



New South Wales Board of Vocational Education and Training  
Department of Education and Training

## FINAL PROJECT REPORT

# BROKERING PARTNERSHIPS FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN THE NEW MANUFACTURING SECTOR

Prepared by:

TAFE NSW, Manufacturing, Engineering,  
Construction and Transport Curriculum Centre



\_\_\_ June 2006 \_\_\_

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### Project Background and Objectives

In recognition of the continuing importance of the manufacturing and engineering (M&E) industry in the NSW and Australian economies, the NSW TAFE Commission Board has, in recent years, devoted considerable attention to the issue of how best to provide services to the industry in support of its workforce development needs. Globalisation and technological change are exposing the industry to ever-increasing competition and demanding significant changes in the way business operates and the way workers acquire and apply their skills.

Research commissioned by TAFE NSW reinforced the need to re-orient their services to the M&E industry and recommended the development of a more systematic and responsive approach to **consultation** with industry, including **networking**, regional and state-wide **partnership** formation and acting more as a **broker** of training solutions.

In response to the latter recommendations, and as part of its New Manufacturing Strategic Directions Plan, TAFE NSW sought the support of the NSW Board of Vocational Education and Training (BVET) to fund a number of pilot projects under the banner *“Brokering Partnerships for Workforce Development in the New Manufacturing Sector”*. Operating in five (5) regional locations in NSW (Western Sydney, Mid North Coast, Riverina, South Western Sydney and Western NSW) TAFE NSW Institutes were invited to develop projects in pursuit of four key objectives:

1. Support the establishment of New Manufacturing Workforce Development Networks to improve the capacity of TAFE NSW and enterprises to identify and respond to manufacturing and engineering workforce development requirements in specific regions.
2. Develop the capability of Networks to broker partnerships to assist New Manufacturing enterprises improve business capacity, work practices and production processes via a more appropriately skilled workforce.
3. Enhance the capacity for allied VET providers to unite their efforts and take up the challenge of cooperative interaction and resource sharing in order to improve VET community responsiveness to regional and state-wide workforce development requirements.
4. Identify communication, management and structural strategies to enable Networks and partnership arrangements to engage in effective and sustainable collaborative interaction, focused on workforce development solutions for improving manufacturing business capability.

## Overview of Project Outcomes and Evaluation Comments

In line with the projects overall theme of advancing a more systematic and responsive approach to support regional industry skills development through strategic networking, the five targeted regions produced the following outcomes and external evaluation comments.

- **Riverina – ‘A New Manufacturing Industry Network for the Riverina Region’**

A New Manufacturing Industry Network is expanding in the Riverina as a result of the project, enhancing the regions’ capacity to promote and develop competitive (Lean) manufacturing training and improve manufacturing processes for local food manufacturers and engineering manufacturers. This sub-project specifically set out to establish natural network ties with enterprises by assisting targeted businesses to improve business practices/productivity and then engage these businesses as ‘flag-ships’ to expand the network and assist other businesses in the region to develop their skills capability.

Evaluation comments: The Riverina network’s future and growth is based on TAFE NSW’s concerted efforts in promoting successful business improvement partnerships and fostering network activity across the region. A number of local industry stakeholders have already sought partnership links/membership to this network. Through expressed interest in this project from local business consultants and enterprises from the Wagga Wagga and Griffith areas, and in conjunction with the networks proposed ‘virtual network communication strategy’, TAFE NSW has established its credibility as regional brokers of workforce development partnerships.

- **Mid North Coast – ‘Manufacture Coffs Coast/North Coast Institute: Advanced Manufacturing Partnerships’**

The project enhanced the capability of the existing ‘Manufacture Coffs Coast/North Coast Institute: Advanced Manufacturing Network’ to adopt a coordinated approach to broker advanced manufacturing training solutions for allied network enterprises in the region. TAFE NSW is taking a lead role in the network to source expertise and relevant training providers from across the state.

Evaluation comments: As a result of this projects effort to unite with and support the Manufacture Coffs Coast (MCC) network, TAFE NSW was espoused by network members as pivotal to its goals, particularly given the disparate nature and remote locations of MCC network members. This project has ensured a continued and coordinated response in the region to support the networks skill development function and broker workforce development solutions for its enterprise members.

- **Western – ‘Orange-Cabonne-Blayney Industry and Skills Group: Client Training Management Network’**

A ‘Client Manager’ approach was established in the Western Region of NSW, supporting industry members of the ‘Orange-Cabonne-Blayney Industry and Skills Group’ (Industry and Skills network) to identify skill needs and develop training solutions for their workforce. This network is going from strength to strength with

approximately twelve enterprises, two local Councils and the Department of State and Regional Development actively participating. The value of collaborative and focused workforce development activity has increased VET/Industry relationships significantly in the region.

Evaluation comments: Through the success of this project in the region, TAFE NSW – Western Institute has established a ‘Client Manager’ function within its business strategy to support workforce development for manufacturing and engineering firms. Uniting this function with existing Industry and Skills network goals has provided the network with an ongoing/sustainable approach to regional workforce development. Based on the positive results of this approach, Western Institute is presently instigating a capacity development strategy to develop the capabilities of more staff, and staff in other industry disciplines (i.e. building and construction), to support industry skill identification and training partnership activity (i.e. Client Manager activity). To date, network members have benefited from immediate response by TAFE NSW through this projects ‘Client Manager’ approach for specific enterprise based training solutions, recognition of prior learning for existing workers, contextualised training in line with enterprise job functions and on-the-job delivery and assessment of apprenticeship training for mature aged apprentices.

- **South Western Sydney – ‘TAFE NSW / SWS Industry Education Partnership Inc. / AIG: Industry Preparation Network’**

A successful community network initiative implemented in the Macarthur region – the Macarthur Apprentice Recruitment Strategy (MARS) is being emulated in the Bankstown region of South Western Sydney to promote entry-level training and employment of ethnic youth in local M&E enterprises. This project is being driven by the ‘TAFE NSW/South Western Sydney Industry Education Partnership Inc/Australian Industry Group: Industry Preparation Network’, which has brought together a network of community interest groups to promote M&E careers by establishing a sound pathway to apprenticeships. Project coordinators are currently promoting this initiative across a number of local high schools.

Evaluation comments: TAFE NSW’s capacity to emulate the collaborative MARS concept in another community has been enhanced by this projects support. However, while support from local host enterprises is promising, a significant factor in successful implementation and sustaining this networks goal will be the effectiveness of promoting manufacturing and engineering careers and the ultimate take-up of such careers by young ethnic people. The timing of such promotion is critical and has been purposely aligned to the completion of a school year when potential recruits are considering their career options for the future.

- **Western Sydney – ‘Competitive Manufacturing Network: Promoting Business Improvement for SMEs’.**

In the Western Sydney region a new ‘Workforce Improvement Network’ (WIN) has been established as a result of this project, comprising to date a small group of eight (8) small to medium enterprises (SMEs) from the areas manufacturing and engineering sector. The network is currently applying its effort to investigating methods to assist SMEs to participate in, and reap the benefits of, implementing

'competitive (Lean) manufacturing systems' as part of their work functions. TAFE NSW's role in this collaborative cohort is coordinating/brokering the development of innovative competitive manufacturing training solutions for these enterprises. The Western Sydney network is building momentum and is currently fine-tuning its objectives for workforce improvement of regional SMEs.

Evaluation comments: Responsiveness and sustainability of the WIN network will depend on TAFE NSW's commitment to continue to drive regional skill development support for SMEs. As with the Riverina experience, testimonials from successful network member partnerships will serve as a 'flow-on' effect to grow network membership and workforce development activity.

The five regional workforce development networks have highlighted the significance and value of community groups working together. Increased opportunities are emerging for TAFE NSW, industry and allied community personnel to collaborate in relation to skill identification and innovative training solution development.

Through the project networks, mutual opportunities now exist for TAFE NSW staff to gain a greater understanding and appreciation of enterprise business imperatives and practices, and for industry staff to gain a greater understanding and appreciation of the national training system and its capacity to support industry skill development.

As a direct result of this project, the opportunities for TAFE NSW and industry to improve cooperative interaction that supports workforce skill development continue to grow.

## Comments and Recommendations

In general terms, the TAFE NSW/BVET Brokering Partnerships for Workforce Development in the New Manufacturing Sector project (New Manufacturing Project) provided the five TAFE NSW Institutes with resources to explore some new ways of engaging with local manufacturing and engineering enterprises, to develop insight into current industry needs and to plan and develop what products and services they might offer in response.

The TAFE NSW/BVET New Manufacturing Project has provided a range of sound models for unifying the efforts of TAFE NSW, industry and the community for workforce development in line with current Council of Australian Government (COAG) initiatives to make the national training system more flexible and responsive.

A major outcome of this project was the importance of developing strong **relationships** with local enterprises and offering them more than what has been offered in the past. Building strong **relationships** with and winning the trust of local manufacturing enterprises is something which requires long term strategies so longer term outcomes can be achieved. However, the short-term BVET project funds did offer Institutes the opportunity to integrate project objectives within their broader Institute plans and strategies to grow TAFE / Industry partnership arrangements that foster collaborative workforce development.

Specific regional sub-projects, under the overall TAFE NSW/BVET New Manufacturing project, have identified the need to promote a holistic approach to workforce skills development as part of the networking process. Ultimately, the aim of these regional sub-projects was about how TAFE NSW can work in a different way in partnership with industry and the community. As these regional sub-projects have evolved, so has the need to form networks, examine workforce organisation, assist enterprises with job-design, optimise skills used in the workplace and build workforce capability as a part of regional and economic development. These characteristics of new ways of working could potentially link with future Skill Ecosystem frameworks in regions or enterprises.

## **Recommendations - TAFE NSW response**

The TAFE NSW/BVET New Manufacturing Project has highlighted a number of recommendations for TAFE NSW to consider in order to maintain meaningful and collaborative partnership arrangements and support workforce skill development in the manufacturing and engineering industry sector. These recommendations and TAFE NSW's response include:

- **Establishing systems to sustain networking and partnership arrangements to support future regional workforce skill development.**

Project evaluation of the TAFE NSW/BVET supported project acknowledges that, for longer term and sustainable outcomes to be pursued, successful partnership models need to be integrated within TAFE NSW Institutes' broader plans and operational strategies.

As part of TAFE NSW's, New Manufacturing Strategic Directions Plan (Plan), there is corporate commitment to align TAFE NSW training products and services with the current needs of the manufacturing and engineering industry and position TAFE NSW to anticipate and respond timely to the sectors workforce development needs.

In line with the Plan, TAFE NSW/BVET New Manufacturing Project directions will continue to evolve and be embedded into the business of TAFE NSW through strategic actions currently being implemented and overseen by the TAFE NSW, New Manufacturing Strategic Directions Committee and Management Group.

These actions will incorporate successful project outcomes and include:

- TAFE NSW Institutes continuing to take a lead role within regions in coordinating new or aligning with existing industry/community based networks and brokering partnership arrangements for workforce skill development. Existing TAFE NSW/BVET project network models will be replicated across all Institutes to support this action.
- Communicating the outcomes and models developed under the TAFE NSW/BVET project via a TAFE NSW, New Manufacturing Communications

Website. It is intended that this website be developed into an interactive web portal. The portal will invite industry, community and VET providers to engage in collaborative interaction. The portal is currently under construction and will be rolled-out towards December 2006.

- Implementing a TAFE NSW Capacity Development strategy to expand the New Manufacturing Project and enhance the capability of staff to engage with industry through networks and partnerships with respect to workforce skill development. TAFE NSW has a current sister-project in place to develop this strategy.

TAFE NSW/BVET New Manufacturing Project coordinators and Managers in three of the targeted regions are devising a Capacity Development Strategy based on the success of their specific projects. Western Institute, North Coast and Western Institutes are presently working together to formulating a goal oriented approach to capacity development for TAFE NSW that extends beyond traditional professional development and supports TAFE NSW M&E personnel to take on new roles such as client liaison, workplace training, training brokerage and developing meaningful partnerships with industry.

- Integration of strategic elements and actions within Institutes and overall TAFE NSW strategic goals.

Other recommendations arising from the TAFE NSW/BVET project, which will be incorporated into the implementation of New Manufacturing strategic directions are:

- **The need to promote community based relationships.**

It is clear that workforce skill development relationships need to incorporate broader representation of stakeholders than has occurred in the past. As argued in 'World Class Skills for World Class Industries' (Australian Industry Group, 2006) report, regional workforce skill development is a shared responsibility that compels input from government, employers, employer associations, community and individuals - all have a role to play in the development of workforce skills.

- **The need to use minimalist terminology.**

Words like "networks", "partnerships", "training brokerage", "VET community responsiveness" and "workforce development" are at the very heart of the Brokering Partnerships initiative, but they seemed to mean very different things to different people throughout the project. Such terminology can be treated as jargon and consequently practitioners may lose track of what is really important – in this case, simply developing strong **relationships** with local enterprises.

- **Assuring that partnership arrangements are effectively coordinated and project managed.**

For partnerships to be effective and sustainable, a clear mission, detailed project plan - including task outlines, milestones and a clear statement of success measures, needs to be developed and adhered to. Commitment from all stakeholders from the outset in conjunction with a dedicated coordination role is essential for successful partnership arrangements.

- **Responding to regional workforce skill requirements via collaborative interaction.**

The project revealed that there are great benefits to be derived from collaboration with other service providers and working with other key regional agencies when seeking to enhance relationships with industry. Relationships with these stakeholders need as much nurturing as those with industry, particularly if they are expected to make a material contribution to effective workforce skill development for the region.

- **Removing systemic barriers to networking and partnership arrangements.**

Removing systemic barriers to networking and partnership arrangements includes accommodating work demands of enterprises and systemic constraints often inherent in public sector providers.

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## PROJECT DETAILS

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### HISTORY

In recent times the manufacturing and engineering industry sector has experienced significant and persistent trade skills and labour shortages that are compromising the sector's capacity to respond to increased global competition. An aging workforce, historically low training rates and diminished capacity to attract, develop and retain younger trade qualified people is dramatically contracting the pool of skilled labour. Combined with the challenges of increased global competition, anticipated declines in the sector, which is the second largest employer in NSW, will impact on the overall state economy.

Changes to manufacturing and engineering industries demand for both skill and labour have significant implications for the provision of Vocational Education and Training (VET) provider products and services and the business of TAFE NSW.

#### Acting on research

The NSW TAFE Commission Board commissioned a Manufacturing and Engineering Research Program (Research Program)<sup>1</sup> to investigate current and future operating characteristics of manufacturing and engineering enterprises across the state and to develop strategies to support enhanced skill formation for the sector.

Research identified that developing and delivering appropriate VET support for the sector will play a key role in improving workforce productivity at a time where product and process innovation are critical to the sector's survival (Toner, 2002). Toner asserts that investment in collaborative and responsive skill formation systems is a necessary condition for innovative and high performance manufacturing firms.

A 'whole of industry' approach to skill definition and development is required that moves beyond the limits of traditional VET thinking to incorporate the broader ethos of *workforce development* (Buchanan, 2003). Workforce development is defined as:

*"Those activities which increase the capacity of individuals to participate effectively in the workforce throughout their whole working life and which increase the capacity of firms to adopt high-performance work practices that support their employees to develop the full range of their potential skills and value"* (Schofield, K. et al, Skills South Australia. Final Report - Ministerial Inquiry, Adelaide 2003).

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<sup>1</sup> The Manufacturing and Engineering Research Program, commissioned by the NSW TAFE Commission Board comprised two major studies to guide the development of strategic directions for TAFE NSW to more appropriately support skill formation in the manufacturing and engineering sector. The two studies included:

- Toner, P., Wixted, B., *The Emerging Training Needs of the NSW Manufacturing and Engineering Sector*, Australian Expert Group in Industry Studies (AEGIS), University of Western Sydney, 2002
- Buchanan, J., Briggs, C., et al, *'Not with a bang but a whimper?' Skills and the future of NSW Manufacturing and Engineering*, Australian Centre for Industrial Relations Research and Training (ACIRRT), University of Sydney, 2003. **Executive summaries and full reports are available at [www.lg.tafensw.edu.au/2387/workforce/default.htm](http://www.lg.tafensw.edu.au/2387/workforce/default.htm)**

Within the context of workforce development, the research identified an urgent need for specific new training strategies to reposition the VET sector and improve New Manufacturing<sup>2</sup> productivity. There was significant emphasis in the research on improving communication channels between enterprises, allied training providers and allied training support agencies and a suggestion that this would strengthen the sector's capacity to meet new and emerging workforce development challenges. Key strategies identified for VET providers were:

- Taking a lead role in coordinating liaison between industry/community support agencies and enterprises via strategically formed and focused workforce development networks.
- Adopting a more focused and systematic approach to 'partnership arrangements' on a regional and state-wide basis.
- Embracing a VET provider 'training brokerage' role to more effectively respond to enterprise skill needs.

Acting on research, TAFE NSW is renewing its commitment to be the catalyst for rebuilding a vibrant and appropriately skilled New Manufacturing industry. The NSW TAFE Commission Board has developed and is implementing TAFE NSW Strategic Directions with a mission to 'make a difference for the workers and employers in the NSW manufacturing and engineering sector' (**Appendix 1**).

## PROJECT OBJECTIVES

With the joint support of the NSW Board of Vocational Education and Training (BVET), TAFE NSW intends to revitalise and refocus VET products and services for a New Manufacturing Sector in NSW. As part of its Strategic Directions, TAFE NSW is currently taking a lead role at state and regional levels in coordinating strategic Workforce Development Networks and actively brokering partnerships for innovative workforce development solutions. This involves bringing together enterprises, allied VET providers, allied industry support agencies, government and regional development organisations to collaborate in identifying skill requirements and improving workplace practices and productivity improvements for regional manufacturing and engineering firms.

The *Brokering Partnerships for Workforce Development in the New Manufacturing Sector Project* has four objectives.

1. Support the establishment of New Manufacturing Workforce Development Networks to improve the capacity of TAFE NSW and enterprises to identify and respond to manufacturing and engineering workforce development requirements in specific regions.

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<sup>2</sup> New Manufacturing is a term currently being promoted by TAFE NSW and is based on the Victorian Governments 'Agenda for New Manufacturing' (Manufacturing Policy, Victoria, May 2003). New Manufacturing describes the vital and progressive nature of modern manufacturing industries. VET provision for New Manufacturing builds on traditional training practices and embraces a refocused and revitalised paradigm for emerging skill requirements of the sector. For VET providers, New Manufacturing means new challenges, new opportunities and new investment in training products and services for a sustainable future.

2. Develop the capability of Networks to broker partnerships to assist New Manufacturing enterprises improve business capacity, work practices and production processes via a more appropriately skilled workforce.
3. Enhance the capacity for allied VET providers to unite their efforts and take up the challenge of cooperative interaction and resource sharing in order to improve VET community responsiveness to regional and state-wide workforce development requirements.
4. Identify communication, management and structural strategies to enable Networks and partnership arrangements to engage in effective and sustainable collaborative interaction, focused on workforce development solutions for improving manufacturing business capability.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The potential for establishing regional New Manufacturing Workforce Development Networks and Partnership arrangements within the boundaries of ten (10) TAFE NSW Institutes across the state was investigated by project Institute New Manufacturing Champions (i.e. Cohort of TAFE NSW staff seconded to support the implementation of Strategic Directions). Project proposals were prepared and presented to the Project Management Group for consideration.

In line with the strategic intent of this joint TAFE NSW/Board of Vocational Education and Training (BVET) project, the project Management Group confirmed that effort and resources would be focused on a selection of regions where manufacturing and engineering was most prominent and active and that targeted regions would provide a diverse range of network/partnership models that could eventually be rolled out to other regions and industry sectors.

On advice from the project Management Group, the TAFE NSW – New Manufacturing Strategic Directions Committee (Project Steering Committee) endorsed that five (5) regions in the state would be targeted to trial and evaluate the effectiveness of a diverse range of Workforce Development Networks and Partnership models based on the specific characteristics of the manufacturing and engineering community for the specific region.

The regional projects included:

- Riverina – ‘A New Manufacturing Industry Network for the Riverina Region’
- Mid North Coast – ‘Manufacture Coffs Coast/North Coast Institute: Advanced Manufacturing Partnerships’
- Western – ‘Orange-Cabonne-Blayney Industry and Skills Group: Client Training Management Network’
- South Western Sydney – ‘TAFE NSW / SWS Industry Education Partnership Inc. / AIG: Industry Preparation Network’
- Western Sydney – ‘Competitive Manufacturing Network: Promoting Business Improvement for SMEs’.

## Regional project approach

Each of the five regional networks determined its own mode of operation and region-specific outcomes as outlined in Tables 1 to 5 below. However, each regional project contributed to the overall project objectives and was underpinned by a ‘whole-of-industry’ focus on skill identification and workforce development solutions. In each case, TAFE NSW took a lead role in coordinating a collaborative approach to regional workforce development need.

Prior to commencement, all regional projects carried out a ‘project planning’ phase specific to their locality and identified key stakeholders, project coordination tasks and timeframes that aligned to overall project requirements.

**Table 1: Riverina Region - ‘A New Manufacturing Industry Network for the Riverina Region’**

Approach	Regional Specific Outcomes
<p>This project coordinated a campaign to encourage regional manufacturing enterprises to investigate the Competitive Manufacturing (CM) initiative as a means to assist them to be more globally competitive through innovative workforce skill development.</p> <p>The project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoted competitive manufacturing and the National Competitive Manufacturing Training Package (CMTP) as a catalyst for improving business practice and manufacturing processes in the region.</li> <li>• Formed a new regional Industry Network to identify CM skill development competencies for regional enterprises.</li> <li>• Developed collaborative partnerships with the aim of engaging participants from a range of regional manufacturing firms in training and assessment activities that will lead to formal CMTP qualifications.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A New Manufacturing Industry Network for the Riverina region charged with capacity to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promote developments in CM training throughout the Riverina Region.</li> <li>- Identify competencies and delivery options relevant to the broader workforce of the local manufacturing sector.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ongoing benefits of the new Network will be unique in the region because it will bring together a mixture of enterprises with a focus on their common interest in improved manufacturing processes. It is planned that the industry Network will be maintained and developed by a virtual network with an annual seminar and/or enterprise visits.</li> </ul>

**Table 2: Mid North Coast Region – ‘Manufacture Coffs Coast / North Coast Institute: Advanced Manufacturing Partnerships’**

Approach	Regional Specific Outcomes
<p>TAFE NSW in cooperation with Manufacture Coffs Coast Network collaborated to investigate new ways of working between industry, government and education in order to promote and build a highly skilled workforce for advanced manufacturing firms in the Coffs Coast region.</p> <p>The project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinated identification of skill clusters and the necessary advanced manufacturing and generic skill sets / training needs required to assist the regions manufacturing businesses.</li> <li>• Is actively brokering partnerships with appropriate and capable training providers for innovative and practical workforce development solutions that address immediate industry skill needs.</li> <li>• Worked with key advanced manufacturing stakeholders in the region to promote economic value and return on investment of business-focused training.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Established framework for a sustainable response to workforce development for regional advanced manufacturing firms.</li> <li>• Enhanced capability of the MCC / NCI network, to adopt a coordinated approach to sourcing and resourcing practical training solutions to address current/long-term workforce development needs.</li> <li>• Increased value of TAFE NSW as a ‘first-choice’ training broker that engages appropriate and relevant training providers for workforce development solutions supporting business goals of advanced manufacturing enterprises.</li> <li>• Improved regional focus on the promotion of manufacturing as a viable career option for existing workers and new recruits.</li> </ul>

**Table 3: Western Region – ‘Orange-Cabonne-Blayney Industry and Skills Group: Client Training Management Network’**

Approach	Regional Specific Outcomes
<p>Western Institute established a ‘client workforce development management’ provision in the region to work in collaboration with manufacturing and engineering firms and the Orange-Cabonne-Blayney Industry and Skills Group.</p> <p>The project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinated identification of common and relevant skill requirements for clusters of regional firms in collaboration with the Industry and Skills Group.</li> <li>• Brokered partnerships with regional manufacturing and engineering enterprises to develop and establish innovative workforce development solutions that addressed the common and relevant skill requirements identified by the network.</li> <li>• Promoted and supported the existing network group as an informed focal point for skills debate to ensure that workforce skill requirements and development solutions for the region are targeted and based on local business improvement needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved capability for a coordinated and regional approach to workforce skill identification and workforce development solutions.</li> <li>• Enhanced value of TAFE NSW as a ‘service provider’ of focused workforce development activity. The value for enterprises is business focused skill development based on job function requirements and training and development programs that are primarily work-based. The value for individuals is that job needs are satisfied, work functions mapped to national units of competency and gap training is possible to obtain national qualifications.</li> <li>• Client managed approach provides ongoing/sustainable approach to regional workforce development identification and solution.</li> </ul>

**Table 4: South Western Sydney Region – ‘TAFE / SWS Industry Education Partnership Incorporated / AIG: Industry Preparation Network’**

Approach	Regional Specific Outcomes
<p>TAFE NSW SWSI in cooperation with Ai Group and South Western Sydney Industry Education Partnership Inc established a regional industry preparation network for the promotion, training and employment of entry-level traineeships and apprenticeships targeting local ethnic groups in the Bankstown region.</p> <p>The project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Established a network of organisations interested in the promotion, entry-level training and employment of young people into M&amp;E sector.</li> <li>• Partnered with local manufacturing and engineering organisations for the development of a publicity campaign delivered in local high schools promoting the advantages and career prospects of working in the manufacturing and engineering sector.</li> <li>• Liaised with local ethnic groups and developed materials in the various different languages to promote the advantages and career prospects of working in the manufacturing and engineering sector.</li> <li>• Established entry-level training programs for interested youth with local employers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased regional focus on the promotion, entry-level training and employment of ethnic youth in the manufacturing and engineering sector for the Bankstown region.</li> <li>• Targeted manufacturing and engineering career promotional strategy, through the delivery of manufacturing and engineering seminars in local schools, promoting traineeships and apprenticeships.</li> <li>• Increased opportunity for local ethnic youth to gain a traineeship and/or apprenticeship in the manufacturing and engineering sector.</li> <li>• Improved regional relationship between key manufacturing and engineering sector stakeholders enhancing the community’s capacity to identify skill requirements and act on workforce development solutions for the sector.</li> </ul>

**Table 5: Western Sydney Region – ‘Competitive Manufacturing: Promoting Business Improvement for Regional SMEs’**

Approach	Regional Specific Outcomes
<p>This project established a regional Competitive Manufacturing Industry Network to address the potential for Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to actively integrate competitive manufacturing principles into their business operations and improve their capability to adopt high performance work practices.</p> <p>The project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigated methods to assist SME's to participate and benefit from implementing Lean Manufacturing methods in their work practices, without the large costs of individually employing expert consultants.</li> <li>• Established a collaborative cohort of SMEs to promote innovative implementation of Competitive Manufacturing to including Lean Manufacturing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased value of TAFE NSW WSI's capability to take a lead role in coordinating the implementation and training of high performance work practices for the benefit of regional manufacturing and engineering firms.</li> <li>• Improved capacity of SME's to adopt 'Worlds Best Practice Lean Systems' as part of their work functions.</li> <li>• Enhanced method of communication and consultation within the region regarding workforce development identification and solutions for small to medium manufacturing and engineering enterprise.</li> </ul>

**Project Management**

A TAFE NSW – New Manufacturing Strategic Directions Committee (Project Steering Committee) and Project Management Group (**Appendix 2**) was established to provide leadership and advice and to oversee the implementation of the joint TAFE NSW/BVET project.

**External Evaluation**

The Project Management Group engaged an external evaluator - Powers and Associates (Australia) Pty Ltd, to work with project management and regional project teams to evaluate outcomes and achievements of the joint TAFE NSW / BVET project. The over-arching purpose of the evaluation was to provide practical, professional, and independent advice and contribution to project outcome improvement.

The aim of the external evaluation was to document and review project progress against its main objectives and provide:

- A concise description of the networking and partnership models being used within each of the regional networks, highlighting similarities and differences between them
- An analysis of progress of each of the regional networks against the project objectives and outcomes, identifying the key factors affecting progress
- Identification of lessons learned across the five networks that can inform future networking and partnership activities
- Consideration of how successful activities might be replicated and scaled up to be effective and sustainable in other situations, regions and industry sectors.

Specific factors to be considered by the independent evaluator included the capability, capacity and commitment of stakeholders (VET providers, firms, allied industry and government agencies) to participate in the project and to support its objectives and the communication mechanisms required for sustainable networking, workforce development and partnership activity.

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## **REGIONAL PROJECT DEVELOPMENTS / EVALUATION**

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### **WESTERN SYDNEY: Building a Formal Network from Scratch**

In broad terms, the Western Sydney model involved “hand picking” a small, group of eight (8) local SMEs from the Manufacturing and Engineering sector; choosing firms initially on the basis of the Network Facilitator’s existing personal business network; TAFE itself taking the lead role in putting the network together, organising its meetings and providing executive services and allowing the network to formulate its vision and mission under a broad charter as a regional “Workforce Improvement Network”.

It was found that setting up this new network has required a big investment of time compared with other sub-projects, that have instead used existing networks as a vehicle for trialling new service arrangements. Because of this, the initial outcomes of the Western Sydney project are about laying the foundations for future innovation. It might take 12 months or more for the network to reach a stage where TAFE and the industry can begin to benefit fully from the arrangements being put in place.

However, the external evaluator reported a number of promising developments that can be reported against this network. The network is generating increased levels of interest in Competitive Manufacturing training. There have been numerous requests for TAFE presentations on their training services in this field and there is interest too from the network’s largest company member. “Everyone on the network has now either directly accessed TAFE services or has made enquiries”, said the Network Facilitator. This includes negotiation of business management training for one member’s network of small-firm sub-contractors. The prospect of winning business from the network’s large company member was viewed as a potential “big win” for the network and for TAFE. The opportunity presented to the SME members to network and learn from the large company member also stands to improve local business capacity.

### **WESTERN NSW: Harnessing an Existing Engineering Network**

Growing concerns in the region about local skills shortages led to the formation in 2005 of a group of regional stakeholders called the “Orange-Cabonne-Blayney Skill Development Steering Committee”. This group received funding from the NSW Department of State and Regional Development (50%) and the three participating councils (50%) to engage a Project Officer to facilitate networking and drive other local initiatives. It soon became clear that a network focused on the specific skill needs of the local engineering sector was also needed thus an Industry Skills Group was formed.

The partnership and networking approach pursued is based on harnessing an existing network focused on skills development; supporting its expansion to include other firms (primarily engineering firms involved in metal fabrication); encouraging an open dialogue at the network meetings and being willing to “take criticism on the chin when it is warranted” and, in developing solutions, to “not be constrained by what has

been before or what is out there already”; and providing services to the industry at the workplace through a Client Manager who analyses enterprise needs and identifies workforce development solutions.

The network is building momentum and maturing quickly. It is beginning to formalise its mission and is planning further expansion of its membership. It has chosen a new name – RENWELD (Regional Engineering for Work Education Logistics Delivery) – and has drafted formal objectives and a vision. It is doubtful that any of this would have happened without the impetus provided to the network by the Brokering Partnerships project and the realisation of TAFE’s capacity to respond to local industry skill development needs.

### **NORTH COAST NSW: Harnessing an Existing Manufacturing Network**

Similar to the Western NSW model, the model in North Coast NSW can be described as tapping into an existing network – ‘Manufacture Coffs Coast Network (MCC)’, in need of reinvigoration through a greater level of member involvement. The network itself comprises mostly small firms (staffing of 5 to 60) and, although originally intended as an “Advanced Manufacturing Network” is now more all-embracing and includes fairly low-tech businesses such as a saw mill and a surfboard manufacturer. A regional industry skills audit was undertaken as a platform for future partnership formation and training brokerage.

The project is still in its early stages and the results of the skills audit were not available at the time of preparing this report, however, TAFE is preparing to develop and broker appropriate products and services to respond to the needs of industry.

### **RIVERINA: Focusing on Business Development**

The network model included the selection of a Project Coordinator with extensive industry experience and with expertise in the Competitive Manufacturing Training Package (CMTP); then implementation of the CMTP in two carefully selected pilot sites through the provision of an initial 5 days of consultancy services to these pilot sites on the condition that they assist with a later promotional campaign by acting as “flag-ships”.

The Brokering Partnerships funding has helped to raise the level of awareness of TAFE’s response to improving business capability and supporting the strategy to kick-start the delivery of CMTP with the participating enterprises and in the region more broadly. The delivery of the package includes training of personnel at all levels in the firms and leading on-site, business improvement teams to oversee application of the training at the shop floor.

This was followed by conducting a promotional campaign including the development of Riverina-based promotional materials and the running of promotional events in Wagga Wagga and Griffith. Recruitment of other businesses to undertake the training and to be part of a regional industry network is currently underway.

To an extent, Riverina Institute has reversed the conventional thinking concerning network formation. Rather than develop a network as a means of increasing its business with the industry, as was the case in the other four projects, Riverina Institute seems to have done the opposite – it is first attempting to increase its business with industry and, in the process, build a network of satisfied customers willing to act as advocates for the region's development and for TAFE as a service provider.

The early signs are promising, in that the pilot firms have embraced CM concepts, with measured improvements in productivity, and will be entering into commercial contracts with TAFE for the provision of further training.

### **SOUTH WESTERN SYDNEY: Focusing on the Community**

The Brokering Partnerships project approved for the South Western Sydney Institute is an attempt to emulate a successful initiative implemented in the Macarthur region – the Macarthur Apprentice Recruitment Strategy (MARS). Involving TAFE, Macarthur Group Training, host employers, the Australian Industry Group and a range of local school and community stakeholders, MARS promotes manufacturing and engineering careers to young people and the community and establishes a new pathway to apprenticeships. Students enter the program after leaving school and sign up as trainees for the first twelve months. In that time they receive extra tuition at TAFE and have exposure to all three trade streams. Opportunities then exist to sign up to finish the apprenticeship with credit given for the time spent in the traineeship.

The Brokering Partnerships project differs from MARS in an important respect. The Canterbury-Bankstown region, where the Brokering Partnerships project is intended to operate, is said to have a weaker sense of regional identity compared to Macarthur, which is more like a rural community in this sense. Because of this, TAFE is focusing effort on a particular ethnic sub-group, people with a Lebanese background. It was thought that, by doing this, the manufacturing and engineering industry could access a new source of labour supply while a number of unemployment-related social problems in the region could be addressed.

**Table 6: External Evaluation Report – Summary of Regional Project Achievements**

Location	The Model	Achievements/Comments in Relation to Project Objectives 1 to 4
Western Sydney	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New 'formal' network from scratch</li> <li>• Target – SMEs</li> <li>• TAFE leads &amp; services the network</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Network formation has laid the foundation for close alliances with eight (8) regional SMEs</li> <li>2. Network has plans to engage experts and large company members to share experiences of Lean Manufacturing techniques with SMEs</li> <li>3. Responsiveness and sustainability depends on TAFE's willingness to continue to drive network support for SMEs</li> <li>4. Early signs that networks themselves are a valuable mechanism for enhanced communication with industry.</li> </ol>
Western NSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic links with existing network</li> <li>• Provision of 'Client Manager' approach to service M&amp;E firms by identifying skill needs</li> <li>• Broker training solutions</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Project has given the regions existing network a timely 'kick-start' and immediate pay-off by identifying skill needs through the 'Client Manager'</li> <li>2. Project has significantly enhanced TAFE's image in the eyes of industry and has benefited staff with practical experience in on-site consultation and needs analysis. Industry staff have also benefited.</li> <li>3. Industry initially anxious about training delivery after needs have been identified however, the project has proven its capacity to broker training. For example, training arrangements for one network firm has been brokered with the Riverina Institute in Non-destructive Testing.</li> <li>4. At this stage the Network is primarily funded by DSRD and driven by Network members. Sustainability will depend on the Networks ability to manage itself and take a shared responsibility over its own functions.</li> </ol>
North Coast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic links with existing network</li> <li>• Re-invigorate network to focus on skill development</li> <li>• Broker advanced manufacturing training solutions</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The initial approach to establishing alliances with an existing regional network proved to be difficult due to the disparate nature and remote locations of 'Advanced Manufacturing' network members</li> <li>2. North Coast TAFE is now working closer with the MCC chairperson to respond to enterprise skill needs. The diversity of enterprises in the network has presented problems in identifying common skill needs and business training solutions</li> <li>3. TAFE is seen by the Network as playing a pivotal role in brokering training solutions for the region and the project must continue to pursue a coordinated response in support of the MCC network</li> </ol>

		4. Stakeholders have expressed concerns about a lack of communication and effective project management. Steps have been taken to get the project back on track.
Riverina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New network via strategic business alliances</li> <li>• Focus on business improvement</li> <li>• Engage allied businesses as flag-ships to foster network activity</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Riverina experience has reversed the conventional thinking about network formation by forming strategic alliances with targeted firms and using them as flag-ships to engage other firms – a testimonial approach.</li> <li>2. As a result of this initiative the network has shown early signs of natural growth. As the network grows, so will its capability to broker partnerships and support industry skill development</li> <li>3. From a community perspective, Riverina is currently exploring links with other Lean Manufacturing networks. As a result of the projects success a number of local consultants are seeking partnership links/membership to the network</li> <li>4. Methodical management to the project has maximised results. Riverina's concerted efforts to initial industry analysis, project promotion and strategic alliances has assured its credibility to act as brokers.</li> </ol>
South Western Sydney	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emulation of MARS network in another setting</li> <li>• Target local ethnic community</li> <li>• Engage community groups, schools and industry</li> </ul>	Evaluation of this sub-project has revealed that transplanting the MARS model at another site would require significantly more time. As such, no evaluation was available at the time of writing this report.

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## MAJOR PROJECT OUTCOMES / LESSONS LEARNED

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There were a number of significant outcomes and lessons learned across the regional sub-projects. In relation to the four (4) key objectives of the project these included the following:

***Objective 1: Develop New Manufacturing Networks to improve the capacity of TAFE NSW and enterprises to identify and respond to workforce development needs.***

Projects like the Western Region approach has given their regional network a “kick-start” and an immediate pay off for network members’ contribution of time and ideas. Virtually at its inception, TAFE proved itself willing to listen to industry’s concerns and, more importantly, to respond immediately through the Brokering Partnerships approach. This project directly aimed to identify network members’ workforce development requirements. A significant feature of this identification was the direct contact made to firm supervisors and workers through their Client Manager approach.

Project outcomes have clearly influenced the development of capabilities of both TAFE and enterprise staff to engage in meaningful dialogue related to regional skill needs.

***Objective 2: Develop the capability of networks to broker partnerships and assist enterprises to improve business capacity and work practices.***

A number of promising developments can be reported against this objective.

Firstly, the Western Sydney network is generating increased levels of interest in Competitive Manufacturing training. The Network Facilitator has had numerous requests for TAFE presentations on their training services in this field and there is interest too from the network’s prestigious large company member. “Everyone on the network has now either directly accessed TAFE services or has made enquiries”, said the Network Facilitator.

The opportunity presented to the SME members to network with and learn from the large company member also stands to improve local business capacity. The Training and Development Manager from this company was described as an important network driver. She told the Network Facilitator that she had not been involved in a network for more than 12 years and was keen to “give something back”. From the perspective of the SMEs, the involvement of the larger firm could also present business-to-business opportunities and the development of enhanced local networked production capability with all its local economic flow-on effects.

Western NSW’s network was based on transferring and adapting a commercially negotiated partnership arrangement with a large local firm to a group of smaller enterprise network members. Such a multi-party partnership has broken new ground for Western Institute and the experience has been invaluable both for TAFE and the

participating firms. The network's recently drafted objectives clearly demonstrate a desire to build on this experience and to continue to work in partnership with each other and with TAFE – they include:

*“Utilise our combined power to best effect for the purposes of purchasing and training requirements”;* and

*“Maintain a close working relationship with TAFE NSW in order to ensure training provided is well suited to our collective requirements and actively pursue government assistance for training needs in our area.”*

From a regional development perspective, a very encouraging development is the growing willingness of members to form regional partnerships to bid for work and to pursue efficiencies and scale economies in procurement processes. There have already been examples of network members forming partnerships for project tenders and this is quite new in the region. As one member said: *“We’ve had clusters sold to us before, but these have all fallen apart. They were government-controlled, very regimented. ‘This is what you’ll do.’ This new network has brought people together and we run it as we see fit.”*

The participating pilot firm arrangements in the Riverina involved TAFE assuming a more innovative and pro-active approach in its engagement with local businesses. Has brokerage capability been enhanced? This is a complex question as TAFE's costs were covered by the *Brokering Partnerships* funding. Could the deal have been done without this funding? Certainly, if TAFE were to offer the same deal of five free days of training, financial risk would be added to the mix, but such “loss leader” strategies are not unknown in the business world when there is the prospect of significant commercial returns further down the track. Would TAFE have been prepared to take such a risk? Could the pilot firms have been sold on the idea on a commercial basis? All we can really say is that the ice was broken as a result of the BVET funding and that there are good prospects that further deals can be negotiated on commercial terms as a result.

**Objective 3:** *Enhance VET community responsiveness, cooperative interaction and resource sharing.*

At this stage the Western Sydney network provides the opportunity for TAFE to cast its service net more broadly among regional manufacturing and engineering firms and is enhancing such collaborative arrangements. As the network matures and more regional needs are identified, one would expect such arrangements to increase.

Brokerage of training solutions is certainly a critical element of the Western NSW project and there have already been examples of training expertise from outside the region being accessed, albeit TAFE expertise. This occurred when, in the course of the project's analysis of training needs, a network member inquired about the availability of training in non-destructive testing (NDT) and a deal was brokered with Riverina Institute to deliver it.

While there may be understandable limits to the willingness of TAFE in the future to broker deals with certain competitors, it is clearly positioning itself to do more and

more of this brokerage in the future. Western Institute recognises that the important thing is to develop a relationship of trust with the businesses in the region and that if this includes bringing in outside expertise, then that relationship can only be enhanced.

The need for TAFE to position itself as a broker of training solutions seems well understood by TAFE and other network stakeholders in the Mid North Coast. As a Coffs Harbour Council Economic Development Officer pointed out, “*We’re a small region, but clustered together we’re not. This is an opportunity for TAFE to be more proactive.*” TAFE is now recognised as an active partner in the adjunct Nambucca network, willing to broker creative solutions to its members training needs.

**Objective 4:** *Communication mechanisms for effective and sustainable collaborative interaction.*

Faced with some local scepticism about the value of networks in the Western Sydney cohort, the Network Facilitator researched factors that led to success in their operations. Three of the key factors identified were:

- Ensuring that network “maintenance functions” were performed;
- Developing group tasks on which the network can focus its energies and achieve early success; and
- Ensuring that members’ individual needs were met.

In this case, as the instigator of the network, TAFE has assumed full responsibility for its operation and for ensuring these success factors are built in. This differs from *Brokering Partnerships’* other structured networks in Western NSW and Coffs Harbour where a DSRD facilitator is responsible. While it gives TAFE more influence over the network’s areas of focus, it means a bigger investment of time and resources.

Overall it was seen as more important that the network itself takes responsibilities over its own operation and direction.

The Project Officer in Western NSW believes that, provided the training and other collaborative activities continue, there might be sufficient commitment to the concept within the network to share these functions among members. As he put it: “*They’re finally getting it – it’s not about me, it’s about them.*”

However, given the central importance of training and regional workforce development to the network, it is less likely that the network’s momentum will be maintained if TAFE backs away from its current, proactive approach. The expectations of the network have been raised as a result of the project and TAFE must now find a financially viable mechanism to deliver what the businesses want

Within the Western Institute itself, there is interest in replicating the approach. The Institutes’ Educational Leader is currently considering establishing an Automotive Network in Dubbo based on the BVET project service delivery model.

In the Riverina, engagement of the pilot firms as “flag ships” for TAFE is perhaps the most important element of the project’s communication strategy. The Institute believes its local market to be fairly sceptical about the benefits of new manufacturing techniques and management theories and that it would struggle to get its message across on its own. However, by partnering with respected local firms and having them speak on TAFE’s behalf it is anticipated that this is the best way to overcome this resistance and to quickly establish credibility.

The BVET funding has kicked started the process and, if all goes according to plan, the market will determine the viability of this new service offering by TAFE NSW.

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## KEY ISSUES / COMMENTS

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The external evaluation raised a number of key issues and comments in relation to project outcomes. These included:

- Establishing a new network is a time-consuming enterprise that requires clear commitment from a broad range of stakeholders to its purpose, directions and maintenance to support its intrinsic value and sustainability.
- Individual commitment to partnership arrangements and new ways of interaction between training providers, industry, government and community groups needs to be supported by fundamental systemic commitment to the philosophy of workforce development by both industry and VET providers.
- Removing systemic barriers to communication and increasing trust between network partners is necessary for a more responsive service strategy. One employer in the Western NSW region said:

*“The biggest thing [about the project] is that communication between TAFE and employers has increased ten-fold. Now we are getting a call from the apprentice’s teacher before they fall behind, not after. Now we can do something about it – it makes a big difference.”*

- No two networks will have the same characteristics. It is important that networks be allowed to develop their own structure and evolve at their own pace. Clearly networks with common interests appeared to work more amicably despite the potential for competitive tensions. Networks with more diverse membership may have few competitive tensions, but their fewer common interests might make it more difficult to maintain momentum.
- From the Riverina experience it was revealed that while networks are valuable, one does not need a network as a pre-requisite for the development of new business streams. On the contrary, the successful development, delivery and promotion of new business offerings can lead to a far more natural network: a committed customer base, willing to assist TAFE in the interests of the region.
- The costs and benefits of collaboration with other service providers need to be carefully weighed. Despite the good policy reasons for greater collaboration in regional areas, commercial and competitive realities mean that providers need to exercise care in how it presents such arrangements to industry.

- Specific regional sub-projects, under the overall TAFE NSW/BVET Brokering Partnerships for Workforce Development in the New Manufacturing Sector project (New Manufacturing Project), have identified the need to promote a holistic approach to workforce skills development as part of the networking process.

Ultimately, the aim of these regional sub-projects was about how TAFE NSW can work in a different way in partnership with industry and the community. As these regional sub-projects have evolved, so has the need to form networks, examine workforce organisation, assist enterprises with job-design, optimise skills used in the workplace and build workforce capability as a part of regional and economic development. These characteristics of new ways of working could potentially link with future Skill Ecosystem frameworks in regions or enterprises.

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## CONCLUDING REMARKS / RECOMMENDATIONS

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### CONCLUDING REMARKS

In general terms, the TAFE NSW/BVET Brokering Partnerships for Workforce Development in the New Manufacturing Sector project (New Manufacturing Project) provided the five TAFE NSW Institutes with resources to explore some new ways of engaging with local manufacturing and engineering enterprises, to develop insight into current industry needs and to plan and develop what products and services they might offer in response.

The TAFE NSW/BVET New Manufacturing Project has provided a range of sound models for unifying the efforts of TAFE NSW, industry and the community for workforce development in line with current Council of Australian Government (COAG) initiatives to make the national training system more flexible and responsive.

A major outcome of this project was the importance of developing strong **relationships** with local enterprises and offering them more than what has been offered in the past. Building strong **relationships** with and winning the trust of local manufacturing enterprises is something which requires long term strategies so longer term outcomes can be achieved. However, the short-term BVET project funds did offer Institutes the opportunity to integrate project objectives within their broader Institute plans and strategies to grow TAFE / Industry partnership arrangements that foster collaborative workforce development.

Specific regional sub-projects, under the overall TAFE NSW/BVET New Manufacturing project, have identified the need to promote a holistic approach to workforce skills development as part of the networking process. Ultimately, the aim of these regional sub-projects was about how TAFE NSW can work in a different way in partnership with industry and the community. As these regional sub-projects have evolved, so has the need to form networks, examine workforce organisation, assist enterprises with job-design, optimise skills used in the workplace and build workforce capability as a part of regional and economic development. These characteristics of new ways of working could potentially link with future Skill Ecosystem frameworks in regions or enterprises.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The TAFE NSW/BVET New Manufacturing Project has highlighted a number of recommendations for TAFE NSW to consider in order to maintain meaningful and collaborative partnership arrangements and support workforce skill development in the manufacturing and engineering industry sector. These recommendations and TAFE NSW's response include:

- **Establishing systems to sustain networking and partnership arrangements to support future regional workforce skill development.**

Project evaluation of the TAFE NSW/BVET supported project acknowledges that, for longer term and sustainable outcomes to be pursued, successful partnership

models need to be integrated within TAFE NSW Institutes' broader plans and operational strategies.

As part of TAFE NSW's, New Manufacturing Strategic Directions Plan (Plan), there is corporate commitment to align TAFE NSW training products and services with the current needs of the manufacturing and engineering industry and position TAFE NSW to anticipate and respond timely to the sectors workforce development needs.

In line with the Plan, TAFE NSW/BVET New Manufacturing Project directions will continue to evolve and be embedded into the business of TAFE NSW through strategic actions currently being implemented and overseen by the TAFE NSW, New Manufacturing Strategic Directions Committee and Management Group.

These actions will incorporate successful project outcomes and include:

- TAFE NSW Institutes continuing to take a lead role within regions in coordinating new or aligning with existing industry/community based networks and brokering partnership arrangements for workforce skill development. Existing TAFE NSW/BVET project network models will be replicated across all Institutes to support this action.
- Communicating the outcomes and models developed under the TAFE NSW/BVET project via a TAFE NSW, New Manufacturing Communications Website. It is intended that this website be developed into an interactive web portal. The portal will invite industry, community and VET providers to engage in collaborative interaction. The portal is currently under construction and will be rolled-out towards December 2006.
- Implementing a TAFE NSW Capacity Development strategy to expand the New Manufacturing Project and enhance the capability of staff to engage with industry through networks and partnerships with respect to workforce skill development. TAFE NSW has a current sister-project in place to develop this strategy.

TAFE NSW/BVET New Manufacturing Project coordinators and Managers in three of the targeted regions are devising a Capacity Development Strategy based on the success of their specific projects. Western Institute, North Coast and Western Institutes are presently working together to formulating a goal oriented approach to capacity development for TAFE NSW that extends beyond traditional professional development and supports TAFE NSW M&E personnel to take on new roles such as client liaison, workplace training, training brokerage and developing meaningful partnerships with industry.

- Integration of strategic elements and actions within Institutes and overall TAFE NSW strategic goals.

Other recommendations arising from the TAFE NSW/BVET project, which will be incorporated into the implementation of New Manufacturing strategic directions are:

- **The need to promote community based relationships.**

It is clear that workforce skill development relationships need to incorporate broader representation of stakeholders than has occurred in the past. As argued in 'World Class Skills for World Class Industries' (Australian Industry Group, 2006) report, regional workforce skill development is a shared responsibility that compels input from government, employers, employer associations, community and individuals - all have a role to play in the development of workforce skills.

- **The need to use minimalist terminology.**

Words like "networks", "partnerships", "training brokerage", "VET community responsiveness" and "workforce development" are at the very heart of the Brokering Partnerships initiative, but they seemed to mean very different things to different people throughout the project. Such terminology can be treated as jargon and consequently practitioners may lose track of what is really important – in this case, simply developing strong **relationships** with local enterprises.

- **Assuring that partnership arrangements are effectively coordinated and project managed.**

For partnerships to be effective and sustainable, a clear mission, detailed project plan - including task outlines, milestones and a clear statement of success measures, needs to be developed and adhered to. Commitment from all stakeholders from the outset in conjunction with a dedicated coordination role is essential for successful partnership arrangements.

- **Responding to regional workforce skill requirements via collaborative interaction.**

The project revealed that there are great benefits to be derived from collaboration with other service providers and working with other key regional agencies when seeking to enhance relationships with industry. Relationships with these stakeholders need as much nurturing as those with industry, particularly if they are expected to make a material contribution to effective workforce skill development for the region.

- **Removing systemic barriers to networking and partnership arrangements.**

Removing systemic barriers to networking and partnership arrangements includes accommodating work demands of enterprises and systemic constraints often inherent in public sector providers.

**Mission:** To make a difference in the development of emergent skill requirements for the workers and employers in the NSW manufacturing and engineering sector.

**Goal:** To align TAFE NSW products and services with the current needs of the manufacturing and engineering industry and position TAFE NSW to anticipate and respond timely to future needs. In this process, TAFE NSW will be seen by industry and the community as partners, pioneers, catalysts and innovators in revitalising workforce development in the NSW manufacturing and engineering sector.

## Strategic Directions

- ***Nurturing TAFE NSW core market.***  
Build on a strong foundation of trade based training but not dwell on traditional trades and past training practices. Rebuild strong relationships with larger workplaces by finding new ways to engage with these employers.
- ***Diversifying for new markets and openings.***  
Devote attention to identifying and responding to new markets. Identify where TAFE NSW can reap the benefits of economies of scale through coordinated curriculum development at central level and its capacity for decentralised delivery at Institute level.
- ***Building new institutional capacity.***  
Upgrade and reconfigure TAFE NSW capacity to respond to changing circumstances and its ability to engage with the immediate needs of workplaces and their systems. Charge TAFE NSW personnel with the capability to engage with changing workplace needs.
- ***Embracing a new philosophy of skill: ‘Brokering partnerships for workforce development’.\****  
Extend TAFE NSW beyond a VET mindset by promoting the broader ethos of ‘workforce development’. TAFE NSW take the initiative in coordinating and brokering partnerships with a wide range of key agents for the development of manufacturing and engineering skills, particularly at regional levels.

\* **Workforce Development** ...those activities which increase the capacity of individuals to participate effectively in the workforce throughout their whole working life and which increase the capacity of firms to adopt high-performance work practices that support their employees to develop the full range of their potential skills and value (Schofield, 2003)

Implementation Actions and Primary Objectives	
<b>1</b>	<b>M&amp;E Products &amp; Planning</b> Review current offerings and future needs for New Manufacturing sector and, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure integrated provision across the State</li> <li>• Develop new products and services to increase the capacity of manufacturing and engineering firms to adopt high-performance work practices.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<b>Industry Coordination / Networking</b> Take a lead role at State and local level in <i>coordinating</i> key industry agents including enterprise and workplace managers / supervisors, labour hire firms, group training companies, equipment suppliers and private RTOs. <i>Includes; Peak employer groups, Skills Councils/ITABs, Local training advisory &amp; regional development committees, TAFE NSW &amp; Interstate links.</i>
<b>3</b>	<b>Communication &amp; Promotions</b> Develop and implement a <i>communication strategy</i> covering internal and external stakeholders including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documenting good practice in and beyond TAFE NSW.</li> <li>• Integrated client management and stakeholder liaison.</li> <li>• Development and dissemination of information.</li> <li>• Joint developed R&amp;D projects involving TAFE staff, industry and research institutions.</li> <li>• Enhanced use of TAFE Intranet and improved liaison with BVET regarding workforce skill development for the manufacturing sector.</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<b>Professional Development</b> Develop and implement an internal <i>workforce development strategy</i> for TAFE NSW personnel, which supports them to take on new roles such as client liaison, workplace training, brokerage and developing meaningful partnerships with industry. This plan will include medium and longer-term initiatives to replenish the TAFE NSW manufacturing & engineering workforce.
<b>5</b>	<b>Corporate Strategy</b> Integration of identified strategic elements and implementation actions within Institute and overall TAFE NSW strategic goals by incorporation into: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutes service delivery strategies.</li> <li>• The objectives of the MECAT Curriculum Centre.</li> <li>• The work of the Centre for Learning Innovation.</li> </ul>

**TAFE NSW, New Manufacturing Strategic Directions Committee**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Position / Representing</b>
Dr Maurice Allen	Director Education and Assessment, Engineers Australia
Dr Doreen Clarke, AM	TAFE Commission Board Member
Mr David Collins	R/GM State Training Services
Mr Robert Cowen	Managing Director, Cowen Manufacturing Pty Ltd
Mr Simon Hemli	Manager, Industry Services & Infrastructure, DSRegional Development
Ms Kathy Rankin	Policy Adviser, Australian Business Limited
Mr Evan Rees	Chairman Macquarie Generation
Ms Kaye Schofield	TAFE Commission Board Member
Ms Gail Silman	NSW Education and Training Advisor, Australian Industry Group
Ms Linda Simon	TAFE TA Secretary and BVET Board member
Mr Paul Sinclair	Electrical Trades Unions NSW Branch (rep. Labour Council of NSW)
Mr Ian Stone	Managing Director, Advanced Metal Products Pty Ltd
Mr Doug Wright (Chair)	Australian Industry Group / TAFE Board Member
Ms Susan Wright for Mr Paul Williams	Manager, VET Research, NSW Department of Education and Training
Mr Phil Cox	Institute Director, Hunter Institute, representing TAFE NSW Directors
Mr Cliff Trood	Member, New Manufacturing Workforce Development Network
Mr Derek Page	Member, New Manufacturing Workforce Development Network
Mr Brian Cobb	Manufacturing Skills Australia (Manufacturing Industry Skills Council)
Mr Emil Tabone	Manager, Operations, NSW DET New Apprenticeship Centre
Mr Brian Kerwood	Director, Australian Industry Group Training Services - AiGTS
Ms Rose Shum	Project Manager, MECAT Curriculum Centre
Mr Steve Parkinson	Executive Officer, Project Coordinator, MECAT CC

**Strategic Directions Management Group**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Position / Representing</b>
Mr Doug Wright	Australian Industry Group / TAFE Board Member
Ms Kaye Schofield	TAFE Commission Board Member
Mr Ian Stone	Managing Director, Advanced Metal Products Pty Ltd
Mr Phil Cox (Chair)	Institute Director, Hunter Institute - representing TAFE NSW Directors
Ms Rose Shum	Project Manager, MECAT Curriculum Centre
Mr Steve Parkinson	Project Coordinator, MECAT Curriculum Centre
Others	As required