24.3
Total	103	100.0

Question 9: Did the trainer or assessor assess your relevant experience and skills to see if the training could be shortened?

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
Yes	52	50.5
No	51	49.5
Total	103	100.0

Your opinions on the teaching/training

Question 10: Teaching/training

(Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed with six statements about the teaching/training they received.)

My trainers/instructors had a thorough knowledge of the area.

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
Strongly disagree	0	0.0
Disagree	0	0.0
Neither	2	2.0
Agree	26	25.5
Strongly agree	74	72.5
Total	102	100.0

My trainers/instructors provided opportunities to ask questions.

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
Strongly disagree	0	0.0
Disagree	0	0.0
Neither	0	0.0
Agree	32	31.4
Strongly agree	70	68.6
Total	102	100.0

My trainers/instructors treated me with respect.

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
Strongly disagree	0	0.0
Disagree	0	0.0
Neither	1	1.0
Agree	29	28.7
Strongly agree	71	70.3
Total	101	100.0

My trainers/instructors understood my learning needs.

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
Strongly disagree	0	0.0
Disagree	1	1.0
Neither	2	1.9
Agree	37	35.9
Strongly agree	62	60.2
Total	102	100.0

My trainers/instructors explained things effectively.

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
Strongly disagree	0	0.0
Disagree	0	0.0
Neither	2	1.9
Agree	31	30.1
Strongly agree	67	65.0
Total	103	100.0

My trainers/instructors made the subject as interesting as possible.

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
Strongly disagree	0	0.0
Disagree	0	0.0
Neither	9	8.8
Agree	34	33.3
Strongly agree	58	56.9
NOT APPLICABLE	1	1.0
Total	102	100.0

Question 11: Assessment

(Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed with five statements about the assessment they undertook.)

I knew how my skills and experience were going to be assessed.

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
Strongly disagree	0	0.0
Disagree	1	1.0
Neither	8	7.8
Agree	48	47.1
Strongly agree	45	44.1
Total	102	100.0

The way I was assessed was a fair test of my skills.

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
Strongly disagree	0	0.0
Disagree	1	1.0
Neither	5	4.9
Agree	43	42.2
Strongly agree	53	52.0
Total	102	100.0

I was assessed at appropriate intervals.

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
Strongly disagree	1	1.0
Disagree	1	1.0
Neither	6	5.9
Agree	45	44.1
Strongly agree	48	47.1
NOT APPLICABLE	1	1.0
Total	102	100.0

I received useful feedback on my assessment.

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
Strongly disagree	3	2.9
Disagree	1	1.0
Neither	7	6.9
Agree	46	45.1
Strongly agree	44	43.1
NOT APPLICABLE	1	1.0
Total	102	100.0

The assessment was a good test of what I was taught.

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
Strongly disagree	1	1.0
Disagree	3	2.9
Neither	5	4.9
Agree	39	38.2
Strongly agree	54	52.9
NOT APPLICABLE	0	0.0
Total	102	100.0

Question 12: Development of general skills

(Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed with five statements about the development of general skills that occurred through their training.)

My teaching/training developed my problem solving skills.

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
Strongly disagree	0	0.0
Disagree	1	1.0
Neither	14	13.6
Agree	50	48.5
Strongly agree	37	35.9
NOT APPLICABLE	1	1.0
Total	103	100.0

My teaching/training helped me develop my ability to work as a team member.

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
Strongly disagree	0	0.0
Disagree	0	0.0
Neither	9	8.8
Agree	50	49.0
Strongly agree	41	40.2
NOT APPLICABLE	2	2.0
Total	102	100.0

My teaching/training improved my skills in written communication.

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
Strongly disagree	4	3.9
Disagree	1	1.0
Neither	25	24.3
Agree	35	34.0
Strongly agree	36	35.0
NOT APPLICABLE	2	1.9
Total	103	100.0

My teaching/training helped me to develop the ability to plan my own work.

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
Strongly disagree	3	2.9
Disagree	4	3.9
Neither	13	12.6
Agree	50	48.5
Strongly agree	32	31.1
NOT APPLICABLE	1	1.0
Total	103	100.0

As a result of my teaching/training, I feel more confident about tackling unfamiliar problems.

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
Strongly disagree	1	1.0
Disagree	2	1.9
Neither	15	14.6
Agree	45	43.7
Strongly agree	39	37.9
NOT APPLICABLE	1	1.0
Total	103	100.0

Question 13: Your development as a learner

(Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed with three statements about their development as a learner resulting from their training.)

My teaching/training has made me more confident about my ability to learn.

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
Strongly disagree	0	0.0
Disagree	2	2.0
Neither	12	11.8
Agree	40	39.2
Strongly agree	46	45.1
NOT APPLICABLE	2	2.0
Total	102	100.0

As a result of my teaching/training, I am more positive about achieving my goals.

My teaching/training has helped me think about new opportunities in life.

	Total Sample		Queensland Rail	
	No.	%	No.	%
Strongly disagree	1	1.0	0	0.0
Disagree	1	1.0	0	0.0
Neither	16	15.7	5	25.0
Agree	45	44.1	8	40.0
Strongly agree	37	36.3	7	35.0
NOT APPLICABLE	2	2.0	0	0.0
Total	102	100.0	20	100.0

Question 14: Overall satisfaction

Overall, I was satisfied with the quality of this teaching/training.

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
Strongly disagree	0	0.0
Disagree	0	0.0
Neither	6	5.8
Agree	36	35.0
Strongly agree	61	59.2
NOT APPLICABLE	0	0.0
Total	103	100.0

Your work situation

Question 15: Which of the following **job-related benefits** do you feel you have received as a result of undertaking the training shown on the front of the form? (you can tick more than one box)

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
Got a job	16	15.5
Was able to set up/expand my own business	3	2.9
Change of job	7	6.8
A promotion	18	17.5
An increase in earnings	18	17.5
Other – more secure in my job	27	26.2
Other – helped me to do my job better	61	59.2
Other	1	1.0
None	12	11.7

Question 16: What is your current main occupation? (respondents were asked to list these – there were no options offered to choose from)

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
Bus operator	10	9.7
Customer service	9	8.7
Foreman	8	7.8
Retention consultant	6	5.8
Leading hand	4	3.9
Supervisor	4	3.9
Team leader	4	3.9
Call centre	3	2.9
Carpenter	3	2.9
Manager	3	2.9
Mobile Plant Operator	3	2.9
Straddle crane driver	3	2.9
Trainer and assessor	3	2.9
Admin officer	2	1.9
Bus Operator Trainer	2	1.9
Compliance officer	2	1.9
Contractor operation	2	1.9
L&D consultant	2	1.9
Operator	2	1.9
Plant operator	2	1.9
Superintendent	2	1.9
Track worker	2	1.9
Admin team leader	1	1.0
Construction worker	1	1.0
Customer support	1	1.0
Digital learning advisor	1	1.0
Facilitator	1	1.0
Form worker	1	1.0
Foxtel agent	1	1.0
Guard	1	1.0
Labourer	1	1.0
Learning tech advisor	1	1.0
Plant & equip coordinator	1	1.0
Production Planning Officer	1	1.0
Rail	1	1.0
Reporting analyst	1	1.0
Safe Working Compliance Officer	1	1.0
Sales rep/service	1	1.0
Senior learning qual	1	1.0
Signal electrician	1	1.0
Stevedore	1	1.0
Tech support representative	1	1.0
Track Inspector	1	1.0
Training advisor	1	1.0
Total	103	100

Question 17: Is this the same occupation as when you completed the qualification/training shown on the front of the form?

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
Yes	78	75.7
No	25	24.3
Total	103	100.0

Question 18: How relevant is what you learned in the **qualification/training** to your current main occupation?

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
Highly relevant	76	73.8
Some relevance	20	19.4
Very little relevance	5	4.9
Not at all relevant	2	1.9
Total	103	100.0

Question 19: Which of the following **personal benefits** do you feel you have received as a result of undertaking the training shown on the front of the form? (you can tick more than one box)

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
Got into further study	8	7.8
Advanced my skills generally	79	76.7
Gained confidence	44	42.7
Satisfaction of achievement	42	40.8
Improved communication skills	35	34.0
Made new friends	15	14.6
Seen as a role model for others	14	13.6
Other – I am able to do my job better	37	35.9
Other	1	1.0
None	5	4.9

About you

Question 20: What is your work status in your main job?

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
Full time permanent	88	86.3
Part time permanent	12	11.7
Casual	2	2.0
Total	102	100.0

Question 21: Do you still work for the company listed on the front of this form?

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
Yes	99	98.0
No	2	2.0
Total	101	100.0

Question 21a: If you answered no to question 21, what is the industry area of your current main job? (options offered to selected from were: Farming, forestry and fishing; Manufacturing and engineering; Transport; Hairdressing and beauty; Fast food, cafes, restaurants and accommodation; Banking, real estate and insurance; Government administration (including education and defence); Communications, media and computing; Mining; Building (including electrical and plumbing; Retailing (shop work); Food processing; Cultural, recreational or sporting; Clerical or administration; Health, personal and community services (including aged and child care); Automotive (e.g. mechanic/panel beater); other)

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
Transport	2	100.0

Question 22: Which age group do you fall into?

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
20-24	10	9.7
25-44	64	62.1
45+	29	28.2
Total	103	100.0

Question 23: What is your gender?

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
Male	84	81.6
Female	19	18.4
Total	103	100.0

Question 24: Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
No	101	98.1
Yes, aboriginal	1	1.0
Yes, Torres Strait Islander	1	1.0
Yes, both	0	0.0
Total	103	100.0

Question 25: Do you speak a language **other than** English at home?

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
Yes	30	29.1
No	73	70.9
Total	103	100.0

Question 26: Do you consider yourself to have a disability, impairment or long-term condition?

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
Yes	6	5.8
No	97	94.2
Total	103	100.0

Education or training undertaken previously

Question 27: What was the highest level of schooling you completed **before** undertaking the qualification/training shown on the front of the form?

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
Year 12	54	52.9
Year 11	11	10.8
Year 10	26	25.5
Year 9	8	7.8
Year 8 or below	3	2.9
Total	102	100.0

Question 28: Had you completed any of the following qualifications **before** undertaking the qualification/training shown on the front of the form? (you can tick more than one box)

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
Bachelor degree or higher	9	8.7
Advanced diploma or associate diploma	6	5.8
Diploma or associate diploma	11	10.7
Certificate IV	15	14.6
Certificate III	30	29.0
Certificate II	8	7.8
Certificate I	3	2.9
Other certificate	6	5.8
Certificate of competency or proficiency	10	9.7
Statement of attainment	13	12.6
Pre-vocational training	1	1.0
Other	7	6.8
None	24	23.3

Education or training undertaken since you completed the qualifications/training shown on the front of the form

Question 29: Have you undertaken **any other qualifications since undertaken the qualification/training** shown on the front of the form? (tick one box only)

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
No	78	76.5*
Yes, but cancelled or withdrew	1	1.0*
Yes, still ongoing	9	8.8**
yes, finished	14	13.7**
Total	102	100.0

*Respondents ticking these responses had completed the survey.

**Only these respondents went on to answer questions 30 and 31.

Question 30: Which of the following best describes the level of the **highest** qualification you have enrolled in **since undertaking the qualification/training?** (tick one box only)

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
Bachelor degree or higher	1	4.3
Advanced diploma or associate diploma	1	4.3
Diploma or associate diploma	0	0.0
Certificate IV	11	47.8
Certificate III	2	8.7
Certificate II	1	4.3
Certificate I	0	0.0
Other certificate	0	0.0
Certificate of competency or proficiency	0	0.0
Statement of attainment	5	21.7
Pre-vocational training	0	0.0
Other	2	8.7
Total	23	100.0

Question 31: Where did you undertake, or are you undertaking, this course of further study?

	Total Sample	
	No.	%
University	2	8.7
TAFE Institute	5	21.7
TAFE university	2	8.7
Private college	7	30.4
Adult and Community Education College or Provider	0	0.0
Secondary School	0	0.0
Other	7	30.4
Total	23	100.0

Appendix 5a: Comparison across RTO types (Enterprise RTO, TAFE and Private Provider): Certificate II in Stevedoring

The nature of the learners

The Enterprise RTO (ERTO) focused on the delivery of a number of skill sets from the Cert II. The primary audience were new hires to the company. In most cases, the new hires did not have previous experience of stevedoring. New hires were given a formal induction lasting a number of weeks covering basic site operations and workplace safety. Only after this induction were learners taken into the Cert II. Learners began by taking the skill set relating to driving a straddle crane. After a period on the straddle crane, some learners went forward to the skills set based on fixed crane operations. Some might also move through to the Cert IV in Front Line Management. Because the possession of the skill set was mandatory in the company, there was no resistance from learners. Many of the learners were low on LLN and this was reflected in delivery and assessment methods.

The TAFE delivered the Cert II qualification in its entirety to stevedoring businesses across a number of companies operating in a particular State. The delivery was through traineeships, funded through the State government. As at the ERTTO, the learners were all new starts and had undergone a thorough formal induction before they began the Cert II. Many learners had LLN difficulties, but it is not clear how this was accounted for in training and assessment delivery. By contrast, the Private focused on existing workers but they also covered new hires. Here, most of the delivery was by RPL, sometimes done on a collective basis. The learners often had previous experience of the industry but, like the ERTTO learners, were low on LLN. This was reflected in the training and assessment delivery strategies which the Private RTO adopted.

Training delivery

At the ERTTO, training was delivered principally on the job using the existing equipment for training. Some training took place off the job in a training centre for the more theory based aspects of the units. About 85% of training was delivered on the job. Normally the delivery of the straddle crane skill set took about 10 weeks covering up to 20 shifts. The company issued workbooks to learners to supplement the practical training. The assessment was carried out by trained workplace trainers.

The TAFE delivered the full Cert II qualification. The training was delivered on site by trainers employed by the TAFE staff and it took up to 18 months to deliver the full qualification. Training was primarily delivered on the job and carried out by certified workplace trainers who possessed the necessary training qualifications. The TAFE trainers delivered some of the training off the job. Learning materials were made available on-line for all trainees. Assessment was both written and practical but with allowances made for some learners with low LLN skills. Supervisors engaged with the TAFE staff by teleconference on a regular basis.

The Private RTO had adopted a different training strategy based on RPL. The focus was on existing workers, many of whom had significant industry experience. The RTO provided gap training after the RPL exercise. RPL could be negotiated with the employer to cover a large number of employees, although it could also be done on an individual basis, especially with new

hires. The gap training was delivered over six, half day visits over a period of 8-10 weeks. The RTO was thinking of moving to an 'auspiced' arrangement in the future in which company staff delivered the training and the RTO validated training and carried out assessment. The RTO used learner guides, assessment tasks, observation checklists and PowerPoint for class room delivery.

Curriculum development

There was a considerable difference in the approach taken by the TAFE and both the ERTO and the Private RTO to curriculum development. The TAFE did not develop curriculum materials itself but rather buys in curriculum developed externally and then proceeded to put it on-line for the use of trainees.

Both the ERTO and the Private RTO developed their own curriculum resources. The ERTO produced its own in-house written workbooks for trainees. These were produced by the ten trainers and the training co-ordinator. Since the industry was quite limited in terms of the number of companies, the learning materials were validated in-house using training staff from the other company locations. The company only offered skills sets, so no electives. The Private RTO supported a compliance and R&D unit that specialised in the development of learning materials. These were validated by using the network of trainers in the RTO's other locations across the country and used by all branches. The RTO had developed a range of learning materials including learner guides, assessment tasks, competency reports and observation checklists for the units which they delivered.

Assessment and RPL

Neither the ERTO nor the TAFE offered RPL on any widespread basis. Most new starts had no experience and, if they had no qualification, were required to go through the whole training. At the Private RTO, RPL was the usual method of delivery. The delivery of training there was based on RPL for existing workers supplemented by gap training.

At all of the providers, the approach to assessment was quite similar. As all three providers were dealing with cohorts of learners with (generally) lower levels of LLN skills, the focus was on practical skills training and assessment and less on written assessment. At the ERTO and the TAFE, assessment was done by supervisors on the job with a small number of written tests. The written tests were kept to a minimum.

At the Private RTO, a combination of practical assessment and limited written assessment was carried out by the trainers. The RTO produced monthly progress reports which were given to employers for each learner, and this was supplemented by regular three-monthly visits to all employers to assess progress.

Trainers

Both the ERTO and the Private RTO employed a number of trainers that worked on the Cert II. The ERTO supported an organisation that employed ten workplace trainers and assessors who were not full time trainers, but drawn from the operational workforce. There was a full time Training Co-ordinator and a full time RTO Manager. All trainers had the latest Cert IV TAE and the LLN unit. They also possessed the Cert II and III in Stevedoring. The ERTO

trainers kept up their knowledge of the industry and currency by retaining their jobs as stevedores. The Private RTO employed full time trainers only and there were no casual staff employed in the stevedoring area. All the RTO trainers had the Cert IV TAE and the LLN unit as well as the industry qualifications. The RTO insisted that all trainers keep up their industry current competency through a points-based PD system and each trainer had to produce evidence of PD during each year that adds to 100 points. In general, events such as conferences, industry seminars and industry visits counted for five points each towards industry currency.

The TAFE ran a smaller operation with a reliance on the use of industry trainers at the worksites it serviced. The TAFE employed two full time trainers and a Program Co-ordinator. The three trainers were all drawn from the stevedoring industry. All three possessed the Cert IV TAE as well as the Cert II and III in Stevedoring. There was no information on how trainers kept up industry competence except through visits to workplaces.

Outcomes

At both the ERTO and the Private RTO, there was a strong emphasis on evaluation. At the ERTO, learners filled in evaluation forms after each unit of competency that they undertook. In general, interviews with learners showed that they were happy with the quality of the training that they experienced. The transfer of learning was guaranteed, as the training was carried out in the work situation. A particular strength of the ERTO was its use of the national network of trainers in the company, to run both validation and moderation. All training and assessment materials were validated with other sites; and sites cross checked and marked assessment items from other sites to ensure full consistency of training. Regular meetings, chaired by the RTO Manager, underpinned this validation and assessment system. At the Private RTO, learners evaluated each unit of competence and also the program when it was finished. The RTO also had a regular, monthly system of feedback with the employers and visited the employer every three months to discuss the training and improvements. Benefits for the learners included their ability to fulfil the licensing requirements of the industry. The workplace nature of the training and the adaptable nature of the assessment also lessened the fear of trainees with low LLN to undertake formal, qualifications based training. At the TAFE it was not clear how learners evaluated the training they receive. Regular meetings and teleconferences with employers helped to provide feedback on the progress of learners and to receive feedback on the quality of training.

In general, outcomes for learners included the ability to progress to higher level jobs and into management. The training was tailored to make learners feel comfortable in a workplace based training environment where the emphasis was on practical training rather than classroom delivery and assessment.

Recognition

There were no formal recognition or graduation ceremonies for learners in any of the cases.

Funding

The ERTTO received little or no state funding for the delivery of the stevedoring qualifications. Funding was not critical to the ERTTO's decision to establish and continue with an ERTTO which was driven by the need for specific industry training. In the previous couple of years, the ERTTO had been the beneficiary of National Workforce Development funding for a program that upgraded skilled workers to a Cert III in Stevedoring via RPL.

With the Private RTO, funding was more critical. State funding for the Cert II delivery was stopped a couple of years ago. As a result, the RTO was unable to progress with the delivery of the qualification. It was reviving the delivery as a fee-for-service course based on RPL with employers currently.

The TAFE received some State funding for the delivery of the Cert II

Lessons learned

For the ERTTO, the lessons learned were around the need to adapt training delivery and assessment to the needs of low LLN workers. This has been done through the emphasis on the job training, practical assessment items and less use of written as opposed to verbal, answers for assessment. As has been noted, funding was a key issue for the Private RTO. The withdrawal of funding led to the ceasing of the qualification but the RTO hoped that it would reopen on a fee for service basis. As with the ERTTO, a key learning had been the adaptation of training and assessment for low LLN learners.

Appendix 5b: Comparison across RTO types (Enterprise RTO, TAFE and Private Provider): Diploma of Community Service Work (Financial Counselling)

The nature of the learners

The Enterprise RTO (ERTO) mainly offered qualifications and units of competency related to their core business of community services. This included the Diploma of Community Services (Financial Counselling), offered only to the ERTO employees based on job need and job requirements or for work competency reasons.

The TAFE delivered the Diploma of Community Services (Financial Counselling) to employees already working as financial counsellors where there was a work requirement to undertake the Diploma as a means of maintaining ongoing employment. The course had been added to the TAFE's scope 18 months previously following requests for the course. All the learners were people who were simultaneously studying and working in the field.

The private provider delivered the training to students across Australia from a range of backgrounds including employees working as financial counsellors wanting to upgrade their qualifications, employees wanting a career change and people wanting to improve their own financial literacy.

Training delivery

The ERTO delivered the Diploma of Community Services (Financial Counselling) almost entirely through distance learning. Learning materials were sent to trainees in the mail. Trainees worked through the modules and assessments at their own pace and returned the assessments in the mail once completed. Trainees would then receive written feedback advising competency or non-competency and would have the opportunity to resubmit the assessment if necessary. There was limited personal contact, unless trainees were undertaking role plays as part of their assessment, and these were generally done via a phone link-up.

The TAFE and the private provider used a blended approach to deliver their training. TAFE learners primarily studied off campus and also regularly attended three to four hour on campus, face-to-face workshops held once a month. The workshops generally focussed on covering a specialised area in greater depth, often with guest lectures who had expertise in the area. They also provided an opportunity for learners to clarify study materials and to work through the Learner Guides and assessment requirements. The Diploma took between 18 months and two years to complete and approximately 80 – 100 hours involved face-to-face contact. For the private provider learners, the course entailed approximately 24 weeks of online learning and a one week, face-to-face intensive which included classes, practice assessment sessions, reflections and a full day of practical assessment.

Curriculum development

Approximately seven years earlier, the ERTO had developed its own curriculum for the Diploma of Community Services (Financial Counselling). This was done using in-house experts and subject matter experts in the field from the national peak body, Financial Counselling Australia, and presidents of various associations from around Australia. Due to

a lack of resources, the curriculum had primarily remained the same but was currently undergoing an audit and an update using a small group of internal and external subject matter experts. There was no formal body to oversee curriculum development, rather this was one of the responsibilities of the organisation's Head of Learning.

The TAFE on the other hand, had a formal process to oversee curriculum development, AQTF requirements and Copyright issues. Curriculum evaluation and validation was continually undertaken by internal subject matter experts and at regularly held state-wide moderation meetings where small groups would get together and evaluate particular courses or units. Most of the curriculum for the Diploma of Community Services (Financial Counselling) had already been developed prior to the course commencing because they were associated with other courses already being offered by the TAFE. Specific financial counselling units were developed by an internal expert who was a practicing Financial Counsellor and would also teach the program. Electives were developed and offered as part of the course and were primarily based on agency and/or community needs. For example, the TAFE was based in an area with a large indigenous population so an indigenous unit was developed.

The Diploma of Community Services (Financial Counselling) was initially delivered as an on campus course by the private provider. It had been developed by a board member of the State's Financial Counsellors' Association. In 2011 an online version of the course was developed and involved a collaboration between the private provider, a key community based organisation in the State, and the Association. Electives units were offered as part of the course but were not chosen by the students; rather, the RTO decided which electives to offer after consulting with the community and internal experts.

Assessment and RPL

All of the training providers offered RPL, and learners requesting RPL were assessed on a case-by-case basis. Work history, knowledge and previous qualifications were all taken into account. In the ERTO, RPL based on work experience and knowledge was given to some long serving employees who had initially come into the organisation with no formal qualifications and were now wishing to undertake a formal qualification.

A variety of assessment techniques to assess learning was used in all the training organisations including role plays, written assignments and verbal and written feedback. In the ERTO, assignment feedback was often delayed due to the distance learning nature of the course. In the TAFE and the private provider, feedback was more immediate because of the face-to-face components of the course. Assessment was generally carried out by the course trainers and/or in-house specialists in a particular area qualified to undertake assessments.

Trainers

All of the training providers used in-house trainers who had completed a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment and were considered subject matter experts with specific professional qualifications and/or industry experience in the area to deliver the training. In the TAFE it was also a requirement that trainers complete a LLN qualification and undertake continual professional development as part of their annual performance review. The ERTO's trainers belonged to a formal Trainer and Assessors Association and the organisation also used the association as a means of identifying individuals with specific training expertise across the organisation.

Outcomes

The ERTO and the private provider trainees provided course feedback via standard student evaluation sheets. In addition, the ERTO used a survey via its RTO management system to survey general student satisfaction with the course and application of learning on the job, while the private provider used the AQF learner survey to gather this information. Similarly, TAFE learners were encouraged by the Student Services Department to participate in the formal course evaluation process that included surveying student satisfaction. Students were also encouraged to personally meet with the Student Services Department if they had particular course issues they wanted addressed.

The ERTO and the private provider viewed career progression as a major benefit for learners undertaking the Diploma of Community Services (Financial Counselling). ERTO employees were able to specialise in their area of expertise and also progress up the career ladder but not necessarily into management roles. The practical hands on experience gained while working with real clients as part of the training meant that these learners were able to expand their knowledge, gain marketable qualifications, give back to the community and obtain job security.

Learners undertaking the Diploma of Community Services (Financial Counselling) in the TAFE were completing the course as a job requirement and were simultaneously working in the field. The qualification was viewed as necessary professional development, with most employers paying the course costs for their employees.

Recognition

The ERTO had no formal recognition or graduation ceremonies for learners. The TAFE, on the other hand, held a formal graduation ceremony to acknowledge their learners achievements. The ceremony was held at the local Arts Centre, family members were invited to attend and graduands were gowned and went up on stage to receive their scroll or certificate. The private provider had attempted to hold formal graduation ceremonies, but these were not considered viable because many students were interstate and simply requested that their parchment be sent in the mail. There were future plans to hold a once a year celebration ceremony instead.

Funding

The ERTO did not receive any formal State or Federal funding. The organisation had committed to paying the basic costs of running the centre and the ERTO had to source their own additional funding. Currently, the ERTO held training contracts with the State and Federal Governments, with statutory bodies and various traineeship groups. This presented a number of challenges though because of the different rules and reporting requirements of each entity.

The TAFE and the private provider both received some State funding for the qualification, although one State only made funding available for people studying at a higher level than the qualifications they already had.

Lessons learned

For the ERTO, the main lesson learned was in relation to the isolation associated with

undertaking distance education. Learners could enrol in the Diploma of Community Services (Financial Counselling) at different times and could complete the modules in a different order at their own pace. As a result the learners were always at different stages, making networking with others difficult. The combination of off campus study and on campus, face-to-face monthly workshops worked well in the TAFE. While this was more time consuming than anticipated, it meant that learners were able to network and share their work experiences as well as clarify course content and get immediate feedback. For the private provider, the main lessons related to creating an interactive engaging online learning environment to ensure course completion.

Appendix 5c: Comparison across RTO types (Enterprise RTO, TAFE and Private Provider): Certificate III in Home and Community Care

Background

The TAFE and private provider both provided a dual qualification to learners – home and community care (HACC) and aged care. The ERTO delivered aged care (and also disability care) but not together with home and community care. There were many units in common between the two qualifications. The private provider had actually preferred not to undertake dual delivery, but their major client had requested that they do so.

In the industry, aged care service employers often required the qualification before employing people. This was not necessarily the case in home and community care, but in some cases would be written into contracts that the organisation held. There was some controversy in the industry around the ability to gain a Certificate III without work placements but it was reported that the new Training Package mandated work placement as a separate unit of competency. This discussion probably applied more to aged care than HACC.

The nature of the learners

The ERTO was within a national organisation providing home and community care among a range of services. The learners in the Certificate III were mostly women in an older age bracket (45+) but with some men and a few younger workers. They were mostly participating as trainees and were generally part-time. Many had had previous careers in different industries. It was part of joining the organisation as a support worker that people enrolled in the Certificate III. If they went on to specialise in aged care or disability care they would then upskill. They were paid for time spent undertaking the training if they were eligible for traineeship funding, but in any case the training itself was free to all workers.

At the TAFE Institute, learners were quite diverse. Some already worked in aged care; others had part-time jobs in other industries. Some learners were retraining after previous careers or following retrenchment. Some were from non-English speaking backgrounds, including migrants and refugees. While most were women, there was a cohort of older men. A group of students had come in from a Job Service Agency (JSA) to undertake some foundation units, and stayed on to complete the qualification.

The private provider tended to deliver to cohorts from particular employers. One client had been the State Health Department which had asked the RTO to add HACC to its scope for the Home Care service. However funding had just been withdrawn and so only one pilot program, with four cohorts, had so far been delivered. Many learners were ‘mums or people returning to work’, and were part-time workers. Mental illness had been an issue, as well as LLN needs. The RTO had been approached by a JSA to deliver to clients but was nervous about this because the job was so demanding.

Training delivery

At the ERTO the course was generally delivered over about 12 months, although learners differed in their progress. The off-the-job training was generally delivered half a day a fortnight in the afternoon. The afternoon was chosen because the mornings were busiest in

the service delivery. The 12 month delivery was chosen because people were all working as well, and many of them also had their own caring responsibilities. Training was mostly face to face and distributed at different centres, as people did not like to travel too far. They were looking at more on-line delivery but IT systems coupled with people's IT capabilities were acting as barriers. The ERTO had standard PowerPoint presentations for each unit as well as a standard introductory section for each workshop. The on-line platform did not support video clips and these materials were put onto centrally controlled USBs which were recalled and reissued every six months. This helped to ensure consistency across the different sites.

At the TAFE site, the course was delivered over a six month period. There were two full days a week, and homework to complete assignments. Additionally there was a 120 hour practical placement. If the learner already worked in the industry, a different site for placement was found. A new model was being trialled where an initial placement block of four days was undertaken after the first four weeks of off-the-job training. This was in response to feedback from students who were keen to get out and practice their skills. The placements were generally in aged care facilities rather than the HACC environment because HACC providers were not keen to allow students into people's homes. For the job, training was delivered face to face, with some online work, and a simulation room with a bed, hoists and so on. The Institute was currently looking at extending the online offerings with the idea that learners might familiarise themselves with the material before classes where possible, to maximise learning from the classes.

The private RTO had delivered the pilot program as a traineeship. This was available to existing workers as well as to new workers who were employed by the major client. There were four different schedules of delivery for the program as each region in the client organisation had different needs. (The regions were all within a metropolitan area). All required initial first aid training. Altogether there were 16 one-day sessions and often these were as in hired venues. LLN support was built into the program as the RTO specialised in qualifications which often required extra support.

Curriculum development

The ERTO used national learning resources but were hoping to move over to using a textbook. The resources were used as a stopgap, as when the training co-ordinator who was interviewed came into the job she found that the in-house resources were inadequate. She found that the learners did not particularly value the printed resources, hence the plan to use a textbook. The staff liked to attend staff development activities with other ERTOs as sometimes it was difficult within the organisation to have conversations about the ERTO, since line managers found the VET system very complex.

At the TAFE site, the teacher and the program co-ordinator attended meetings of the State curriculum group and kept in touch with Industry Skills Council communications. An industry reference group met once or twice a year.

The private provider had recently downsized due to the funding changes and so there was a reduced system for curriculum development. The curriculum was developed with the client, and the compliance manager confirmed that the Training Package packaging rules were kept. A textbook was used for the training, which the learners reportedly liked. It was regarded as 'a reference tool for life.'

Assessment and RPL

At the ERTO, there were assessment tasks included in the learning resources that they used. While completing the Certificate was a requirement of the job, it was sometimes difficult to get people to complete the assessments in a timely fashion. If they lagged too much, it became a performance management issue. RPL was not much used and the organisation was still developing the RPL procedures. The ERTO undertook validation and moderation annually. While that was done internally, there had also been a review of the ERTO recently where external validation and moderation was undertaken. Generally, internal moderation consisted of trainers selecting a certain number of completed assessments from particular units and swapping them. They tried to swap across States and Territories. This had proven very useful, as it sharpened people's thinking about what was acceptable and ought to pass.

At the TAFE site, assessment was generally carried out in three ways for each unit of competency: a practical test in the simulation room, written answers, and observation on placement. About 90% of students passed the course. Some withdrew, particularly at the placement stage. Sometimes people from a non-English speaking background struggled with assignments and needed extra help. Assignments had strict due dates and people failed assignments if they did not submit, which tended to improve their adherence to deadlines subsequently. RPL was available but was rarely sought. The cost was the same and it was reported that people preferred to study. The Institute's policy was that units were validated once every three years.

The private RTO experienced difficulty in assessing on the job. They addressed this issue by creating a log book for the items that the Training Package required to be assessed in the workplace, and the supervisor (the 'service coordinator') signed off on these items. All learners were given extra support and training if they needed it in order to pass assessments. No RPL was given, as the client did not wish it to happen. As the RTO put it '[The employer] wants them to have the full delivery correctly delivered by a reputable RTO'. While the RTO was not sure what happened in moderation of this particular course, the understanding would be that with two trainers, they would moderate amongst themselves. The normal practice at the RTO was for moderation to take place in a group with de-identified student assignments. There was also a system of two or three PD days a year at the RTO's head office where assessment would be a topic for discussion.

Trainers

Trainers were sometimes registered nurses and reportedly could be resistant to becoming qualified in HACC; however one case was reported of a nurse who had finally agreed to undertake a work placement in HACC to improve her knowledge of the area. Trainers met annually which was an opportunity for professional development, and in some jurisdictions the trainers attended network meetings of aged care teachers.

At the TAFE site, the teachers tended to be enrolled nurse-qualified. One had been RPL'd into the Certificate III qualification and worked a shift in aged care every week to keep current. Generally one teacher taught the whole qualification, with support from a couple of trainers one of whom had a disability background. A separate teacher taught 'most of the theory'. Extra learning support was available from trainers who had particular qualifications in LLN and learning support.

The private provider used two major trainers. An outside agency provided First Aid training. The RTO had trained up a high quality graduate of the pilot program, to teach it the next time, should funding permit. She worked for the State's home and community care service and now was also employed by the RTO. The RTO manager said 'It's always been her dream to be a trainer, and by completing the course she's reaching her dream. It's just fantastic; every time she comes in here, she glows.'

Outcomes

In the ERTO, learners were surveyed at the end of every school term (as training tended not to take place in school holidays). These results were collated and examined for improvement possibilities. The organisation surveyed workers every six months about their learning needs, and those results were sent to managers and co-ordinators enabling the RTO to gain feedback on training needs.

The TAFE site had not yet evaluated the course with employers, but were planning to start on-line evaluations through Survey Monkey the following year. This had already been done with Nursing. The Industry Reference Group also provided feedback.

The private RTO met with the employer each month and the students were asked to provide feedback after every session. Also, after each session trainers were asked to complete a 'trainer note' which often included ideas on how things could be done better. The RTO also used the standard AQTF questionnaires. It was the traineeship co-ordinator at the client who completed the learner survey.

Recognition

In the ERTO, graduation ceremonies were generally held after the end of each course. This was generally about a month after the course ended, to allow for lagging assignments. The graduation was normally an afternoon tea at the local training centre. Another example was at one branch, where there was a regular 'Christmas in July' event and the certificates were handed out there. Families were also invited. One example was given of a middle aged man in his mid-50s whose mother came along, and was very proud as it was the first qualification he had ever gained.

At the TAFE site, there was an annual graduation but not many attended as they might have completed some time previously and had already been issued with their certificates. However for those that did, it was regarded as a big occasion especially if it was the only or the highest qualification they had ever received.

In the private RTO, graduations were held for each course in the students' workplaces, with morning tea events. The learners were encouraged at these events to persuade their colleagues to undertake the training: they were provided with posters to put up in the workplace.

Funding

At the ERTO, the funding varied among states. The site we visited was in a State where the ERTO was not expecting to receive any funding under the new funding regime. Enterprise RTOs were not specifically banned, but the criteria served to exclude them. Commonwealth employment subsidies were received for some eligible trainees, although that, too, had

progressively been reduced.

At the TAFE site, students had to pay fees if they were not eligible for government funding (as was often the case, as students had previous qualifications at the same or higher levels). The fees were quite substantial. If they were working, even in the industry, it was not usual for their employer to pay. If they were from overseas, they were ineligible for government places also.

For the private RTO, funding had been withdrawn by the State Government but Commonwealth incentive remained. Therefore the RTO hoped that the major client would decide to continue with the course as the employer would still receive some funding.

Lessons learned

Some issues that had been learned and addressed included:

- Rescheduling placement to earlier in the course;
- Using a well-respected textbook rather than less adequate learning resources;
- Increasing on-line availability of materials to enable students to prepare for class.

Summary

- Where the training was delivered by institutional RTOs for specific clients, there was great commonality with ERTTO delivery. The private provider had just employed a trainer from the client, which increased the parallels.
- ERTTO delivery meant that the values and mission of the organisation could be integrated into the training.
- The student group was reasonably similar across all types of RTO.
- A common issue for all was the difficulty of assessing in the workplace environment, as the workplace was people's homes and there were privacy issues.

Appendix 6: Enterprise RTO Survey #2: Quantitative data

ERTO Survey 2 2014
N = 66

Question 1: Name of your organisation

Question 2: Is the head office of the organisation located in a:

	N	%
Capital city	61	92.4
Regional city	3	4.5
Small town	2	3.0
Remote area	0	0.0
Total	66	100.0

Question 3: Is your organisation located at:

	N	%
Single site	6	9.1
Multi-site up to 9 branches	18	27.3
Multi-site 10 or more branches	36	54.5
Other	6	9.1
Total	66	100.0

Note. Other response includes: 170 private hospitals, global approximately 500 sites, headquarters and 45 separate units on the NSW coast, multi-permanent sites (10+) but also many temporary project sites, national footprint branches and corporate offices in each state.

Question 4: States and territories in which you operate:

	N	%
ACT	26	39.4
NSW	41	62.1
NT	29	43.9
QLD	38	57.6
SA	34	51.5
Tas	26	39.4
Vic	37	56.1
WA	35	53.0

Question 5: Does your organisation have international operations?

	N	%
No	37	56.1
Yes	29	43.9
Total	66	100.0

Question 6: If yes, is the head office in Australia or overseas?

	N	%
Australia	23	79.3
Overseas	6	20.7
Total	29	100.0

Industry Area

Question 7: In what sort of industry is the major activity of your company?

	N	%
Agriculture, Forestry and fishing	2	3.1
Manufacturing	5	7.7
Construction	2	3.1
Retail Trade	3	4.6
Transport & Storage	8	12.3
Finance and/or Insurance	3	4.6
Education	0	0.0
Health and Community Services	13	20.0
Personal and other services	1	1.5
Mining	4	6.2
Electricity, Gas and Water Supply	3	4.6
Wholesale Trade	0	0.0
Accommodation, Cafes & Restaurants	2	3.1
Communication Services	1	1.5
Property and Business services	1	1.5
Government Administration & Defence	7	10.8
Cultural and recreation services	1	1.5
Emergency services	9	13.8
Total	65 ¹	100.0

¹Note. 1 respondent did not provide a response.

Workforce Structure

Question 8: What is the approximate total workforce of your enterprise?

	N	%
Less than 500	12	18.5
500 to <1000	3	4.6
1000 to <2000	6	9.2
2000 to <5000	16	24.6
5000 to <10, 000	11	16.9
10, 000 to <20, 000	8	12.3
20, 000 to < 30, 000	4	6.2
More than 30, 000	5	7.7
Total	65 ¹	100.0

¹Note. 1 respondent did not provide a response.

Question 8a: If there is a volunteer workforce please state how many volunteers you have:

N respondents	Minimum	Maximum	Average
24	0	300,000	14,102

Question 9: What are the five most common qualifications/skill sets that you deliver? List in order of number of learners.

Note: Only Qualification 1 is included for reasons of space

Qualification 1

	N	%
Accredited Course	1	1.6
AHC21010	1	1.6
All of UET package	1	1.6
AUM20112	1	1.6
AUR20212	1	1.6
AUR20705	1	1.6
AUR30405 Cert III Automotive Technoly	1	1.6
AVI30408	1	1.6
AVI50308 - Diploma of Aviation (Air Traffic Control).	1	1.6
AVI50408	1	1.6
AVIF2014A Undertake aircraft underwater escape and survival	1	1.6
BSB30211	1	1.6
BSBOHS509A	1	1.6
Cert II Public Safety (Aquatic Rescue)	1	1.6
Cert II Public Safety FF & Emergency Operations	1	1.6
Cert IV Frontline Management	1	1.6
Cert IV Government (Trade Measurement)	1	1.6
Cert IV in Training and Assessment	1	1.6
Certificate III in home and community care	1	1.6
Certificate 3 in Live Production & Services	1	1.6
Certificate I in Transport Distribution (Maritime Operations)	1	1.6
Certificate II & III in Business	1	1.6
Certificate II Financial Services	1	1.6
Certificate II in Drilling Operations	1	1.6
Certificate II in Gas Supply Industry Operations	1	1.6
Certificate III in Automotive Mechanical Technology Light Vehi	1	1.6
Certificate III in Early childhood education and care	1	1.6
Certificate III in Government	1	1.6
Certificate III Process Plant Operations	1	1.6
Certificate IV Health Care (Ambulance)	1	1.6
Certificate IV in International Freight Forwarding	1	1.6

Certificate IV in Telephone Counselling Skills	1	1.6
CHC30212 - Certificate III in Aged Care	1	1.6
chc30212 aged care	1	1.6
CHC41912	1	1.6
CPP30411	1	1.6
csc30112	1	1.6
cue30303	1	1.6
Diploma of Management	1	1.6
Diploma of Public Safety (Policing)	4	6.3
Diploma Paramedical Science (Ambulance)	1	1.6
FNS30111	1	1.6
NA - units only	1	1.6
Participate in a rescue operation	1	1.6
PUA cert 2	1	1.6
PUA20713 Certificate II in Public Safety (Forest Firefighting)	1	1.6
PUA21312	1	1.6
RII20213	1	1.6
RII21109	1	1.6
RII30113	1	1.6
RII40712 Certificate IV in Civil Construction (Supervision)	1	1.6
SIR20212	2	3.2
SIT20213	1	1.6
TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment	1	1.6
TLI21311	1	1.6
TLI21311 Certificate II in Rail Infrastructure	1	1.6
TLIL31610	1	1.6
UET30512	1	1.6
UET30612	1	1.6
Total	63¹	100.0

¹Note. 3 respondents did not provide a response.

Type of delivery	N	%
Skill set/s only	7	11.3
Full qualification	55	88.7
Total	62¹	100.0

¹Note. 1 respondent did not provide a response.

26 respondents (39%) indicated qualification/skill set 1 was a requirement for their industry
Number of learners enrolled in training in this qualification in 2013

N respondents	Minimum	Maximum	Average
61	0	5000	363

Question 10: What is the qualification/skill set that you deliver most frequently (to most learners)?

	N	%
Apprentice	1	1.6
ASIC Tier 2	1	1.6
AUM20112	1	1.6
AUR20705	1	1.6
AUR30212	1	1.6
AUR30405 / AUR31112	1	1.6
AUR30612	1	1.6
AVIF2014A Undertake aircraft underwater escape and survival	1	1.6
BSB30211	1	1.6
BSBOHS509A	1	1.6
Cert 111 Financial Services	1	1.6
cert 2 SES rescue	1	1.6
Cert II Public Safety (Aquatic Rescue)	1	1.6
Cert III & Cert IV	1	1.6
Cert IV Health Care (Ambulance)	1	1.6
Cert IV in TAE & Cert IV in FLM	1	1.6
Cert IV in Telephone Counselling Skills	1	1.6
Certificate 3 Live Production	1	1.6
Certificate I in Maritime operations (Maritime Operations)	1	1.6
Certificate II in Drilling Operations	1	1.6
Certificate III in Disability	1	1.6
Certificate III in Early Childhood education and care	1	1.6
Certificate IV in International freight forwarding	1	1.6
Certificates II and III in health related disciplines to non-regulated health care workers	1	1.6
Certificate II in Gas Supply Industry Operations	1	1.6
CHC30212 - Certificate III in Aged Care	1	1.6
CHC30212 Cert 3 Aged Care	1	1.6
CHC41912	1	1.6
cue30203	1	1.6
DEF21112	1	1.6
Diploma of Management	1	1.6
Diploma of Public Safety (Policing)	3	4.8
Diploma of Public Safety Policing	1	1.6
Diploma Paramedical Science (Ambulance)	1	1.6
Financial Services	1	1.6
First Aid	1	1.6
home and community care	1	1.6
Mental State Examination	1	1.6

N/A	1	1.6
Now just delivering Diploma AVI50408	1	1.6
Participate in a rescue operation	1	1.6
PUA20613 - Certificate II in Public Safety (Firefighting and Emergency Operations)	1	1.6
PUA20713	1	1.6
PUA20713 Certificate II in Public Safety (Forest Firefighting)	1	1.6
PUA21312 Certificate II in Public Safety	1	1.6
RII30812	1	1.6
RII32009	1	1.6
SIR30212	2	3.2
SIT30713	1	1.6
Surface Shot firer	1	1.6
TAE40110	1	1.6
TLI21311	1	1.6
TLI21311 Certificate II in Rail Infrastructure	1	1.6
TLI21413	1	1.6
TLI31210	1	1.6
Trade Measurement Limited Weighing Instrument	1	1.6
UET30612	2	3.2
Working at Heights	1	1.6
Total	62 ¹	100.0

¹Note. 4 respondents did not provide a response.

Question 10b. Thinking about that qualification/skill set, How would you rate the language and literacy requirements of the job the workers trained in that qualification/skill set are expected to perform?

	N	%
1 (Extremely low)	0	0.0
2	0	0.0
3	1	1.6
4	5	7.8
5	18	28.1
6	6	9.4
7	15	23.4
8	12	18.8
9	4	6.3
10 (Extremely high)	3	4.7
Total	64 ¹	100.0

¹Note. 2 respondents did not provide a response.

Question 10c: How would you rate the language and literacy capabilities of learners on average in that qualification/skill set?

	N	%
1 (Extremely low)	0	0.0
2	0	0.0
3	4	6.2
4	3	4.6
5	20	30.8
6	10	15.4
7	8	12.3
8	16	24.6
9	2	3.1
10 (Extremely high)	2	3.1
Total	65 ¹	100.0

¹Note. 1 respondent did not provide a response.

Question 10e: How would you rate the numeracy requirements of the job the workers trained in that qualification/skill set are expected to perform?

	N	%
1 (Extremely low)	0	0.0
2	0	0.0
3	0	0.0
4	6	9.2
5	18	27.7
6	12	18.5
7	15	23.1
8	11	16.9
9	1	1.5
10 (Extremely high)	2	3.1
Total	65 ¹	100.0

¹Note. 1 respondent did not provide a response.

Question 10f: How would you rate the numeracy capabilities of learners on average in that qualification/skill set?

	N	%
1 (Extremely low)	0	0.0
2	0	0.0
3	2	3.1
4	1	1.6
5	22	34.4
6	12	18.8
7	12	18.8
8	11	17.2
9	2	3.1
10 (Extremely high)	2	3.1
Total	64 ¹	100.0

¹Note. 2 respondents did not provide a response.

Question 10h: Thinking about how the training is delivered please indicate the method on a scale of 1-10:

	N	%
1 (Entirely as a part of normal work)	1	1.6
2	5	7.8
3	12	18.8
4	6	9.4
5	15	23.4
6	10	15.6
7	8	12.5
8	2	3.1
9	3	4.7
10 (Entirely in the training room)	2	3.1
Total	64 ¹	100.0

¹Note. 2 respondents did not provide a response.

Question 10i: What proportion of workers in this qualification/skill set:

Pass first time

	N	%
1-24%	6	9.1
25-49%	0	0.0
50-74%	8	12.1
> 75%	52	78.8
Total	66	100.0

Pass after extra attempts

	N	%
1-24%	43	65.2
25-49%	5	7.6
50-74%	2	3.0
> 75%	16	24.2
Total	66	100.0

Are asked to withdraw

	N	%
1-24%	63	95.5
25-49%	1	1.5
50-74%	0	0.0
> 75%	2	3.0
Total	66	100.0

Fail		
	N	%
1-24%	66	100.0
25-49%	0	0.0
50-74%	0	0.0
> 75%	0	0.0
Total	66	100.0

Question 11: How do you gather feedback from the business units within your enterprise about their satisfaction with the training their staff received from the ERTO?

	N	%
formal written evaluations	40	60.6
formal verbal feedback	4	6.1
informal feedback	9	13.6
other	13	19.7
Total	66	100.0

Question 12: Do you recognise or celebrate learners when they complete qualification/skill sets (e.g. with a graduation ceremony)?

	N	%
No	16	24.2
Yes	50	75.8
Total	66	100.0

Question 13: Do you exchange information about RTO operations with other ERTOs?

a. In your same industry area?

	N	%
No	20	30.3
Yes	46	69.7
Total	66	100.0

b. Those outside your industry area?

	N	%
No	31	47.7
Yes	34	52.3
Total	65 ¹	100.0

¹Note. 1 respondent did not provide a response.

Question 14. What sources of funding have you received?

a. Commonwealth funding

	N	%
Employment incentives for traineeships or apprenticeships	32	48.5
National Workforce Development Fund	17	25.8
Workplace English Language and Literacy	4	6.1
Other	15	22.7 ¹

Note. Percentage does not equal 100 as respondents could select more than one response.

b. State/Territory or other funding

	N	%
Payroll Tax Exemptions	14	21.2
Other	13	19.7 ¹

Note. Percentage does not equal 100 as respondents could select more than one response.

Question 15: Approximately how many individual learners did your ERTO train in qualifications or skill sets in 2013?

N respondents	Minimum	Maximum	Average
61	0	5000	363

Question 16: Does your RTO provide accredited training to persons who are not your organisation's employees or volunteers?

	N	%
Yes	30	46.9
No	34	53.1
Total	64 ¹	100.0

¹Note. 2 respondents did not provide a response.

Question 17a: What proportion of your accredited training is delivered to people who are not your employees or volunteers?

	N	%
1-24%	26	81.3
25-49%	2	6.3
50-74%	1	3.1
> 75%	3	9.4
Total	32 ¹	100.0

¹Note. 34 respondents did not provide a response.

Question 17b: Are the external learners individuals, or are they sent by companies?

	N	%
Individual learners	7	21.9
Sent by companies	25	78.1
Total	32 ¹	100.0

¹Note. 34 respondents did not provide a response.

Question 17c: If they are sent by companies, are they individual companies not associated with yours or are they part of your company's supply chain?

	N	%
Companies not associated	7	25.9
Companies part of our supply chain	20	74.1
Both	0	0.0
Total	27 ¹	100.0

¹Note. 39 respondents did not provide a response.

Question 18: Do you use external RTOs to provide Nationally Recognised Training for your employees or volunteers?

	N	%
No	19	28.8
Yes	46	70.8
Total	65 ¹	100.0

¹Note. 1 respondent did not provide a response.

If yes, please briefly describe four qualifications or statements that you "buy in".

Note: Only one response from each respondent is included for reasons of space

Name of qualification / statement of attainment 1

	N	%
All High Risk Licence training	1	2.2
Apply First Aid	1	2.2
AUM30112	1	2.2
Cert 111 in Financial Services	1	2.2
Cert IV & Diploma of Project Management	1	2.2
Cert IV in Training and Assessment	1	2.2
Cert IV TAA	1	2.2
Cert IV Training and Assessing	1	2.2
Cert IV Training and Assessment	1	2.2
Certificate 111 Financial Servicews	1	2.2
Certificate III Driving Operations	1	2.2
Certificate III in ESI - Power Systems Distribution Overhead	1	2.2
Certificate IV in Home and Community Care	1	2.2
Certificate IV in Telephone Counselling Skills	1	2.2
Certificate IV in Training & Assessment	1	2.2
Certificate IV OHS	1	2.2
Certificate IV Public Safety	1	2.2
Certificate IV TAE	1	2.2
Certificate IV Training & Assessment	1	2.2
Confined Space	1	2.2
Construction Trades	1	2.2
CPCCLDG3001A	1	2.2

CPCCOHS1001A	1	2.2
Diploma of Management	2	4.4
Drive vehicles under operational conditions	1	2.2
first aid	1	2.2
First Aid	1	2.2
Four Wheel Drive units	1	2.2
Frontline Management/ Business	1	2.2
Generic units from Cert IV (Trade Measurement)	1	2.2
High Risk licences	1	2.2
HLT32812 Certificate III in Health Support Services	1	2.2
HLTAID001	1	2.2
HLTAID003	1	2.2
HLTFA311A Apply First Aid	1	2.2
MEA40611 Certificate IV in Aeroskills (Avionics)	1	2.2
Operate & Maintain Chainsaw	1	2.2
Provde First Aid	1	2.2
SIR30212	1	2.2
TAE10	1	2.2
TAE40110 Certificate IV Training and Assessment	1	2.2
UEE30811	1	2.2
work health & safety	1	2.2
Working at Heights	1	2.2
Total	45¹	100.0

Note. ¹1 respondent who indicated their organisation used external RTOs to provide Nationally Recognised Training for their employees or volunteers did not provide a response.

How is it delivered:

	N	%
Onsite	25	55.6
At the RTO	14	31.1
Other	6	13.3
Total	45	100.0

Note. Other delivery methods reported were distance learning, off-the-job training at another RTO, online, safety Training Centre (JV with TAFE), ¹1 respondent who indicated their organisation used external RTOs to provide Nationally Recognised Training for your employees or volunteers did not provide a response.

Is it delivered by:

	N	%
Wholly your staff	8	20.0
Wholly external RTO staff	22	55.0
Partly your staff/partly external	10	25.0
Total	40¹	100.0

¹Note. 6 respondents who indicated their organisation used external RTOs to provide Nationally Recognised Training for your employees or volunteers did not provide a response.

Question 20: How many full-time equivalent staff members does your enterprise allocate to the administrative workload specifically generated by VET sector regulatory compliance requirements?

N respondents	Minimum	Maximum	Average
66	0	3500	56

Question 20a: What proportion of the total administrative workload for all training activities of your organisation (accredited and non-accredited) does this represent?

	N	%
1-24%	22	34.4
25-49%	12	18.8
50-74%	17	26.6
>75%	13	20.3
Total	64¹	100.0

¹Note. 2 respondents did not provide a response.

Question 21: Does your organisation employ casual workers?

	N	%
Yes	41	62.1
No	25	37.9
Total	66	100.0

If yes, what proportion of the workforce is casual?

	N	%
1-24%	30	75.0
25-49%	9	22.5
50-74%	1	2.5
> 75%	0	0.0
Total	40¹	100.0

¹Note. 1 respondent who indicated their organisation employed casual workers did not provide a response.

Question 22: Are casual employees eligible to receive Nationally Recognised Training from your ERTO?

	N	%
Yes	26	63.4
No	15	36.6
Total	41	100.0

Question 22a: What proportion of your casual workforce has received Nationally Recognised Training from your ERTO?

	N	%
1-24%	21	77.8
25-49%	1	3.7
50-74%	1	3.7
>75%	4	14.8
Total	27¹	100.0

¹Note. 14 respondents who indicated their organisation employed casual workers did not provide a response.

Question 22b: Under what conditions do casual workers receive their training?

	N	%
If they request it	4	16.0
If the company requests them to do it	6	24.0
When it is mandatory for their work	10	40.0
Other	5	20.0
Total	25 ¹	100.0

¹Note. 16 respondents who indicated their organisation employed casual workers did not provide a response. Other conditions include after 12+ months of employment, as part of their employment conditions, we do not have a casual workforce, in WA, linked to job role, required for their role and supported by their line manager.

Question 22c: Do casual workers normally undertake their training in their own time or during their paid work time?

	N	%
In their own time	6	24.0
In paid work time	19	76.0
Total	25 ¹	100.0

¹Note. 16 respondents who indicated their organisation employed casual workers did not provide a response.

Question 23: Does your organisation employ sub-contractors?

	N	%
Yes, as a large part of our operations	10	15.4
Yes, as a minor part of our operations	29	44.6
No	26	40.0
Total	65 ¹	100.0

¹Note. 1 respondent did not provide a response.

Question 24: Are sub-contractors eligible to receive Nationally Recognised Training from your ERTO?

	N	%
Yes	15	39.5
No	23	60.5
Total	38 ¹	100.0

¹Note. 1 respondent who indicated their organisation employed sub-contractors did not provide a response.

Question 25: Since 2009 have there been structural changes to your ERTO?

	N	%
No	24	36.4
Yes	42	63.6
Total	66	100.0

Question 26: Since 2009 have there been leadership changes to your ERTO?

	N	%
No	16	24.6
Yes	49	75.4
Total	65 ¹	100.0

¹Note. 1 respondent did not provide a response.

Question 27: On a scale of 1 to 10 how would you rate the visibility (or exposure) of the RTO within the enterprise?

	N	%
1 (No exposure or visibility)	1	1.5
2	3	4.5
3	4	6.1
4	5	7.6
5	5	7.6
6	7	10.6
7	8	12.1
8	11	16.7
9	8	12.1
10 (Extremely visible)	14	21.2
Total	66	100.0

Question 31: Does the RTO conduct cost/benefit analyses of providing Nationally Recognised Training for staff?

	N	%
No	34	52.3
Yes	31	47.7
Total	65 ¹	100.0

¹Note. 1 respondent did not provide a response.

Question 32: Does the RTO compare the cost of conducting the training in-house as opposed to using an external provider?

	N	%
No	16	25.8
Yes	46	74.2
Total	62 ¹	100.0

¹Note. 4 respondents did not provide a response.

Question 33: To your knowledge does your RTO train workers or volunteers who then use their training with other employers in your industry?

	N	%
Not to our knowledge	17	25.8
Sometimes	34	51.5
Frequently	15	22.7
Total	66	100.0

Appendix 7: Summary of UK consultations 2014

The final phase of the project included a comparison with the English equivalent to enterprise RTOs. In 2009, when we first planned our research project, a pilot project was underway in England of employers who were what is known as ‘Awarding Bodies’. This seemed as though it was the nearest equivalent to the Australian system of Enterprise RTOs, the main difference being that Awarding Bodies also ‘own’ qualifications in something of the same manner as Australian Industry Skills Councils. A Price Waterhouse Cooper evaluation of the initiative had been carried out and we had been aware of this before commencing the research project

In 2014, interviews took place in England to undertake the comparison. It turned out that the situation had shifted over the past five years, as will be explained below. The English VET system is very complex and the explanations are necessarily simplified.

Table 1 shows the people and companies that were involved in the comparison study:

- A VET system expert currently working for an association of private providers;
- The body that oversees apprenticeships (the Skills Funding Agency)
- Three employers: one was both an Awarding Body and an apprenticeship ‘direct grant’ employer, and the other two were direct grant employers only.

Table 1: Interviewee details

Organisation			Position
Government/other bodies			
Association of Employment and Learning Providers			Operations manager
Skills Funding Agency (incorporates the former National Apprenticeship Service)			Head of Employer Development – South, Large Companies unit
Employers	Direct grant app’ship employer	Awarding Body	
Burger Co <i>Fast food</i>	X	X	Four staff, from the awarding body and training department
Hair Cut Co <i>Hairdressing</i>	X		National Training Manager
Staff Hire Co <i>Administration & IT</i>	X		Operations Director, apprenticeship initiatives

Summary of findings

Awarding Bodies

In the UK there are over 160 awarding bodies; well-known examples are City and Guilds and the Engineering Construction Industry Training Board. Their concern is to ensure quality and integrity of the assessment and qualifications that they 'own'. They also provide learning materials for the qualifications, and competition among them is fierce.

The Awarding Bodies experiment for employers had reportedly more or less failed. Only three employers had signed up to the pilot project: Burger Co, an armed services organisation and a discount airline. Reportedly, the airline had pulled out because of the red tape, leaving only the first two still operational. Unfortunately, although the armed services organisation initially seemed co-operative, they stopped responding to contact and I was only able to visit and interview Burger Co staff. This meeting took place at Burger Co's Training Academy, which was a busy location filled with branch staff coming in for training and for final examinations.

Burger Co was an awarding body and owned two qualifications: Shift Management and Food Safety, both Level 3. These were non-apprentice qualifications. Burger Co decided to become an Awarding Body because it gave them greater powers to enforce quality in their training department and branches. No funding was provided for this work although the company employed three people in the awarding body. A separate company was set up to ensure proper oversight of education matters.

Direct grant apprenticeship employers

Direct grant employers manage their own apprenticeship systems. There were 64 at the time of the interviews, and the Skills Funding Agency was aiming at 100. The Skills Funding Agency (which oversees qualifications for people aged 16 plus) had recently taken over some of the functions of the National Apprenticeship Service, which had ceased to exist.

The English apprentice system is different from Australia's and includes three components:

- The 'technical qualification' from an awarding body such as City and Guilds
- The National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) which covers the on-the-job training
- Foundational skills which are now required to deliver a grade C at English and Maths GCSE level (Year 10)

NVQs are roughly equivalent to Training Package qualifications. Unlike the situation in Australia, other, earlier, qualifications (such as City and Guilds) co-exist alongside NVQs. NVQs tend to be looked down on.

At the time of the visit, employers received funding to manage the whole 'package'. It was quite complicated and they could contract out parts of it, but some delivered the whole 'package'. Staff Hire Co, which provides the outsourced apprenticeship arm of the Civil Service, did so. They purchased technical qualifications from an awarding body and the purchase price included access to learning materials. The awarding body monitors assessment results through a moderation-type system and undertakes audits separate from the national VET quality system.

Burger Co delivered an NVQ level 2 qualification in hospitality as part of the

apprenticeship package; and Hair Cut Co a Level 2 in hairdressing (a City and Guilds qualification). Level 2 roughly equates to Certificate III in Australia. Hair Cut Co had mapped their already highly-regarded qualifications to the NVQ. Staff Hire Co delivered apprenticeships in business and IT in an outsourced manner across the Civil Service and also to its own employed staff. The latter staff work on a contracted basis for the Civil Service and other organisations.

Expressed benefits of these links with the VET system

- ‘Employer of choice’ argument;
- A way of making seemingly (or initially) less attractive work more attractive;
- Creating a career path and a source of senior manager talent;
- Empowerment;
- Standardisation and quality;
- Ability to secure better service from training providers (if outsource components);
- Ability to enforce stricter training and assessment processes within the company because of the external quality system,

Some major concerns expressed by employers

- The amount of red tape needed to undertake either of these two roles;
- The sheer complexity of the VET system
- The reputational risk to the whole company if anything goes wrong;
- The presence of two auditing bodies for the direct grant employers (OfSTED for the training provider activities, and the Awarding Body.) For the former, a phone call arrives on Thursday lunchtime for a Monday morning audit.