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RAVE News

#### Issue 11.

[*https://federation.edu.au/schools/school-of-education/research/research-groups/rave-researching-adult-and-vocational-education*](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 May 2020. 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*](https://outlook.uob.ballarat.edu.au/owa/m.wise@ballarat.edu.au/redir.aspx?C=qicVly1hm0-m_uT_kFi1WswoGNpFk9MILOSWGNsZ9MZT1J4EORn4VPd2hr4q2DxrNIkDDiONXR4.&URL=mailto%3avet.research%40federation.edu.au)*. Do not hesitate to email RAVE about any items*.

We hope that colleagues both in Australia and overseas are well and safe at the end of a year which has disrupted all of our lives. There were a few positives, however. RAVE members were involved with on-line events that could, for the first time, include people from all around the world.

Our VET teacher-education programs at Federation University, on-line and with printed learning materials, grew considerably in 2020. Our students are teachers from TAFE and other RTOs, and we swapped stories with them about moving to on-line teaching and how it has affected students. The resilience of the VET teaching workforce has been memorable.

Government funding changes mean that fees for our Associate Degree of VET will reduce by around 40%. <https://study.federation.edu.au/#/course/DTV3> Our new Undergraduate Certificate in VET was a great success and will continue in 2021, albeit part-time rather than full-time. Any enquiries may be made to Erica Smith at [e.smith@federation.edu.au](mailto:e.smith@federation.edu.au)

45 students undertook our applied research single-subject course, completing small research projects about VET or industry. Not surprisingly, VET teaching in COVID featured strongly in research topic choices! We hope our students continue to undertake research.

In the newsletter you will find information about our research activities, research events that we have facilitated or helped to facilitate, our publications and engagement in policy and practice in the VET sector. Please forward to colleagues and encourage them to contact us to be added to the mailing list.

Stop Press: Just before the end of the working year we heard we had won a major research grant, from the new National Careers Institute Partnership Grants program. Brief details about that grant below.



**December 2020**

**OctoberVET 2020 ‘Learning in turbulent times’, 16 Nov 2020**

This year RAVE in partnership with AVETRA hosted its thirteenth OctoberVET event: ‘Learning in turbulent times’. This was our first online OctoberVET. We were able to have a keynote presentation from Anthony Mann, Senior Policy Analyst at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in Paris. The presentation was *‘Young people and the COVID-19 labour market: Insights from ‘PISA 2018’.* There were also presentations from RAVE members Barry Golding, Annette Foley, Erica Smith and Morgan Wise, on research about men’s sheds and about how adults have been learning about COVID-19. PowerPoint presentations from the evening are available on the RAVE VET research events page. <https://federation.edu.au/schools/school-of-education/research/research-groups/rave-researching-adult-and-vocational-education/vet-events>

**ACDEVEG Conference, 14-15 Dec 2020**

A few weeks after the OctoberVET event, RAVE members Erica Smith & Morgan Wise managed the organisation of the 6th Annual Conference on VET Teaching and VET Teacher Education, mounted by the Australian Council of Deans of Education Vocational Education group. The conference, *VET teacher development around the world,* was held over two evenings: December 14th and Decembers 15th. Three international experts spoke about VET teacher education in the countries in which they work, and there were also research-based presentations on VET teaching and VET teacher-education in Australia. The presentations will be available shortly via the ACDEVEG 2020 conference link at <https://www.acde.edu.au/networks-and-partnerships/acde-vocational-group/>

**RAVE Research projects**

**New funded RAVE research projects**

Shorty before Christmas 2020, RAVE leader Erica Smith was notified that her research team had won one of 13 projects awarded by the relatively new National Careers Institute; receiving $151,679. See <https://nci.dese.gov.au/partnership-grants-program>

A brief overview of our grant and the twelve other successful applications can be seen at <https://www.business.gov.au/grants-and-programs/national-careers-institute-partnership-grants/grant-recipients>

The RAVE project, ‘Careers in everyday industries: Potential benefits of increased visibility’, builds on several previous RAVE projects including two ARC-funded research projects. RAVE will be working with Victor Callan at the University of Queensland and SkillsIQ Skills Service Organisation. The project commences on 1st April 2021, and more details will be provided in the next edition of RAVE News

**New unfunded research projects**

**Learning to be safer**

**Erica Smith and Morgan Wise**

This project examined the ways in which people have been learning about important aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is believed to be the first research project on this topic. We surveyed adults about how they learned about four matters: health information, restrictions and closures, the progress of the pandemic nationally and internationally, and financial provisions. The project, ‘Learning to be safer’, used similar techniques to another recent RAVE project, ‘Learning to be greener’, which found how people had been learning about recycling and plastic bag use.

The research question for the project was ‘In what way did Australian adults learn about aspects of the pandemic during the early months of the 2020 crisis’? The research went into the field in late June, at a time when the coronavirus crisis appeared to be improving, but shortly afterwards Victoria began its ‘second wave’ which probably affected response rates and the nature of responses alike. This paper presents an overview of the project findings. There were 128 responses, mostly from the state of Victoria.

The project clearly showed that in times of crisis, people were turning to official sources of information which they viewed as trustworthy. They were also relying on very well-established media, i.e. broadcast television. An overview of the findings has already been published in the AVETRA magazine ‘Research Today’. Further analysis will investigate whether different respondent groups of people had different approaches to learning about the crisis; analysis will also be undertaken by date of response, to see if there are links to developments in the pandemic. More information is available on the RAVE research web site at ‘Current Research’.

**Researching men's sheds: Opportunities for international collaboration**

**Barry Golding**

In this project, Barry is seeking to identify some of the 'basics’ behind the now international Men's Shed Movement. This project explores how, why and where the Movement has already spread, what the research shows and briefly identifies opportunities for international research collaboration. Barry is the world leading researcher into men’s sheds.

**Community learning through adversity and disaster: An Australian case study of rural adaptation and resilience**

**Annette Foley and Barry Golding**

Annette and Barry used a qualitative case study approach to critically examine the role of community involvement in learning to adapt and develop resilience in the face of disaster. Within a decade, the already disadvantaged, small, Australian rural community of ‘Bellbird’ (a pseudonym) faced three major disasters: The Millennial Drought (1996 to 2010), a March 2013 bushfire, and the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020. Our interviews were conducted during late 2019 and early 2020 with men and women shedders as well as their significant others in the usually vibrant and unusually gender inclusive ‘Bellbird Men’s Shed’. For at least six months following the interviews, the Bellbird Men’s Shed was shut as a consequence of the COVID-19 lockdowns. The data from our interviews and emerging literature on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic are used to critically interrogate the role local community learning plays in responding to and developing resilience in the face of locally experienced global disasters.

**Teachers’ use of learning theories in vocational education and training**

**Erica Smith**

This project analysed 15 teachers’ accounts of difficult teaching situations in vocational education and training (VET) and the ways in which learning theories could help to explain the situations and to avoid them in the future. The accounts were taken, with permission, from assignments submitted by the students in a VET teacher-education course. They were all experienced VET teachers, in a range of training providers and industry areas. The research was presented at the ACDEVEG conference 2020 (see details above) and will be extended in 2021.

**Updates on previous projects**

Barry Golding’s research on the history of Adult Learning Australia and research into ACE in Australia, through the pages of the Australian Journal of Adult Learning (AJAL) and its antecedent journals spanning 60 years has concluded, and was published in AJAL in December (see below).

Barry Golding published a number of local newspaper articles on his research on the first five years of contact in Dja Dja Wurrung country 1836-1841 (see below)

**RAVE achievements**

**RAVE members’ publications and achieve-ments since RAVE News 10 (May, 2020)**

**Peer-reviewed journal papers**

Barratt-Pugh, L., Hodge, S., & **Smith, E.** (2020). Learning and development practitioners: identity, profession and future trajectory. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources*, *58*(2), 220-246.

**Golding, B.** (2020) Getting serious: The national ‘vision splendid’ for adult education 60 years on. *Australian Journal of Adult Learning, Special Edition*. 60 (3) pp 365-398.

**Golding, B., Foley, A.** & Weadon, H. (2020). Community learning through adversity and disaster: An Australian case study of rural adaptation and resilience beyond paid work*. Australian Journal of Adult Learning, Special Edition*. 60 (3) pp 513-536.

**Smith, E.** (2020). Afterword: A fresh look at workplace learning for VET teachers. *International Journal of Training Research, Special edition, 18*(1), 84-92. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14480220.2020.1757890>

**Non-peer reviewed papers**

**Golding, B**. (2020). Sixty year ALA history, including the broader Australian adult and community education (ACE) context: Time Line, *Australian Journal of Adult Learning*, 60*(3),* pp.538-554*.*

**Smith, E. & Wise, M.** (2020). How have people been learning about COVID-19 related matters? Overview of findings. *Research Today, 26*, pp. 7-9.

**Golding, B**. (2020) 'Growing up in Dja Dja Wurrung Country', The Buloke Times, 19 June, 2020, p.11.

**Golding, B.** (2020) 'The Richardson River and the man behind the name', The Buloke Times, 23 June 2020, pp.8-9.

**Golding, B.** (2020) A darker side to the Mitchell expedition, 1836, Part 1, Setting the scene, The Buloke Times, 26 June 2020,  p.8.

**Golding, B.** (2020) A darker side to the Mitchell expedition, 1836,   Part 2, Two transits through Dja Dja Wurrung Country, The Buloke Times, 30 June 2020,  p.9.

**Golding, B.** (2020) A darker side to the Mitchell expedition, 1836,   Part 3, The third transit , May 1836, The Buloke Times, 3 July 2020,  p.9.

**Golding, B.** (2020) A darker side to the Mitchell expedition, 1836,   Part 4, The second homeward transit, October 1836, The Buloke Times, 7 July 2020,  p.9.

**Golding, B.** (2020), Reflections on Reconciliation: Why bother? And what can we do? Part 1: How things have already changed, The Buloke Times, 10 July 2020,  p.7.

**Golding, B.** (2020), Reflections on Reconciliation: Why bother? And what can we do? Part 2: Some next steps, The Buloke Times, 14 July 2020,  p.12.

**Golding, B.** (2020) From Suffolk to St Arnaud, North Central News, 22 July 2020, p.10.

**Golding, B.** (2020) Not such a Saint Arnaud, North Central News, 29 July 2020, pp.10-11.

**Golding, B.** (2020) Reconciliation with Dja Dja Wurrung peoples, North Central News, 5 August, 2020, pp.8-9.

**Golding, B.** (2020) The Avon Plains Lakes and Wetlands: Repairing a broken system, North Central News, 12 August, 2020, pp.14-15. (later published in the Buloke Times).

**Conference papers - peer-reviewed**

**Smith, E. & Foley, A.** (2020). Choosing VET as a post-school activity: What are some influences on non-metropolitan students? *23rd Annual Conference of AVETRA*, Melbourne, 23-24 April. (Conference postponed, publication details unclear)

**Conference papers – other**

**Smith, E.** (2020). Future workforce ready? How apprenticeships and traineeships can help. Workforce ready: Challenges and opportunities for VET, *29th NCVER 'No Frills*', Virtual conference, July 7-10. Selected as plenary (‘featured’) presentation.

**Smith, E. & Tuck, J**. (2020). How stakeholders in the G20 countries are adapting their apprenticeship systems to address diversity. New Zealand VET Research Forum. On-line, Nov 12th. <https://ako.ac.nz/our-community/ako-aotearoa-news/new-zealand-vocational-education-and-training-research-forum-2020/>

**Golding, B.** (2020). Researching men’s sheds: Opportunities for international collaboration. *October VET: Learning in turbulent times*, online, 16 Nov.

**Smith, E. & Wise, M.** (2020). Coronavirus information: A question of trust? Survey results on learning about the pandemic. *OctoberVET: Learning in turbulent times*, online,16 Nov.

**Foley, A. & Golding, B**. (2020). Community learning through adversity and disaster: An Australian case study of rural adaptation and resilience. *OctoberVET: Learning in turbulent times*, online,16 Nov.

**Smith, E. & Wise, M**. (2020). Researching a pandemic during a pandemic. ACSPRI (Australian Consortium for Political & Social Research Inc.) *Social Science Methodology Conference*, on-line, 1-3 Dec.

**Smith. E.** (2020). VET teacher-trainees’ reflections on the utility of learning theories. *ACDEVEG: VET teacher development around the world: 6th Annual conference on VET teaching and VET teacher education*, on-line, 14-15 Dec.

**Other activities and awards**

Public speaking engagements

**Annette Foley**, Facilitator of the ALA Virtual conference: *Looking back, casting forward – 60 Years of Adult Learning in Australia.* November 25th <https://ala.asn.au/ala-virtual-event-looking-back-casting-forward-60-years-of-adult-learning-in-australia/>

**Annette Foley**, Invited MC of the Adult Learning Australia webinar: *The power and Potential of the Adult Learning and Education in Changing Times*, September 4th 2020.

**Robin Shreeve,** Webinar host:The improving prestige of colleges in the UK. Why it is happening and what it may mean. David Hughes, Chief Executive, Association of Colleges, UK. This was a preview of the final report of the independent commission on the college of the future, 15 Oct. see: [https://www.collegecommission.co.uk/](https://protect-au.mimecast.com/s/hBnDC1WL1yuqMqXmiLAWsz?domain=collegecommission.co.uk/).

**Robin Shreeve,** Webinar host:Trends in the Future of Work: What does this mean for UK Employment and Skills system?  Lesley Giles, Director Work Advance (UK). 21 Oct.

**Robin Shreeve** Webinar host:The Productivity Commission's Interim report on the National Skills and Workforce Development Agreement - responses by Craig Robertson (TDA), Troy Williams (ITECA) and Don Zoellner (CDU). 2 July.

**Erica Smith.** Invited as guest speaker to National VET Educator Development Network (NVEDN) online meeting, 18 November 2020, to speak on ACDEVEG and on her ARC project on VET teacher qualifications.

**Erica Smith,** Invited guest speaker at VPN (VET Practitioner Network Victoria) online meeting September 2020; topic ‘Future workforce readiness’.

**Erica Smith,**  Presentation and panel discussion at ‘No Frills’ conference integrated into a Podcast Special for NCVER’s Vocational Voices series. September 2020. Episodes 1 and 5 at <https://www.ncver.edu.au/news-and-events/podcasts/vocational-voices-podcast>

Contribution to policy work

**Shreeve, R.** Submission to the Productivity Commission Inquiry into VET. <https://www.pc.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/254612/subir070-skills-workforce-agreement.pdf>

**Erica Smith.** Asked to advise on the questions for the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC) government study ‘Growing up in Australia’ – post-school education questions, September 2020.

**Erica Smith.** Consulted by the Productivity Commission in relation to the Inquiry into the National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development.

**Erica Smith.**  Consulted as an expert in relation to a number of national Commonwealth projects on matters to do with VET workforce capability; and on a project on a tertiary sector generic skills framework.

International

**Erica Smith.** Interviewed for a project on Australia-India research collaboration Australia-India Institute, and Invited by the University of Glasgow, to be a member of the International Advisory Committee for an ESRC-funded project, a comparative study of Indian and Mexican apprenticeship systems.

**Erica Smith.** Consulted over OECD multi-country survey on ‘Teachers and leaders in VET’ April, 2020.

Contributions to VET sector

**Erica Smith** continues to serve on the Education Industry Reference Committee (IRC), which maintains the Training and Education, and Foundation skills Training Packages.

In the second half of 2020 she chaired the IRC’s working party to develop a skill set in on-line learning as part of the Training and Education Training Package, to help the VET sector address the need to move to on-line learning as a result of COVID-19. Reporting to the Australian Industry & Skills Committee’s Emergency Response Sub-Committee. Skill set TAESS00018: Deliver E-Learning Skill Set released 29.10.20. <https://training.gov.au/TrainingComponentFiles/TAE/TAESS00018_R1.pdf>

Erica is now a member of the working party of the IRC developing a new unit, or possibly units, of competency on e-assessment, 2020-21.