

<https://federation.edu.au/schools/school-of-education/research/research-groups/rave-researching-adult-and-vocational-education>

Welcome

Professor Erica Smith, RAVE (Researching Adult and Vocational Education) Convenor

We report here on activities of the research group since June 2021. More information about all of our activities is available on our web site (see link above) and our email address is vet.research@federation.edu.au. Do not hesitate to email RAVE about any items.

In the newsletter you'll find information about our group's current and recent research, publications and engagement in policy and practice in the VET sector. You will see that we have been busy with major research projects, and also smaller but significant unfunded projects.

We also report on this year's successful 'OctoberVET' event, which due to COVID had to take place online for the second year running.

Please forward to colleagues and encourage them to contact us to be added to the mailing list.

Our Associate Degree of VET teacher-training program continues to grow, and in Semester 2 we had a record 82 students enrol in our Applied Research subject. So that represented 82 new research projects being undertaken by VET practitioners! It is very exciting to read these research reports, and for us to grow the body of researchers in the sector. Please contact Erica Smith for information about the Associate Degree of VET program course and the Applied Research subject. e.smith@federation.edu.au

Anthony Pearce from Federation TAFE has joined the VET teaching and research team – welcome!

OctoberVET 2021

'Beyond COVID'

The fourteenth annual 'Ballarat OctoberVET', a free, online research-based event was held on the 25th November, hosted by RAVE. The theme this year was 'Beyond COVID', focusing on the impact and possible ways through the pandemic for the VET sector. This year, due to COVID, the event was again held virtually via Teams, with 34 attendees. Thank you to all who joined us. The keynote speaker, **Gary Workman**, (Executive Director, Apprenticeships Employment

Network) in his presentation entitled 'Apprenticeships: what would it take?', covered growing skills shortages and an analysis of the current apprenticeship environment in light of recent historical events, including the effects of COVID.

The following presentations were given by RAVE members:

- **Erica Smith** 'The curious case of jobs and training in retail and hospitality' with Richard Robinson (UQ) and Darryn Snell (RMIT)
- **Anthony Pearce** 'Teacher-student relationships in alternative secondary education'
- **Peter Fieger** 'VET student employment outcomes during COVID'
- **Barry Golding and Annette Foley** 'And now Women's sheds': scoping the shed field internationally'.

The presentations and program can be viewed on the 'VET research events' page via the RAVE website.



The 2021 OctoberVET speakers (L to R): Keynote speaker Gary Workman, Executive Director, Apprenticeships Employment Network (AEN); and Fed Uni staff: Erica Smith, Anthony Pearce, Peter Fieger, Barry Golding and Annette Foley.

New funded RAVE research project

Pre-Accredited Framework Review: A Contemporary Pre-Accredited Framework.

Researchers: Annette Foley (Fed Uni) (Joint Project Leader); Trace Ollis, Deakin Uni (Joint Project Leader); Tamsin Rossiter (ACEVic)

Funding: \$96,076.20

This project funded by the Department of Education and Training was an Adult, Community and Further Education (ACFE) priority project and has already concluded. The project reviewed the Pre-accredited quality framework project and revised and redeveloped the current quality training framework

used by 'Learn Local' providers in the State of Victoria. The Pre-accredited Quality Framework (PQF) has been developed by the Adult, Community and Further Education Board to improve outcomes for learners in the ACFE sector ('Learn Local' providers).

<https://www.vic.gov.au/pre-accredited-quality-framework?Redirect=1>

Executive Summary

This mixed methods research project evaluated the current Pre-accredited Quality Framework (PQF) in Victoria. The report outlines the preliminary themes identified from both the quantitative and the qualitative data from the Qualtrics surveys of Learners, Trainers, Coordinators and Managers across the four DET regions of Victoria. In addition, it outlines the preliminary themes from focus groups conducted with Learn Local Managers and DET staff which emerge from the first review of both data sets.

Key Findings

Understanding of the Pre-Accredited Quality Framework: 83% of the respondents felt they had an advanced or intermediate understanding of the PQF. However, when asked if they referred to the PQF Quality Indicators in their planning of new pre-accredited programs, their responses varied, with less than half indicating they 'always' referred to the indicators. It was noted that some coordinators complete the course plan without input from trainers, seemingly contradicting learner centred practices.

Learner Centred Framework: The Learn Local providers believe the PQF enabled learner centred practices and that training delivery can be adapted to learners' requirements. A quality PQF should be learner-centred, with processes for ongoing reflection on the learning and teaching cycle including examples of 'best practice'.

Pre-Accredited Quality Framework form usability: The respondents frequently referred to the difficulty of using the supplied 'A Frame' forms = they were not intuitive or 'user friendly'. 'The 'A Frame forms' need revising so they are more 'user. Most of respondents said that they prefer a digital or hard copy of 'A Frame' forms which are adaptable.

Moderation: DET staff and Learn Local providers alike agree the moderation process is overly complicated, and cumbersome to implement and not as effective as it could be.

Time and Resources: Providers and DET staff alike frequently referred to the issue of resources, time and funding. Time and resources are needed to ensure a quality pre-accredited training system.

Resources and Professional Development: It was believed that extra resources were needed to assess learners existing knowledge and skills, assessing

learner gain and for quality moderation processes. In addition, extra resources to adequately support learners to transition to employment were noted. Professional development is required in the PQF.

Integrity: Learn Local providers agreed it was important to maintain the integrity of the PQF, particularly in relation to the tradition of no summative assessment of learners. This, according to some respondents, is a key strength of the PQF and distinguishes it from other Vocational Education and Training (VET) programs.

Learner gain: The data showed a tension between measuring learner gain and still maintaining the integrity of a pre-accredited adult learning system with a convention of no formal assessment.

It was also noted that there was some confusion with the concept of transition to employment and learner gain in this area.

Nine recommendations were made in the report. Contact a.foley@federation.edu.au for details.

Continuing funded research

Improving the Attractiveness and Social Perception of Apprenticeships.

Researcher: Erica Smith

This research has been part of a major project 'Apprenticeships Development for Universal Lifelong Learning and Training (ADULT)', managed by the International Labour Organization, Geneva. Erica's work has been completed, identifying a number of successful attractiveness strategies in both developed and developing countries, with detailed case studies of two major initiatives in Australia and South Africa. Her report will appear as a separate paper and also as a chapter in the main project report. A team of around 30 researchers has been undertaking the project as a whole, with a large international reference group. Erica's work is completed, and will be available in due course with the other project outputs at <https://www.ilo.org/skills/projects/adult/lang--en/index.htm>

Careers in Everyday Industries

Researchers: Erica Smith (FedUni) (Project Leader), Andy Smith (FedUni), Darryn Snell (RMIT Uni) Victor Callan (UQ), Richard Robinson (UQ).

This project, funded by the National Careers Institute (NCI), focusing on careers in retail and hospitality, has completed its preparatory phase. The paper that Erica Smith presented at OctoberVET was drawn from part of this phase and has also been published in the AVETRA (Australian VET Research Association) magazine *Research Today*, Issue 28, October 2021,

(This will be available in due course at <https://www.aveetra.org.au/pages/research-today.html>).

The researchers are now undertaking interviews with industry stakeholders from peak bodies and employer organisations in the retail and hospitality industries and other relevant sectors and focus groups with retail and hospitality academics at three universities. We will commence company case studies early next year. COVID has greatly affected the industries and we are adapting our research accordingly.

Project website: <https://federation.edu.au/research-everyday-careers>

New unfunded research

Learning to be Safer in 2021

Researchers: Erica Smith & Morgan Wise

This is a follow-up project to 'Learning to be safer' which was reported in RAVE News December 2020. Like the first survey, this new project investigates the ways in which people have learned and are learning about COVID-19. As well as following up how people feel about and are learning about the issues investigated in the first survey, this project has added two additional topics: vaccination and international travel. 101 responses were received during September-October 2021. The two sets of data are now being analysed.

The Nature and Functions of Apprenticeship Intermediary Organisations

Researcher: Erica Smith

This research follows up a funded 2018-19 project Erica completed for the International Labour Organization on intermediary organisations in apprenticeships, e.g., (Group Training) Organisations. These organisations are often used as a policy tool by national governments in their apprenticeship systems. The 2018-19 project, a desk review, can be seen at https://www.ilo.org/skills/pubs/WCMS_725504/lang-en/index.htm

This new project involves interviews with peak bodies, intermediaries, and policy personnel in Australia and UK. The follow-up stalled in 2020 due to COVID but has now been completed remotely. The research is complete and will be written up early in 2022.

Continuing unfunded research

VET teachers' work during COVID

Erica Smith, with colleague Daryl South at Charles Sturt University, has carried out a project on how VET teachers' work changed due to COVID in 2020. A survey of experienced teachers who were studying VET teacher-training at the two universities was undertaken from August to October 2021. 73

responses were received and are being analysed. The preliminary results were presented at the ACDEVEG conference on December 8th 2021. The presentation will be available shortly at

<https://www.acde.edu.au/networks-and-partnerships/acde-vocational-group/>

Research impact and engagement

Erica Smith was asked to talk about RAVE's National careers Institute project as a panel member for a National Skills Week webinar on 'Everyday Careers', <https://www.nationalskillsweek.com.au/rethink-webinar-careers-in-everyday-industries/> - July 2021

RAVE member achievements

RAVE members' publications and achievements since RAVE News 12 (June 2021)

Books

Golding, B. (Ed.) (October 2021) *Shoulder to Shoulder: Broadening the Men's shed movement*, Book, Common Ground Publishing Champaign, Illinois. (plus 12 chapters, some co-authored, one with A. Foley)

Book Chapters

Golding, B., & Foley, A. (2021). 'The anatomy of one New Zealand Men's Shed: What happens and with what impact?' In B. Mikulek, S. Kump & T. Kosmeri (eds.), *Reflections on adult education and learning: The adult education legacy of Sabina Jelenc Krašovec*, Ljubljana University Press. pp 67-80. Book download: <https://e-knjige.ff.uni-lj.si/znanstvena-zalozba/catalog/book/326>.

Rawinski, M., & Golding, B. (2021). 'Researching Men's Sheds in Australia: Reflections for the Antipodes: A Female visitor and an Australian male guide', in B. Mikulek, S. Kump & T. Kosmeri (eds.), *Reflections on adult education and learning: The adult education legacy of Sabina Jelenc Krašovec*, Ljubljana University Press, pp.97-108. Download as above.

Smith, E. (2021) 'Australian TVET Teacher Training: Once flourishing but now neglected', Chapter 26 in Frank Bünning *et al.* (eds.) *TVET teacher education and training in international and developmental co-operation – models, approaches and trends*. Springer series Technical and Vocational Education and Training: Issues, Concerns and Prospects. DOI will be: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-6474-8_26

Peer-reviewed journal papers

Foley, A., Golding, B. & Weadon, H. (2021, published online 17.8.21). Respite, renewal, retirement and

- tensions: Australian Men's sheds and the impact on significant others. *Aging and Society*. 1-22.
- Golding, B., Carragher, L. & Foley, A. (July 2021) The women's shed movement: Scoping the field internationally. *Australian Journal of Adult Learning*, 61(2), 150-174.
- Hall, M. C., Prayag, G., Fieger, P., & Dyason, D. (2020). Beyond panic buying: Consumption displacement and COVID-19. *Journal of Service Management*. Vol. 32 No. 1, pp. 113-128.
- Rice, B., Martin, N., Fieger, P., & Hussain, T. (2021, published online 3.9.21). Older healthcare workers' satisfaction: managing the interaction of age, job security expectations and autonomy. *Employee Relations: The International Journal*.
- Smith, E. (2021) The expansion and contraction of the apprenticeship system in Australia. 1985-2020. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training*, special edition, 2021. 73(2), 336-365.

Non-peer reviewed papers

- Smith, E. (2021). VET teachers' accounts of difficult teaching situations and how learning theories explain them. *Fine Print: A journal of adult English Language and literacy education*. 44:3, 8-10.

Conference papers

- Dyason, D. & Fieger, P. (2021) Successful visitor market transition for the hospitality industry. A case study of Christchurch, New Zealand; *South African Institute of Management Science Online Conference*, 2021, 13-14 September.
- Smith, E. & Foley, A. (2021). Preparation for post-school careers in rural and peri-urban Australia: Connections with employers and labour markets. *Employer engagement: Preparing Young People for the Future*, 6th International Conf. on Employer Engagement in education. 1-2 July, online.
- Smith, E., & South, D. (2021). The findings of an ACDEVEG survey on VET teachers' work during COVID in 2020. *People, place and time: developing the adaptive VET teacher*, 7th Annual ACDEVEG conference on VET teaching and VET teacher-education, online, December 8th The paper will be available soon (see above for link).

Note: OctoberVET presentations are not listed, for reasons of space.

RAVE members' other achievements

Erica Smith has been appointed to the Editorial Board of the *South African Journal of Vocational, Adult and Continuing Education and Training* (JOVACET).

Adjunct Professor Robin Shreeve has been leading a discussion on LinkedIn about Executives in State TAFE systems and their relationships with politicians

and their political advisers. The discussion was provoked by another sudden change in the Managing Director of TAFE NSW. The main points were 1. TAFE CEOs in some states are treated more like "football coaches" than university vice chancellors. TAFE systems need more autonomy and stability whilst remaining accountable to Government. 2. The 'One TAFE' structure in NSW is built around centrally produced learning and teaching materials. This downplays the professional role of the TAFE teacher. There are inevitable bottlenecks in materials production given the large number of courses and units offered in TAFE systems. As a result, materials are often, "Too expensive, too pretty and too late". The discussion has attracted over 7,000 views, nearly 100 likes and 36 comments. It can be viewed at: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/robin-shreeve-5bb67714/detail/recent-activity/shares/>

Adjunct Professor Robin Shreeve co-ordinated 11 events, mostly online, as part of AVETRA's OctoberVET 2021. These attracted 350 registrations. Topics included presentations on the relationship between migration and international education; Training Package Overlap studies; TAFE teachers and resilience; making TAFE fairer; practitioner research; developments in New Zealand and, of course, the Federation session 'Beyond COVID'.

Anthony Pearce was invited to participate in a National Youth Employment Body (NYEB) System Design Workshop on 'Strengthening pathways to skilled entry level work for young people in Agriculture and Horticulture' (7th September 2021). The NYEB is managed by the Brotherhood of St Laurence on behalf of the Department of Jobs and Small Business.

Erica Smith is a member of the working group developing an online learning and assessment skill set for the Training and Education Training Package.

Erica Smith was recently asked by both the Belgian and Hong Kong governments to review research grant applications

Erica Smith was one of 20 Australian scholars interviewed for an Australia-India Institute project on research collaboration with India. (Strengthening Australia-India Research Collaboration and Engagement: Case Studies and Good Practices) (see p. 51) <https://www.aii.unimelb.edu.au/publications/report/strengthening-australia-india-research-collaboration-and-engagement-case-studies-and-good-practices/>

Erica Smith was consulted by a director of Skill Development Scotland (SDS), in the SDS' service design and innovation directorate, on a 'meta-skills' project on the future of apprenticeship, Nov. 2021.