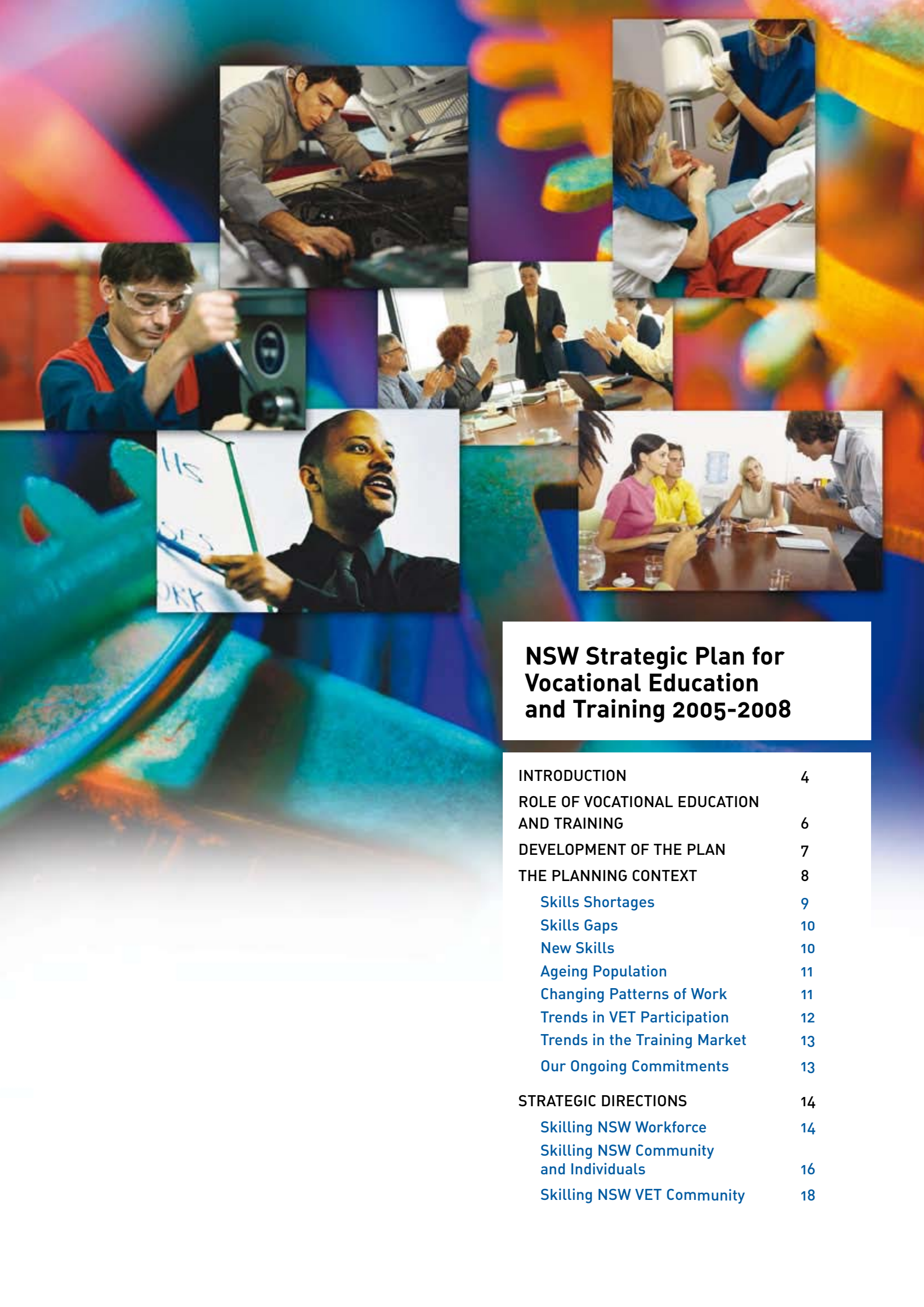




**NSW Strategic Plan for  
Vocational Education  
and Training 2005-2008**



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## NSW Strategic Plan for Vocational Education and Training 2005-2008

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**We have a high quality vocational education and training system that is capable of increasing the workforce capacity and economic performance of our state.**

**Our network of training providers plays a key role in driving the productivity and competitiveness of our industries and contributing to the economic and social development of our communities.**



The next four years will present some significant challenges - challenges for businesses seeking to build and retain a skilled workforce; for individuals looking for employment in an increasingly fragmented labour market; and for Vocational Education and Training (VET) providers anticipating and responding to industry requirements for skilled labour.

Skills shortages are emerging as a very real and growing threat to the economic productivity of enterprises, industries and communities in NSW. The State faces serious shortages of skilled workers, particularly in traditional trades, in the health and community services industries and in financial and business services. As a matter of priority, vocational education and training will need to focus on working in partnership with these and other industries to identify new ways of meeting current and future skills needs.

At the same time, the working population is ageing. More people are expected to retire in the future than enter the workforce. The competition for labour will be strong and employers will need to consider the recruitment of people

of all ages and look to retain and update the skills of their older workers to maximise productivity.

The ageing demographic will also impact upon the nature of services required by the population. More employment opportunities will be created in areas such as hospital and nursing home care, community support services and personal services which cater for the needs of older people, amongst others.

New skills will also be required in fields such as biotechnology, environmental technology and information and communication technology where innovation and technological advancement is driving demand.

As the nature of employment continues to shift away from full-time to part-time, casual and contract work, individuals will increasingly hold multiple jobs, face periods of employment uncertainty, and require skills that allow them to constantly adapt learning to new environments.

The next four years present an opportunity for people considered disadvantaged in the community to gain better access to vocational education and training, and employment. Inequity continues to exist in employment of indigenous people, people with disabilities, those with language, literacy and numeracy difficulties, youth at risk and people in regional areas.

It is critical that we recognise the importance of environmental sustainability to individuals, enterprises, communities and regions. Governments and communities are placing increasing pressure on industry to become more accountable for the environmental, social and economic impacts of business decisions, and the workforce will need the skills to be able to effectively implement environmentally sustainable practices.

The vocational education and training system must address the challenges facing our labour market. We must ensure our training providers continue to have the capacity to anticipate and meet the current and emerging needs of NSW industry. At the same time we will continue to maintain our commitment to quality vocational education and training.

The NSW Strategic Plan for Vocational Education and Training 2005-2008 sets out the strategic directions and priorities for vocational education and training over the next four years. This Plan builds upon the achievements of the NSW VET Plan 2002-2004 and has been developed to support the directions for vocational education and training arising from existing Commonwealth and State

Government plans and commitments. It is a plan that will enable the NSW vocational education and training system to meet the skill development needs of enterprises and individuals in the future.

### **Bert Evans AO**

Chairman

Board of Vocational Education and Training (BVET)







# Development of the Plan

The NSW Strategic Plan for VET 2005-2008 draws upon projections of industry, economic and occupational trends, demographic data, regional statistical profiles and data from commissioned research. It is also strongly informed by consultations with employers, employer associations and unions, training providers, community organisations and government agencies.

In developing the Plan, comments and advice were received from over 440 people who participated in discussion forums held across NSW in Sydney, Parramatta, Newcastle, Wollongong, Wagga Wagga, Dubbo and Coffs Harbour. A further 30 written submissions were also considered. A Consultation Paper was used as a framework around which comment and advice was sought regarding priorities and potential strategies for inclusion in the Plan.

Among the many views that were expressed during these consultations, the following issues were recurrent. Participants wanted:

- Greater engagement and collaboration between employers, training providers and other stakeholders to ensure training meets industry needs
- Improved marketing of vocational education and training to promote better understanding of VET opportunities and pathways
- Increased flexibility in the VET system to facilitate training in areas of skills shortages and skills gaps
- Better access to vocational education and training for people with special needs

The strategies outlined in the Plan have been developed to accommodate these issues and are grouped under three key themes:

## **Skilling NSW Workforce**

## **Skilling NSW Communities and Individuals**

## **Skilling NSW VET Community**

It is anticipated these strategies will be implemented in a range of ways, according to the needs of specific industries, regions and groups of stakeholders. The NSW Strategic Plan for VET 2005-2008 will also be used to guide funding decisions for VET programs in NSW over this period.

**NSW industries are faced with serious economic, demographic and social challenges that threaten the capacity of businesses to remain productive and competitive. Skills shortages and skills gaps are emerging as major problems for most industries. Our workforce is ageing and is not being replaced in sufficient numbers by new entrants. The way we work has also altered dramatically over the last decade.**



## **The Planning Context**

At the same time, participation in vocational education and training continues to increase in NSW as employers and the general community recognise the value of vocational education and training in building individual and workforce capabilities.

The VET training market is also growing, but is facing some challenges of its own.

This section outlines the economic, demographic and VET planning context in which the NSW Strategic Plan for VET 2005-2008 has been prepared.

# Skills Shortages

Like many developed countries, Australia is experiencing widespread skills shortages. In 2004 shortages were most acute amongst professionals, para-professionals and tradespeople.

In the professions, shortages are occurring across a range of occupations, from civil engineers to accountants to health care workers such as nurses, dentists, pharmacists and radiographers. Trade shortages are reported in most fields including manufacturing, building and construction, cooking and hairdressing.

Skills shortages are of concern because they constrain business output, investment and innovation.

There are a number of reasons why skills shortages have occurred in trades occupations in Australia<sup>1</sup>. They include:

- Sustained high output across a broad range of industries (mining and minerals processing, utilities, communications, construction, manufacturing, tourism) for most of the last decade. This has resulted in increased demand for skilled labour.
- Persistent decline in the ratio of apprentices-in-training to employed tradespeople. Reasons for the decline include:
  - Reduction in the proportion of young people in the workforce available for apprenticeships
  - Competing job opportunities arising from growth in the service sector

- Rising school retention rates and increased participation in tertiary education
- Reduced investment in apprenticeship training by privatised public utilities
- Reluctance to invest in longer-term training as a result of intensified competition and a shortening of time permitted for investments to return a profit
- Increased use of labour hire firms that contract trained staff rather than train up their own labour resources

In non-trades occupations, shortages have emerged as a result of industry or sector growth, high attrition rates of workers and insufficient investment in training.

Skills shortages are likely to continue throughout this decade, given the anticipated rates of employment growth across most industries.

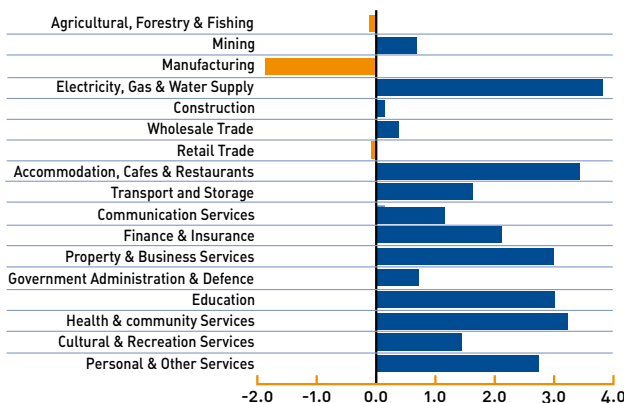
Employment growth is projected to occur in all industries in NSW with the exception of manufacturing, agriculture, forestry, fishing and wholesale trade<sup>2</sup>. Between 2005-2010 employment growth rates will be highest in the hospitality industry (accommodation, cafes and restaurants), personal & other services, health and community services and property & business services.

(See Table 1)

Job growth will be greatest in hospitals and nursing homes, computer services, community care services, legal and accounting services and cafes and restaurants.

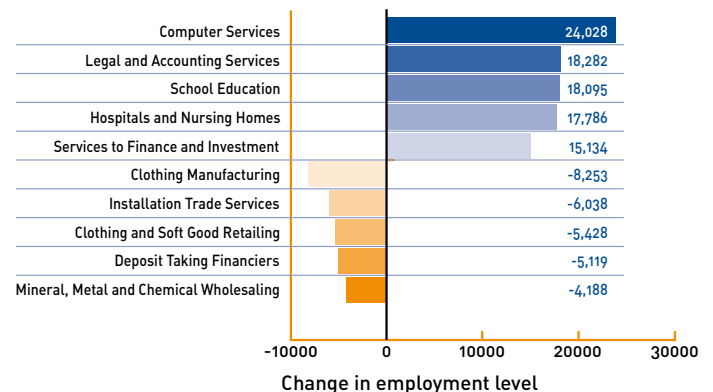
(See Table 2)

**Table 1: Average Annual Employment Growth Rates by Industry, NSW (2005-2010)**



Source: National Institute of Economic and Industry Research Employment Projections for NSW 2005-2010, October 2005

**Table 2: Top five industry sub-divisions with the highest numerical growth and the highest numerical decline, NSW (2005-2010)**



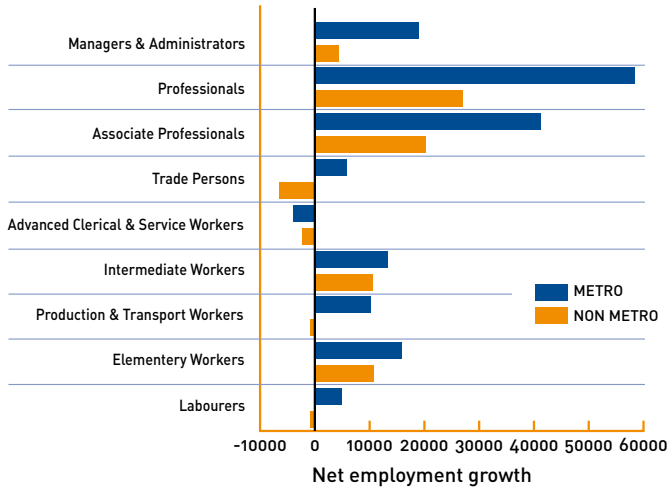
Source: National Institute of Economic and Industry Research Employment Projections for NSW 2005-2010, October 2005

<sup>1</sup> Dr Phil Toner Meeting Trade Skills Shortages through Innovation and Flexibility in the NSW VET System, April 2005

<sup>2</sup> National Institute of Economic and Industry Research Employment Projections for NSW 2005-2010, October 2005

Employment growth will be highest amongst professionals, associate professionals, managers and administrators. Demand for labour in all occupational groups will be greater in metropolitan NSW than in non-metropolitan areas, with the exception of labourers where employment growth is projected to be stronger outside the cities. (See Table 3)

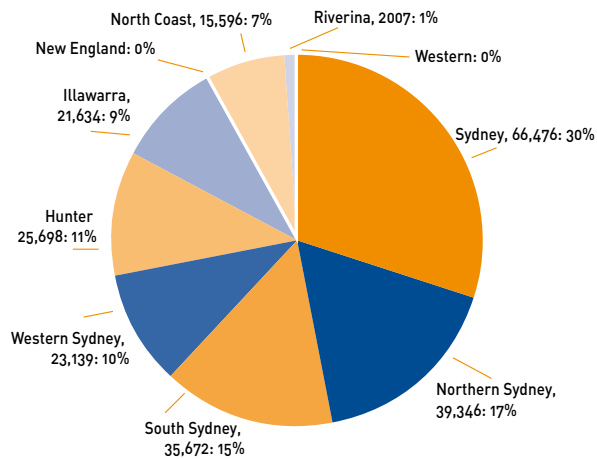
**Table 3: Forecast employment growth by ASCO major group NSW (2005-2010)**



Source: National Institute of Economic and Industry Research Employment Projections for NSW 2005-2010, October 2005

However the economic benefits of employment growth will not be shared equally amongst regions within NSW. North Sydney, South West Sydney and Sydney Central will be the greatest beneficiaries of employment growth between 2005-2010, with 72% of additional jobs generated in these regions. Outside of Sydney, employment growth will be highest in the Hunter, Illawarra and North Coast regions, but minimal in New England and Western NSW.

**Table 4: Distribution of forecast employment growth by Department of Education and Training regions (2005-2010)**



Source: National Institute of Economic and Industry Research Employment Projections for NSW 2005-2010, October 2005

## Skills Gaps

**As jobs evolve and new skills are required as a result of new technologies or work practices, gaps will emerge in the skills sets of workers. Skills gaps are common for workers returning to the workforce after an absence or for people moving to new job functions.**

The vocational education and training system will need to increase flexibility around the provision of training so that gaps in skills can be addressed through sets of competencies, with the focus being on the individual needs of clients.



## New Skills

**In addition to employment growth projected in existing occupations, vocational education and training will need to respond to demand for skills development in new and emerging industries. These include biotechnology, environmental technologies, advanced electronics and information and communications technologies.**

It is also recognised that workplaces now require more emphasis on innovation and seek adaptable, responsible, ethical workers with higher level interpersonal skills such as group and social problem solving and conflict resolution<sup>3</sup>.

These “new” generic competencies will need to be integrated into the future delivery of vocational education and training programs where appropriate, to complement the technical skills required by employers.

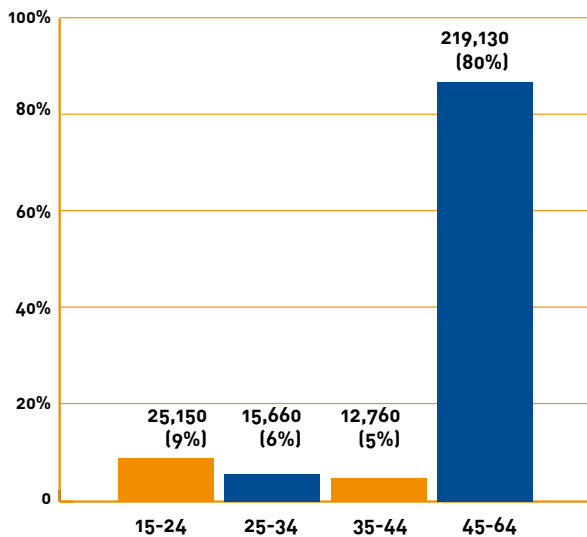
<sup>3</sup> Business Council of Australia Employability Skills for the Future 2002

## Ageing Population

Over the period 2004-2011, 80% of the growth in the 15-64 year old population (traditionally those of working age) in NSW will be attributed to those aged 45-64<sup>4</sup>.

The workforce of the future will increasingly comprise older workers approaching retirement, and there will be fewer young entrants to replace those who are leaving.

Shares of Growth in the NSW 15-64 year old population, NSW (2004-2011)



Source: ABS Population projections 2004-2011 (Cat no.3222.0) Table 5.17

Young people entering the labour market will have greater choice in employment and are more likely to have multiple careers than their working parents.

Employers will need to consider innovative ways of retaining the corporate knowledge and skills of their older workers at the same time as retaining the interest and commitment of their younger workers.

Opportunities exist for vocational education and training to play a major part in providing the solution to skills retention and development for employers and employees across NSW. Our training system must find ways of targeting training to the learning requirements and specific skills required by the different age cohorts and deliver that training in a style, format and place to accommodate the needs of both the employer and the learner.

## Changing patterns of Work

Over 2005-2008 the shift away from permanent full-time employment to part-time, casual and contract work is expected to continue, as shown in Table 5.

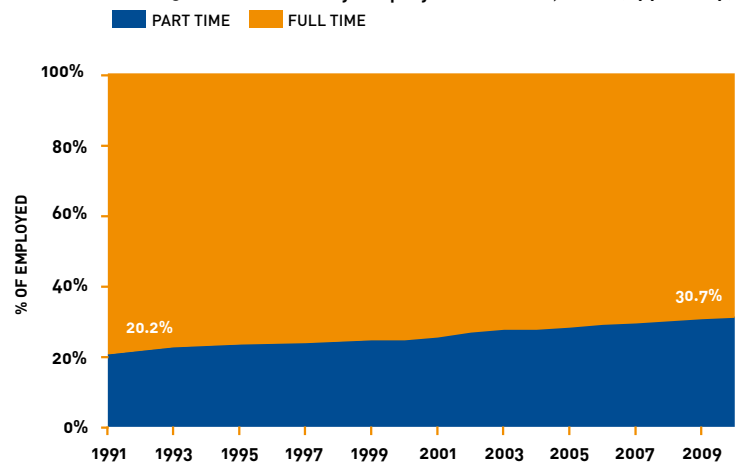
This trend has occurred as a result of organisational down-sizing and outsourcing of job functions (eg IT), and growth in industries such as hospitality and retail where a large proportion of employment has traditionally been casual or part-time.

Many workplaces now effectively operate 24 hours a day, with staff accessible via email and mobile from home. Hours of work are no longer fixed.

Individuals competing for employment in an increasingly casualised job market will not only need the technical skills to perform their work but they must have the ability to quickly apply those skills in future job roles. These workers also need skills to form and use networks, to innovate, and to communicate effectively with others in order to maintain ongoing employment.

With the increase in part-time, casual and contract workers, there is a need to organise training in a flexible way to meet different working patterns. In this labour market, vocational education and training will need to package, deliver and cost training in such a way that is attractive to these workers.

Table 5: Labour force by employment status, NSW (1991-2009)



<sup>4</sup> ABS Population projections 2002-2011 (Catalogue No. 3222.0) Table 5.17, Supplied by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

## Trends in VET Participation

**The number of people participating in vocational education and training continues to increase in NSW.**

### Apprenticeships and Traineeships

Participation in apprenticeships and traineeships has grown significantly in NSW. Over the period 2000 to 2004, the estimated numbers of apprentices and trainees in training in NSW increased from 81,500 to 121,500<sup>5</sup>. More recently NSW has recorded a surge in the number of apprenticeship approvals which are at their highest level since the late 1980s.

Attempting to maintain this level of participation will be crucial in sustaining the number of apprentices and trainees required to reduce skills shortages in trade occupations.

### TAFE Enrolments

Enrolments in TAFE courses have jumped from 417,319 in 1996 to 506,930 in 2004<sup>6</sup>. Increases have occurred across the age groups, with mature aged students now one of the fastest growing client groups for TAFE.

Over recent years NSW has made progress towards improving participation in vocational education and training by groups most disadvantaged in the community. Between 2000 and 2004, course enrolments by Aboriginal students in TAFE NSW rose by 26.5% from 15,787 to 19,968 compared with a 10% increase for total enrolments. At the same time enrolments by people with disabilities grew by 66.8% from 27,961 to 46,628,<sup>7</sup> and enrolments by people from rural and isolated areas increased by 9.0% from 141,894 to 154,615<sup>8</sup>.

Despite these improvements in VET participation, employment outcomes for some equity groups remain below those of the general population. For example, in 2004 60% of Aboriginal students, 47% of students with a disability and 59% of students who speak a language other than English at home were employed after completion of a VET qualification compared with 71% of all graduates<sup>9</sup>.

### Schools

NSW has the most extensive vocational education and training (VET) in schools program in Australia, offering over 150 accredited courses that can contribute to the HSC and a nationally recognised industry qualification. Ten of these courses can also contribute to the Universities Admissions Index.

In 2004 there were 69,563 VET in Schools enrolments compared with 48,658 in 2000. In 2005 over 40% of Government students in Years 11 and 12 undertook a VET course as part of their senior studies, with 80% of these students spending time in structured workplace learning with over 20,000 host employers across the state.



In 2004, 792 students commenced a part-time traineeship in NSW schools, compared with 681 in 2003<sup>10</sup>.

The vocational education and training system in NSW has made an enormous contribution to individual skills development and the economic productivity of businesses in this state. Our goal is to continue to increase that contribution through the provision of training that is client focused and targeted specifically to areas of skill need.

## Trends in the Training Market

**The last decade has seen the number of Registered Training Organisations in NSW increase from 175 in 1995 to 852 in 2004, with another 691 interstate RTOs now operating in NSW under recognition arrangements<sup>11</sup>.**

### VET Workforce

The vocational education and training workforce is itself facing challenges which will need to be overcome if it is to meet the expectations of future clients. Like other industries, the VET workforce is ageing and is increasingly casualised. According to research, the VET workforce of the future will be operating in an environment characterised by increasing diversity in its client base; increasing sophistication in client expectations; change in products and expansion of options for training delivery; changes in employment, work roles, team structures and places of work; increasing competition and increasing demand<sup>12</sup>. To operate effectively in that environment, the VET workforce will need client-focus skills, the ability to adapt to change, management and leadership capabilities, coaching, mentoring and networking skills, information and communication technologies and the ability to access, create and use knowledge to add value to the business they are in.

Teachers and managers in vocational education and training will need access to professional development to support them in responding to such a dynamic training environment.

## Our Ongoing Commitments

Vocational education and training in NSW has been part of a successful national system since 1992. Over 2005-2008 NSW will continue to collaborate with the Commonwealth Government to ensure the workforce acquires the skills necessary to increase the productivity and competitiveness of industry in NSW.

The NSW Strategic Plan for VET 2005-2008 aligns with recommendations related to vocational education and training from the following key state planning documents and initiatives:

**The NSW Government's Plan for Securing our Skilled Workforce**

**Learning for Sustainability: NSW Environmental Education Plan 2002-2005**

**Outcomes of the NSW Summit on Alcohol Abuse. Changing the Culture of Alcohol Abuse in New South Wales, Section 7: Workforce Capacity, New South Wales Government, May 2004**

**NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group and NSW Department of Education and Training Report of the Review of Aboriginal Education, August 2004**

The Plan has also been designed to support national directions outlined in:

**ANTA, Shaping our Future: Australian National Strategy for vocational education and training 2004-2010**

<sup>5</sup> NCVET September 2004 Estimates cited in 2004 Department of Education and Training Annual Report

<sup>6</sup> The NSW Department of Education and Training Annual Report 2004

<sup>7</sup> Disability enrolments are based on a new count which includes students who ask for help with their disability or have specified a type of disability on their enrolment form.

<sup>8</sup> NSW Department of Education and Training Annual Report 2004, p310

<sup>9</sup> NCVET Student Outcomes 2004

<sup>10</sup> 2004 Department of Education and Training Annual Report

<sup>11</sup> NSW Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board Annual Report 2003-2004

<sup>12</sup> ANTA (2004) Enhancing the capability of VET professionals project: Final Report



# Strategic Directions

## Skilling NSW Workforce

**For industry to remain competitive it must have the capacity to improve economic performance by increasing productivity and innovation. To do this, businesses need to attract, retain and develop their workforces.**

During 2005-2008 the vocational education and training system will come under increasing pressure to deliver workforce skills quickly and cost-efficiently. These pressures will be largely driven by growing skill shortages and skill gaps in existing and emerging industries.

To build the workforce skills required by industry over 2005-2008, vocational education and training must be accessible and flexible to allow all people to participate effectively in the workplace. Training providers must accommodate the needs of all client groups – people in the workforce requiring re-skilling, people re-entering the workforce, older workers being retained in the workforce, young people entering the workforce and people with special needs who are most vulnerable to changes in the economy and the labour market. In addition to the paid workforce is the growing number of volunteer workers who also require skills to perform their roles in the community.

To improve the efficiency of the vocational education and training system, greater recognition needs to be made of the skills and knowledge already acquired by workers, with training effort targeted to the specific skills requirements and learning styles of individuals. For example, whilst apprenticeships in traditional trade areas remain an appropriate model for skills acquisition, we also need to look at establishing and promoting alternative pathways, particularly for people with existing skills and experience.

In an environment where competition for the training dollar will increase as industries vie for skilled labour, it will be critical that thorough workforce planning underpins expenditure on training at a regional and state level. The establishment of collaborative networks within regions and more effective channels of communication between regional, state and national organisations, will help to ensure that priorities for expenditure on skills development are determined through informed discussion, sound research and agreement on regional and state training needs and outcomes.

Integral to the building of individual, enterprise and industry workforce capabilities is the development of skills and knowledge that contribute to the environmental and economic sustainability of communities. The NSW Government has introduced a range of programs and strategies to move industry and the community towards sustainable production and consumption. Vocational education and training plays a key role in the implementation of these policies by educating the workforce to adopt new practices and products that will not degrade vital natural resources for future use. These new practices will in turn help develop sustainable industries and communities.

Training providers have the role of understanding the training needs of industry and supporting business development and innovation through the development and delivery of products and services that meet specific enterprise needs. It is through partnerships and collaboration that we can ensure the training needs of the NSW workforce are met.

# Skilling NSW Workforce



Objective	Strategies	Outcomes
<b>Build a skilled, innovative and responsive workforce</b>	<p>Increase the flexibility and relevance of NSW apprenticeships</p> <p>Improve transition to apprenticeships from pre-vocational, pre-apprenticeship, VET in schools and traineeship programs</p>	<p>Reduction in skills shortages in traditional trades</p> <p>Increase in apprentices' competency based progression and completion</p>
	<p>Strengthen traineeship outcomes through traineeship skills profile aligned to NSW industry priorities and agreed traineeship purpose</p>	<p>Reduction of skills shortages in priority industries</p> <p>Increase in traineeship qualifications in priority industries and occupations</p>
	<p>Increase skills recognition and targeted skills gap training, including foundation skills, for workers in priority industries</p>	<p>Increase in qualifications in NSW including through recognition of prior learning and current competencies</p>
	<p>Partner with industry and enterprises to increase skills development for innovation and emerging industries</p>	<p>Innovative training products and services developed and new skill needs met</p>
	<p>Strengthen planning and information on NSW skill priorities through improved engagement with industry, community, education and training providers and government</p>	<p>Greater effectiveness in delivery of training to meet industry and regional skill needs</p>
	<p>Increase environmental sustainability practices within vocational education and training programs</p>	<p>Improved capacity of individuals, businesses and industries to implement environmentally sustainable practices</p> <p>Improved social and economic outcomes for communities and regions</p>

## Skilling NSW Communities and Individuals

**A key role of vocational education and training is to contribute to the economic and social development of communities by skilling individuals within the community. This includes helping people develop the skills to gain employment. It means providing those who seek employment with appropriate technical and generic skills that are targeted to real employment opportunities in their local area.**

Vocational education and training also plays a vital role in building local economies by ensuring that the workforce is equipped with the skills required to maintain and grow successful businesses which contribute to healthy local environments.

Our training providers have the potential to actively work with local businesses, government and community agencies to jointly identify local industry training needs and provide the products and services that best meet the requirements of businesses and individuals within the community.

The vocational education and training system must also ensure equitable access to vocational education for all those who experience barriers to employment. These people include the long-term unemployed, youth (including those at risk),

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people with disabilities, those from non-English speaking language backgrounds, people in rural and remote communities and people with low literacy and numeracy skills.

Improved access to vocational and generic skills is required to assist those returning to the workforce after an absence due to child rearing, unemployment, retirement or other circumstance. Many of these people will have existing skills that can be recognised, but they will also require 'gap' training to update their generic and technical skills to meet the requirements of the modern workplace.

The value of vocational education and training needs to be better marketed to students, teachers and parents at the high school level where career choices are often determined. More effective pathways must be established between the vocational education and training programs offered in schools and those available post-school to maximise the use of vocational skills and knowledge acquired at school.

Greater support also needs to be available to school leavers managing the transition into the workforce and priority will be given to young people undertaking traineeships in areas of employment demand.

# Skilling NSW Communities and Individuals



Objective	Strategies	Outcomes
<b>Prepare people for work</b>	Partner with local industries, enterprises and community organisations to support regional economic development	Improved social and economic outcomes for communities
	Promote vocational education and training career pathways to careers advisers, parents, students and the community	Increased proportion of young people undertaking vocational education and training during and upon completion of school
	Increase access to employability and work ready skills including literacy and numeracy	Improved participation and achievement in vocational education and training
	Strengthen provision of VET in Schools through schools and TAFE NSW	Increased participation in VET in schools programs
	Increase opportunities for students to commence traineeships and apprenticeships at school	Transition from VET in schools to employment and further education and training
	Facilitate the transition of school leavers into post-school vocational education and training through improved articulation and credit transfer arrangements	More effective transition from school to post-school VET
	Give priority to young new entrants in the NSW traineeship system	Increased participation and representation of young people in traineeships in NSW
	Strengthen partnerships between training providers and indigenous organisations to improve participation in employment and training	Improved economic and social development of indigenous communities
	Improve skills recognition, flexible delivery and targeted skills gap training to assist people with special needs gain employment	Increased employment outcomes for people with special needs

## Skilling NSW VET Community

**NSW has a network of public, private, community and enterprise-based education and training providers that is internationally recognised. It is a network that is committed to quality and continuous improvement. Its focus is on delivering quality outcomes for Vocational Education and Training clients using quality teaching methods and resources for trainers and learners.**

The business and general community is rightfully demanding the best quality training products and services and the best and simplest administrative systems to support their skills requirements over the next four years. The vocational education and training system will strive to ensure that training providers continue to have the capacity to anticipate and respond to industry training needs.

There is always capacity in the management of the vocational education and training system in NSW to improve processes and procedures associated with VET programs and compliance with the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF).

It is important that the focus of training providers firmly remains on delivering quality outcomes that are sought by the client (industry and individual employers and learners) and administrative arrangements should be in place to facilitate that.

# Skilling NSW VET Community



Objective	Strategies	Outcomes
<p><b>Ensure NSW has a high quality, flexible VET system</b></p>	<p>Assist training providers to develop skills to build and maintain partnerships with local employers, community groups and employment agencies</p>	<p>Increased customer satisfaction with the quality of training due to collaborative determination of training outcomes</p>
	<p>Increase professional development opportunities for Registered Training Organisations which encourage the development and use of flexible and innovative teaching, learning and assessment strategies</p>	<p>Improved customer satisfaction with and use of provider services</p>
	<p>Streamline the administrative requirements that support the delivery of quality training</p>	<p>AQTF compliance achieved more efficiently</p>
	<p>Strengthen NSW RTO registration and quality assurance</p>	<p>Greater consumer confidence in the quality of training delivery</p>
	<p>Support the directions arising from the Review of the NSW Traineeship System</p>	<p>Streamlined traineeship administration processes</p> <p>Greater focus of the traineeship system around areas of skill needs</p>
	<p>Encourage articulation and recognition arrangements between VET, schools and universities</p>	<p>Increase in credit transfer between all levels of education and training</p>

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