



**Whither Rural Industries?
Their Influence on the Education Debate**

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Statement of Ethical Conduct

The research associated with this thesis abides by the International and Australian codes on human and animal experimentation, the guidelines by the Australian Government's Office of Gene Technology Regulator and the rulings of the Safety, Ethics and Institutional Biosafety Committee of the University of Tasmania and Deakin University.

Abstract

Whither Rural Industries? Their Influence on the Education Debate

This work arose from 20 years' involvement with an Industry Training Advisory Board in Tasmania, Australia. The board's primary role was to provide advice to the appropriate authorities on the provision of vocational education and training to the agricultural sector and rural industries in Tasmania and Australia.

The Kangan Report in 1973 was the catalyst for the development of vocational training in Australia. This research examined how state and federal governments have implemented the vocational education and training agenda and embraced the development of skills training and its delivery, particularly as it relates to rural communities and rural industries.

It seeks to undertake a critical analysis of vocational education and training (VET) policy, processes and development in relation to Australian rural communities and their rural and related industries in order to ascertain how they can best influence VET policy settings and implementation for the future. This was based on an assumption that Australian rural industries and rural communities have had little influence during the past 25 years on the development of VET policy, except where policy issues have been of national significance and then policy makers have sought guidance from this constituency. Critically it seeks to establish the key criteria to enable policy, processes and implementation to occur that benefit rural communities and industries and considers potential policy settings to reflect effective input.

The first part of Chapter 2 provides an overview of the development of agriculture and rural communities in Australia from 1788 to 2000. This is followed by a section which considers the development of VET policy in Australia from 1945 to 2004, with particular reference to federal and state government reports and enquiries. It reflects on how these reports influenced the implementation of VET and the skills agenda in a rural context. It also reflects on the issue of competition in education funding, the debate between academic and technical, and the ongoing issue of old versus new industries and how this then impacts on rural communities and rural industries with particular reference to their implementation in a Tasmanian context.

Chapter 3 is a review of the literature which has identified a number of themes relevant to the delivery of vocational education and training. These themes discuss the importance of leadership, advocacy, boundary crossers, adult learning and social capital, together with the political context, which may provide opportunities for a community to influence educational delivery.

The research was based on qualitative methodology and a case study approach. The research uses document analysis and an interview process to collect data which was

analysed for themes. Three case studies were identified as the result of the document analysis. Documents analysed consisted of a set of primary documents, particularly the Tasmanian Rural Industry Training Board (TRITB) minutes, which included advice, papers and ministerial pronouncements from state and federal governments, and letters, evaluations and input from various state and federal organisations.

The cases were selected to provide an opportunity to consider different contexts in which vocational education and training was delivered. The three case studies considered in this research are the introduction of “a new taxation system and the goods and services tax” in 2000; the development, implementation and introduction of the national rural traineeship in 1994, and the direction by Australia’s education and training minister in 1996 that the “time serving apprenticeship system” was to be replaced by a nationally imposed vocational training regime founded on competency based outcomes. The document analysis identified key personnel who were invited to participate in a semi-structured interview. To limit bias, those selected represented all the various groups who were involved in the case studies, as identified in the document analysis.

The key finding from this research relates to the issue of boundary crossers; the research finds that both organisations and individuals can act as boundary crossers. The board represented a collection of individuals who were able to influence VET policy by developing collaboration and partnerships across defined boundaries. It also indicates that effective boundary crossers—whether organisations or individuals—need to have influential skills, particularly in leadership and advocacy. This allowed information and ideas to be facilitated across two domains. Importantly the research shows that organisations and institutions as well as individuals had an important role to play in advancing the VET agenda. In turn this assisted in raising the social capital in rural communities and related industries. Other implications from this research for VET policy development are how this approach may be of interest to central policy makers and local agencies who interact with the centre, how delivery to thin markets should be addressed, particularly with the new technologies, and the importance of community involvement in creating community leadership to advance the cause of rural communities and industries.

Acknowledgements

Writing this doctorate has been a labour of love amongst a long toil.

To the board members of the Tasmanian Rural Industry Training Board Inc. from 1984 to 2004, I offer my sincere thanks for your support, input and dedication in endeavouring to advance agricultural education and training in Tasmania and in Australia. I also thank the board for allowing me access to our board minutes, executive minutes and correspondence during that period. This provided me with the primary sources to support this thesis.

My special thanks to Mrs Julie Dineen, who has transposed my many handwritten pages, corrections and workings. Without her help, assistance and willingness this work would not have been finished. Also to Ms Bron Fionnachd-Féin who undertook the task of proofreading this thesis and providing many helpful suggestions to edit and improve the work. To my son Timothy who solved many of my computer problems and prepared the final document for examination and to my other son Christopher who kept asking when the tome would be finished and examined. Both Timothy and Christopher provided their father with much ongoing support and encouragement over this rather long journey.

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I also acknowledge my secondary supervisor, Professor John Williamson, for his assistance, comments and support during this thesis.

In stepping out on this journey, it has been a "long and winding road", there has been one very important person. I must thank Sue, my wife and soulmate for the last 46 years, for all her support, accepting those many hours in the study whilst working on this tome, her encouragement when it was getting me down and her long held desire to see this work completed as a reflection of what I have learnt in 20 years of involvement in rural education and training in Tasmania and Australia.

I dedicate this work to my wife Sue.

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List of Acronyms

ABARE	Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics
ABC	Australian Broadcasting Commission
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACCI	Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
ACTU	Australian Council of Trade Unions
AEC	Australian Education Council
AFL	Australian Football League
AGPS	Australian Government Publishing Service
AIG	Australian Industry Group
ANTA	Australian National Training Authority
ANTS	A New Taxation System
ATO	Australian Taxation Office
ATS	Australian Traineeship System
AVCTS	Australian Vocational Certificate Training System
AWU	Australian Workers Union
BAS	Business Activity Statement
CBT	Competency Based Training
CMF	Citizens Military Force
DAFF	Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (Commonwealth)
DEET	Department of Education, Employment and Training (Commonwealth)
DEETYA	Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (Commonwealth)
DEIR	Department of Employment and Industrial Relations (Commonwealth)
DEST	Department of Education, Science and Training

DVET	Department of Education and Training (State)
GCE	General Certificate of Education
GNVQ	General National Vocational Qualifications (UK)
GPS	Global Positioning System
GST	Goods and Services Tax
IFSA	Investment Financial Services Australia
ITAB	Industry Training Advisory Body
MAATS	Modern Australian Apprenticeship and Training System
NATP	National Agricultural Training Programme
NCVER	National Centre for Vocational Education and Training
NFF	National Farmers Federation
NFL	National Football League
NFROT	National Framework for Recognition of Training
NFSTG	National Farm Skills Training Guide
NTB	National Training Board (UK)
NTC	National Training Council
RTCA	Rural Training Council Australia
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TARec	Tasmanian Accreditation and Recognition Committee
TASTA	Tasmanian State Training Authority
TAT	Training Authority Tasmania
TFGA	Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association
TRITB	Tasmanian Rural Industry Training Board
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VFF	Victorian Farmers Federation

Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis will investigate education for rural industries through the lens of the experience of the state of Tasmania, Australia during the period 1984 to 2004.

The period 1984–2004 was chosen because the research student was intimately involved in the outcomes of the major changes which occurred in vocational education and training policy undertaken by the Hawke, Keating and Howard governments. This thesis considers the opportunities that these policy initiatives provided particularly in the context of Tasmania's rural industries and rural communities.

The thesis also seeks to understand community action and change, with particular reference to Australia's rural communities and industries and how community action can influence vocational education and training (VET) policy settings and implementation. It endeavours to ascertain what input rural and related industries and communities had on the education debate during this period and the outcome of that input. The study will have particular emphasis on VET and skills formation for rural industries. For the purpose of this thesis, rural and related industries and communities will be defined as those areas outside the capital cities or metropolitan boundaries and where major industries were defined as primary during the period of interest to the study (ABS, 2001; ABARE, 1982) and supported by the local community and surrounding districts.

During the period 1984–2004 the number of farms in Australia and Tasmania (as defined by the ABS, 1994) reduced markedly. At the same time, employment on Australian and Tasmanian farm enterprises fell. This decline in farm enterprises

represented consolidation of land holdings and the take up of new innovations and technology. Also, in a large number of cases, the reduction in farm employment was accompanied by an increase in the number of agricultural contractors who, in most instances, based themselves in larger regional towns. The services that agricultural contractors provide are important to rural and regional Australia, particularly to agricultural enterprises, as they include harvesting, fencing, fertiliser spreading, hay baling, contract milking, agronomic services and other similar and related services (TRITB Board Minutes, April 2000).

The reduction in agricultural enterprises and employment has had a major significance for rural and regional Australia and in turn the provision of services to rural communities, including education. These changes in employment and rural services are important as they underpin the economic frameworks of larger regional towns as they too compete for the services and funding which are drawn to larger population centres of cities and their surrounding suburbs. Another factor which affects the delivery of education is the vastness of this country and the isolation factor due to time, distance, road conditions, the farm cycle and the seasonal weather conditions. Isolation can vary from rural community to rural community.

The following tables indicate the reduction in agricultural enterprises in Australia over the twenty-year period from 1984 to 2004, and the reduction in employed labour.

Table 1.1

Number of Farming Enterprises in Australia and Tasmania 1984–2004

Year	Australia	Tasmania
1984	173,061	5,199
2004	129,934	3,340
% Reduction	24.9	35.7

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011). *Agricultural Commodities Australia, 2011–12* (No. 7121.0). Canberra: AGPS.

Table 1.2

Number of Persons Employed in Australian and Tasmanian Farming Enterprises 1984–2004

Year	Australia	Tasmania
1984	361,000	8,800
2004	307,000	6,900
% Reduction	14.9	21.5

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011). *Agricultural Commodities Australia, 2011–12* (No. 7121.0). Canberra: AGPS.

Another dimension with respect to Australia has been the lower levels of formal tertiary qualifications among agricultural workers compared to the general Australian workforce. This can be shown in the following table:

Table 1.3*Educational Attainment in the Australian Workforce, 1984, 1994 and 2004 (a)*

Per Cent									
Sector	University Degree			Other post-school qualifications			Without post-school qualifications		
	198	199	200	198	199	200	198	199	200
	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	2.3	4.5	6.8	23.8	23.8	31.4	73.1	70	61
Mining	8.1	14.4	17.3	44.8	35.8	46.7	47.1	49.8	35.3
Manufacturing	4.5	7.2	13.1	35	36.7	40.3	60.2	55.5	45.8
Services	11.7	16.5	24.3	35.5	32.5	34.1	51.1	48.4	40.7
Total	9.6	14.6	22.4	34.5	32.7	34.9	54.5	50.4	41.9

(a) Other post-school qualifications include vocational training and all non-university diplomas and certificates. It also includes (the small population of) people who are still at school

Sources: ABS (Cat no. 6227.0); Unpublished ABS data
Productivity Commission (2005). *Trends in Australian Agriculture*. Research Paper, Canberra, p. 106

Whilst over the period 1984–2004 agricultural workers have attained a higher level of education, there remains a large cohort without any post-school qualifications in comparison to the total Australian workforce.

Foster (2012) and Bonney and Hocking (2007) point out that approximately 27% of agricultural enterprises are responsible for around 83–85% of Australia's agricultural output. This in turn suggests further opportunities for enterprise consolidation, economies of scale, potential reduction in the employed workforce and the possible increase in the use of rural contracting services.

The reduction in farm numbers and employment also has implications for rural and regional Australia. The effect of the reduction in farm numbers, the continuing consolidation of holdings and the reduction in enterprise employment has been felt

across the whole of rural Australia. There is no better example of the decline in rural towns than to look at the reduction in Australian Rules and Rugby League football teams being fielded each Saturday in rural and regional Australia. Many clubs have disbanded over this twenty-year period, 1984–2004, because the small local rural towns could no longer field or support a local team and, as a consequence, country football associations have had to consolidate and in most instances they now cover larger competition areas (AFL, 2004; NRL, 2007).

As Salt (2013) has pointed out, some of these small rural communities have become dormitory suburbs for the larger regional cities, such as the cities of Warrnambool, Launceston, Orange, Mareeba, Geraldton and Port Augusta. Salt suggests these outlying rural communities look to the regional cities as their capital, particularly for the services they provide such as state and federal government offices, supermarkets, banks and social clubs.

The reduction in enterprises and employment has been enhanced by the willingness of owners and managers to embrace new and improved technologies. These include centre pivot irrigators, global positioning systems (GPS), and new varieties of crops such as wheat and poppies. Improved water management, direct drilling, strip grazing and animal husbandry have also had major impacts on improving the productivity and output of rural enterprises (TRITB VET Plan, Board Minutes, April 2001). The introduction of new technologies during this twenty-year period has required a paradigm shift by Australian and Tasmanian enterprises and their managers in ensuring both they and their employees were upskilled to embrace these changes (TRITB Board Minutes June 1988; September 1994; February 2002).

Australian farming organisations have played an important role in Australian rural industries. The Victorian Farmers Federation, formed in 1922, was the first state-based farming organisation in Australia (VFF, 2000). Other state-based organisations followed. In Tasmania two organisations evolved: the Tasmanian Fruit and Stock Owners Association (which represented the larger pastoral holdings and fruit growers, mainly orchardists), and the Tasmanian Farmers Federation which embraced intensive cropping and the dairy industry. The Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association (TFGA) was formed in 1979 through the amalgamation of the Tasmanian Fruit and Stock Owners Association and the Tasmanian Farmers Federation. The role of state-based farming organisations was to represent their constituents in issues which had an impact on their members through negotiations with policy makers, address industrial and wage issues, commodity prices, subsidies and other matters pertinent to the farming community. The following section presents an overview of the amalgamated Tasmanian farming association and how it sought to address vocational and skills training.

Tasmanian Farming Organisations and Education

Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association (TFGA)

The TFGA represents its members in negotiations with state and federal bodies on issues which impact on Tasmanian rural enterprises. One of the early issues raised by the Directors of the TFGA was “...the need to address and improve the skill levels of our members and staff” (TFGA Board Minutes, November 1983). By February 1984 the TFGA was advancing the need to upskill and were seeking funding from the Commonwealth Government to create an Industry Training Advisory Board (ITAB).

Tasmanian Rural Industry Training Board (TRITB)

At a general national conference on training in 1971 it was agreed by both industry and government that their involvement in industry training needed to be broadened. This led to the formation of the National Training Council (NTC) under the Federal Government in 1973. One of the functions of the NTC was the creation of industry-specific training committees or councils, later changed in the 1980s to boards. In establishing these industry training advisory boards (ITABs), the NTC saw them as providing a forum where government, industry and unions could provide training advice and discuss vocational skills training and its implementation. These new bodies, through a process of rationalisation, took over existing state bodies such as the apprenticeship advisory boards. They were partially funded by the Commonwealth, with industry providing either in-kind support or financial assistance (Wooden, 1998).

The Tasmanian Rural Industry Training Board or TRITB (the board) was formed in August 1984 and was housed within the TFGA. The board was tripartite and had representation from employers, unions and the state and federal governments. Its major aim was to consider the long-term future of rural Tasmania, particularly with respect to vocational education and skills acquisition. As the board's Annual Report for 2000 notes "...The Board identifies training needs and provides a framework to implement programmes based on those needs...[and]...through its participating organisations is linked to most users and providers of rural training. It provides the opportunity to ensure that there is a co-ordinated and cohesive approach to rural training in Tasmania", or as an interviewee reflected:

"...the board was seen as the interface between the TFGA, State and Federal vocational and education departments, farmers and workers in making

representations to advance agricultural education and training in Tasmania. It was a body which became highly regarded in the State and nationally as it sought to raise skills and advance training for its members within the State”

The decision to establish an ITAB reflected a similar movement in other Australian rural and regional communities in the twenty-year period from 1984 to 2004. Both the National Farmers Federation (NFF) and state farming organisations argued that it was vital for Australia to maintain an ongoing vibrant agricultural sector and that consolidation, the new industry technologies and the need for a highly adaptable and skilled workforce were essential to this change.

Research Questions and Research Design

The underlying motivation for this thesis relates to the reasons why the TRITB was regarded so highly and what underpinning factors made for its success, especially success in terms of the education and training provided for the rural and regional communities in Tasmania and later its influence on policy at a national level.

The principal aim of this research is to undertake a critical analysis of vocational education and training policy as it applied to rural industries in the years 1984–2004. Contingent to this aim is a need to understand how rural communities and their industries influenced VET policy settings and implementation in this period, and so to better understand how they can influence policy and its implementation in the future.

From this aim a number of subordinate questions arise which are considered during this study. These are:

1. How did rural communities and their rural and related industries influence VET policy settings and their implementation from 1984 to 2004?
2. What were the key criteria which will enable policy, processes and implementation that occurred in Australian rural communities and their rural and related industries in order to meet identified community needs?
3. How did the evolution of these policies, processes and their implementation meet the needs of Australian rural communities and their rural and related industries to build and improve community social capital?
4. What policy settings will be needed in the future to ensure that Australian rural communities and their rural and related industries have a valued and effective input into VET policies, processes, development and implementation?

Research Design

The research design is based on the ideas of Maxwell (2012) and is represented in the following diagram.

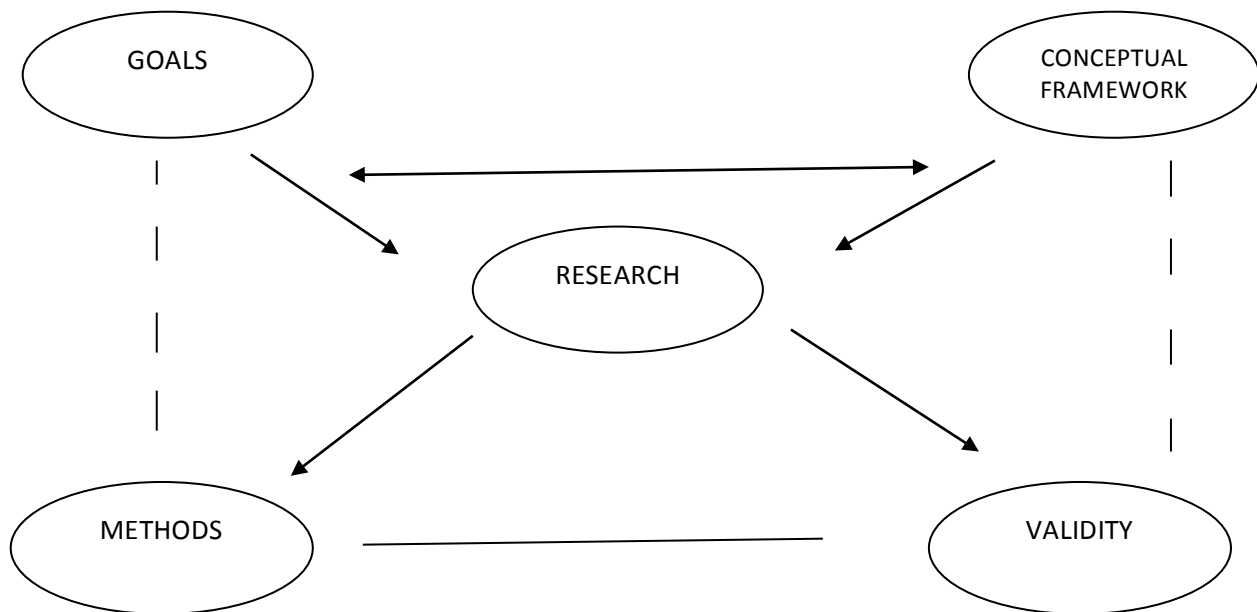


Figure 1.1: Research Design (adapted from Maxwell, 2012)

Diagrammatically the concepts systematically set out the structure of what this thesis seeks to achieve. Each of the elements addresses important underpinnings and need to be considered individually. Paraphrasing Maxwell (2012), the individual elements can be considered as:

1. **GOALS** — to understand how the rural industry can have an input into VET policy and the importance of the result of this understanding in discussions with policy makers.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK — will require an understanding of how VET policy evolved and influenced the period 1984–2004, a consideration of the issues and personnel who drove VET policy and how the policy settings provided knowledge about these issues.
3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS — specifically seeking reasons for the board's reported success and to better understand why the board was so successful.
4. METHODS — the approach taken to collect and analyse the data.
5. VALIDITY — a careful consideration of how the data collected support the research aim, how these findings can provide advice as to how VET policy can be influenced, particularly in future delivery for rural and regional Australia.

Importantly this model places the research questions at the centre of the study design. The research questions are in the centre and link all the components of the work. They also reflect the goals of this study. Each of the components is interactive, that is, each component has a relationship with all the other components.

In turn this leads to a consideration of the proposed methodology and how this research will be undertaken. The thesis is based on qualitative research. This qualitative research analyses data from direct, in-depth, open-ended interviews and written documents. It considers real-world settings and uses the construction of case studies to support this approach. Subsequently this provides patterns and themes (Paton, 2005) compared with quantitative based on data collected that yields statistical information (Belcher, 2009). Evidence to support the qualitative approach comes from the primary data. In the case of this research, the qualitative technique of content analysis of written documents also

led to the identification of three case studies which are based on a vocational training initiative and were supported by a series of in-depth interviews.

Primary data comes from the minutes of the TRITB board and executive from the date of the board's inception in August 1984 to the June meeting in 2004. The board minutes are a comprehensive set of primary documents that include the minutes of the previous meeting, and the agendas for each meeting supported by discussion papers, state and federal government reports, or papers seeking the board's advice on various training and education issues, correspondence, reports from board members and supporting papers from invited guests, the board's written advice on responses to issues and reports on various meetings held within the TFGA, and with state and federal government representatives. These minutes are also supported by the annual reports from 1984 to 2004 which provide an annual overview of the board's activities. Using the extensive board papers, the methodology included a comprehensive analysis of the documents to see what major themes emerged and to consider potential case studies, particularly those which had a vocational training initiative. The data analysis was according to thematic analysis with themes drawn from the literature. This was supplemented by limited aspects of a grounded theoretical approach whereby additional themes were allowed to emerge as the data was analysed.

Structure of this Work

The thesis involves a number of chapters. The opening chapter, Chapter 1, sets out the research aims, background and context for the research, the development of the research questions and an outline of the research design.

Chapter 2 considers the evolution of vocational education and training in Australia in the post-war period from 1945 to 2004. Particular attention is paid to policy issues which have bearing on this thesis. The evolution of VET is discussed within the context of an overview of the development of agriculture in Australia from 1788 to 2004 and the structural changes and developments which occurred during this period.

Chapter 3 is the literature review. The initial literature review was undertaken prior to the analysis of the data. The literature review was revisited when new themes emerged during the data analysis.

Chapter 4 sets out the methodology including how the case studies were selected.

Chapter 5 looks at each of the identified case studies and provides full details of the background, development and implementation of the training that is the subject of each case.

Chapter 6 presents a discussion and an examination of the research questions particularly in relation to the themes which evolved in the case studies and which are considered in depth within the context of the relevant literature.

The final chapter, Chapter 7, addresses the research questions, considers further issues for study which arose as the result of this work, notes the limitations of the thesis and stresses the major finding of this work which relates to the role of boundary crossing organisations in acting across a number of disparate domains. The outcome of this thesis provides insights into how organisations or individuals may seek to influence policy and improve the delivery of VET for Australian rural industries and their communities.

Chapter 2:

A Historical Perspective: Agriculture and Rural Communities in Australia 1788–2004 and the Development of Post-Secondary Education and Vocational Education and Training 1945–2004

The background in Chapter 1 leads into Chapter 2 which considers, from a historical perspective, how agriculture and rural communities grew and then contracted in the period from 1788 to 2004. The thesis then considers the evolution of vocational education and training in Australia from 1945 and how this provided an opportunity to deliver vocational education and training to rural Australia. These developments were important to the Tasmanian Rural Industry Training Board (TRITB)'s formation in August 1984 and its objectives to improve the skills and education of Tasmanian rural workers. Of particular importance were the vocational education initiatives of the 1980s and early 1990s which created training pathways.

This chapter starts with a description of agriculture and rural communities from the first white settlement in Australia until 2004, the end of the period covered by the research. It then provides information regarding the formation of the TRITB and its relationship to the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers. The remainder of the chapter addresses the development and implementation of vocational education and training in Australia, with particular reference to the major studies and reports that were undertaken.

Agriculture and Rural Communities in Australia 1788–2004

It appears then, that agricultural improvement in the eighteenth century was the work of a number of pioneers and publicists, country gentlemen, owner-occupiers and large tenant farmers...[who] popularized practices...[and] this was aided by enlightened landlords who provided fixed capital and security of tenure.

G.E. Mingay (1963, p. 171)

The farmers who arrived with the First Fleet in January 1788 brought with them those English agricultural practices with which they had been imbued. Yet the environment they discovered rarely resembled the conditions with which they were familiar (Wadham, Wilson & Wood, 1957; Henzell, 2007). The early settlers were faced with unfamiliar climatic conditions, soil types and vegetation (Wadham, Wilson & Wood, 1957).

From the nine acres of land cleared at Port Jackson (a portion of which includes the Sydney Botanic Gardens) (Historical Records of Australia Vol. 1, 1915) for the sowing of wheat, agriculture has spread across vast areas of the Australian landscape. This expansion in the first instance was slow with areas of land being opened up in the Parramatta River area and in Tasmania which in 1810 was an exporter of wheat to the colony at Sydney (Historical Records of Australia Vol. 7, 1915).

Blainey (1967) suggests that the slow growth and expansion of agriculture was due to the absence of long inland waterways. This limited the access to those lands on the east side of the continent which were most suited to the growing of grain. Blainey argues that the development and expansion of Australian agriculture was dependent on the commodity being valuable enough on a ton basis for transport costs to be affordable

from regions lying more than 40 miles from deep water. In his view the expansion of the woollen industry from the days of Macarthur and his flock (Wadham, Wilson & Wood, 1957; Henzell, 2007) was because wool could bear those transport costs, both within Australia and in shipping to the woollen mills in Yorkshire and Scotland. The climate and limitless grasslands were ideal for sheep and this opened up vast stretches of the interior, and by the end of the 1840s sheep had spread across an enormous belt of land (Blainey, 1967). These vast pastoral holdings did not support any great towns and it was the arrival of the gold rush and the railways which led to the next era of agricultural expansion (Blainey, 1967; Clarke, 1973; Kiddle, 1963; Shann, 1967).

The goldfields created towns and support for the railways, which in turn led to the further expansion of agriculture. The purpose of the railways was to link each inland area with the nearest port and this resulted in the development of Australia's unique rail system. Railways carried overseas imports from the coast to the inland towns and agricultural products from the inland to the coast. Consequently Australia had many small rural economies, each dependent on a main port and hinterland (Blainey, 1967; Wadham, Wilson & Wood, 1957). Railways enabled wheat to be grown far from the coast and as a result Australia became a great supplier of wheat to European markets. This was also enhanced by the desire of colonial governments to reduce pastoralists' larger land holdings through the introduction of "closer settlement schemes" which became the basis of land selection policy in Australia. The "closer settlement schemes" also reflected the fact that the pastoralists in many cases had access to valuable tracts of land which needed to be released to allow the development of other agricultural pursuits. This policy was to dominate land administration policy in Australia until the early 1960s. Several authors (Blainey, 1967; Clark, 1973; Henzell, 2007; Kiddle, 1963;

Ward, 1998) suggest there were four main reasons for this policy, stating that it reflected a strong desire to avoid the English land-owning class, a belief in the importance of farmers (which led to the development of small farms built around 640 acres of “selection”), the need to diversify the colonial states and later Australia’s rural products (which provided, until recently, the bulk of Australia’s exports), and the desire to populate the vast nation which had an urgent need in the 1860s to find occupations for ex-goldminers.

The closer settlement movement and the selection era gave towns their greatest impetus. This was also supported by the increasing efficiency and output of the primary industry. Blainey (1967) suggests that this was as a result of fatter cattle, heavier fleeces and many labour-saving devices including post-and-rail fences followed by wire fences, water tanks, windmills, the stump jump plough “which made wheat growing in the Mallee country possible” (Blainey, 1967, p. 71) and the development of mechanical refrigeration which led to meat being transported across the world.

The mechanisation of farms and the growth of inland transport increased the demand for ploughs, railway locomotives and other equipment. The spin-off from these developments was the rise of cities and towns. Flour mills were built to handle the grain and factories and workshops were built to attend to the community’s needs. This in turn attracted an increasing number of people to the city or town, to work either locally or as manual labourers in the surrounding farming area (Blainey, 1967; Ward, 1998; Cannon, 1976).

Cannon suggests that as towns grew there were two stages in development. The first saw the arrival of such people as publicans, shopkeepers, bankers, butchers, carnival

workers and prostitutes. The second stage saw the arrival of those such as doctors, schoolteachers (and the erection of the local school), police and police stations, post offices (all manned by officials), magistrates and solicitors, and the clergy and building of local churches. Associated with this was the rise of local community institutions, for example cricket clubs, football clubs, mechanics institutions, church groups and freemasons. (Cannon, 1976; Blainey, 1967; Clark, 1973; Kiddle, 1963).

Importantly, these new towns provided an impetus which paralleled what was happening in Sydney, Melbourne and the other major cities, a desire for the children to have a good, well-founded education. This was strongly opposed by the squatters, with G.W. Rusden claiming that “many squatters refused to assist being afraid their employees would leave jobs in order to live nearer to education institutions” (Cannon, 1976, p. 256). Despite this, Rusden, Perry and others saw the growth of country towns as providing the base for the spread of compulsory schooling. Victoria introduced the first comprehensive system of “free compulsory education” in 1872 with the passing of the “Education Act”, with all children aged 6 to 14 required to attend the local school. The local school and schoolteachers became important in the city or town as a result of this legislation. The desire for learning and better education was not confined to the young—adult education and self-improvement was provided by the local “Mechanics Institution” which was formed in most towns. The Mechanics Institutions were important as they provided a community service, particularly adult education and self-improvement and helped to assist in developing adult literacy and numeracy skills (Kiddle, 1963; Cannon, 1976; Clark, 1973).

The Australian agriculture which had evolved in the 19th century was, at Federation on 1 January 1901, vibrantly supported by many cities and towns. Australian agricultural

production embraced wool, meat, grains, cotton, sugar, fruit and vegetables, dairying and forestry. It was divided into two distinct sectors—the pastoralists with their larger land holdings and farmers who toiled on much smaller intensive holdings (Blainey, 1967; Clark, 1973; Kiddle, 1963; Cannon, 1976; Ward, 1998; Serle, 1963).

Productivity increases arose from new scientific methods of tilling—the introduction of superphosphate to improve the poor Australian soils is one example, new wheat varieties resistant to rust and other diseases is another, and better breeding in dairy herds (particularly the introduction of artificial insemination) led to a rise in raw milk and butter fat production. These improvements spread across all areas of primary production, giving increasing yields. Interestingly, land holdings in the nation were very similar in 1960 to what they had been at Federation in 1901 (Wadham, Wilson & Wood, 1957; Henzell, 2007). This was despite the development of “Soldier Settlement” schemes which evolved following the end of both World War I and World War II. By 1925 some 3,500 World War I ex-soldiers were settled on dairying, dry farming or new irrigation areas at a cost of £70m. In one area every single soldier settler went broke.

Australian agriculture was supported by towns and cities which had evolved from the agricultural expansion. Country towns were the support arm to the agricultural community. Yet they were far more than a service arm to agriculture, they were an essential part of rural Australia as they also provided sporting, social and community services which were so vital to the town population (Rogers & Collins, 2001). The decline of rural towns and cities began in the early 1960s and is related to a number of major factors: firstly the development of larger farming units to accommodate economies of scale and consolidation of smaller landholders; secondly the development of better productivity as a result of research and development of better yielding crops,

improved animal husbandry, crop rotation, fertiliser and water allocation for example; thirdly the development of better plant and equipment which led to increased mechanisation and a reduction in the numbers employed on farms, and finally the rise of specialist contractors who attend to the needs of the annual farming cycle (Rogers & Collins, 2001).

Whereas at Federation there were in excess of 400,000 farming units employing in excess of 600,000 persons, today's numbers indicate around 150,000 farm units—many of which are corporate entities—employing less than 200,000 persons (NFF Year Book, 2000). The dramatic reduction in farming units and those employed has had an effect on the viability of rural towns and the services they have provided since the Second World War (NFF Year Book, 2000). This is against a background which since World War II has seen a relentless cost price squeeze in agriculture, where costs are determined largely by the national economy and their prices by the world market.

Whilst Australian farmers have responded positively through such measures as new crops, improved use of water and fertilisers, improved animal genetics and breeding, by 1999–2000 they needed to produce more than four times the volume to earn in real terms only just over half of what they had in 1951–52 (Henzell, 2007).

The improvement in mechanised transport throughout the 20th century—cars and trucks—ran parallel to the changes in agriculture and also had an effect on rural towns. The new forms of transport enabled manufacturers and tradespeople from larger towns to capture many of the smaller rural towns' business. Local retail shops had difficulty competing with the stores and new chain stores in larger towns. People moved to a larger town and farmers now went to larger towns for their provisions (Blainey, 1967;

Serle, 1963; Kiddle, 1963). As Salt (2013) has suggested, larger regional towns became the capital city for those reduced and outlying smaller towns.

Forth (2001) argues small town decline was part of a long-term historical process based around the changing economic circumstances that enabled people to access the more sophisticated services available in larger centres. Consequently a reduction in the delivery of services across a range of community needs has eventuated, particularly in the provision of education, skills and vocational training so vital to maintain a town's population, skills and its productivity.

As a result larger regional towns became an important hub for the provision of education, particularly post-primary education through the local high schools (Salt, 2013). In the area of vocational education and training the provision of this type of education in regional towns was significant as, due to economic circumstances, many students were unable to undertake a university course at the mainly capital-city-centric universities. VET became an alternative post-secondary education option for these students. Following the acceptance of the Kangan Report (1975), VET institutions, usually represented by colleges and referred to as Technical and Further Education (TAFE) were developed and funded across Australia by the state and federal governments. TAFE colleges can be found in most major regional centres across Australia, for example Launceston (Tasmania); Dubbo (NSW); Mt Gambier (SA); Bunbury (WA). By 2001 there were 84 TAFE colleges in Australia occupying 300 campuses (Goozee, 2001). These TAFE colleges provide a wide range of learning programmes, both formal and informal. Formal courses are based on a structured teaching programme leading to a formally recognised qualification. For the employee, non-formal delivery (which does not lead to a formal qualification) and informal short

courses (which are usually of an educative nature relating to a particular issue) may be vital for ongoing skills provision. Thus TAFE colleges, especially those in regional areas, provide operative, trade, para-professional and general education with a diversity of hours from short course offerings to qualifications which require a number of years of study (Knight & Mlotkowski, 2009).

VET provides linkages between training and skills acquisition, employers and the employee, be this in a formal or informal relationship. Importantly, the consultative arrangements regarding the provision of training between VET, employers and employees seeks to maximise training outcomes. VET and TAFE colleges endeavour to meet the needs of all ages, and as a result support the skills needs of the great majority of employers and industries (Knight & Mlotkowski, 2009; Karmal, 2005).

Another important piece of infrastructure for regional Australia and its supporting towns is the local branch of the state farming organisations. These organisations had evolved from the local agricultural shows, where farmers exhibited their livestock and produce. They came to represent farmers' interests, particularly in relation to legislation and marketing. They also provided a conduit through which to pass on new techniques and innovation. .

In order to enhance new industry techniques and innovation, the Kangan Report (1975) provided for the development of Industry Training Councils, which in the 1980s became Industry Training Advisory Boards (ITABs). Their role was to provide a link between VET, TAFE establishments and industry particularly with regard to the provision of skills training. One of the earliest Industry Training Councils (ITCs) was the Wool Producers ITC which was founded in 1977. Its charter was to raise the profile

of wool harvesting and shearer training throughout Australia. The Wool Producers ITC in conjunction with the Australian wool corporation involved all states and some of the new regional TAFE colleges in wool training, and is an early example of how regional towns, skills training provided by the new TAFE colleges and the farming organisations could provide education and training linkages within their district. One of the reasons for the TFGA forming a rural ITAB was the need to change from a narrow skills commodity focus to one that embraced all Tasmanian rural enterprises with skills coverage over a wider range of agricultural commodities.

Rural towns and communities are made up of many parts. They consist of business, local societies and clubs (tennis, local dramatic society, Rotary etc.), state and federal government agencies, shops, and those who own dwellings and/or reside in the town. All these collectively make up the social capital of a rural community.

Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association (TFGA) and the Formation of the Tasmanian Rural Industry Training Board (TRITB)

The issues raised by Forth (2001) were of paramount concern to the TFGA in the 1980s when the TFGA executive reflected on the need to address the issue of skills formation. Cognisant of the ITAB concept, particularly the success of the Tasmanian Wool Producers ITC, the TFGA executive was advancing the need to upskill those involved in Tasmanian rural enterprises and sought funding from the federal government to create an ITAB.

More importantly, the TFGA executive minutes (January 1984) record that the new board should include the principal union involved in Tasmania's rural economy—the Australian Workers Union (AWU)—as they were “vital in assisting us to address the

issue of skills acquisition” (TFGA, Board Minutes, 1984). Cooney (2012) notes one of the important roles of unions in Australia has been their participation in and the development of training, particularly in conjunction with employers.

Following an invitation from the TFGA executive, the state secretary of the AWU accepted a position on the proposed tripartite board which was made up of employers, unions and federal government. The decision by the AWU to join with the TFGA in the proposed ITAB reflected the coverage in Tasmania of its members employed in agricultural and horticultural enterprises. The proposed board membership reflected the importance of addressing the long-term future of rural Tasmania, particularly in relation to vocational education and improving skills.

The proposal supported by the TFGA/AWU to seek provision of funding for an ITAB was seen by both organisations as an opportunity and a vehicle whereby an organisation would be able to address important issues that were of concern to rural communities and rural enterprises in Tasmania. The formation of the TRITB placed a strong emphasis on skills acquisition, better-trained workers and managers, improved management of enterprises, development of career paths and, importantly, the implementation of research and development. The partners identified the strategic objectives for the proposed new body as follows:

1. ...the need for manpower, development and training.
2. ...improvement of professional, managerial, technical, general knowledge and skills of all persons employed in the agricultural and rural industry in Tasmania.
3. ...to conduct, contribute to, or co-operate in conducting classes, courses, seminars and workshops.

4. ...the development, production or marketing of relevant training materials, and
5. ...to liaise with the Commonwealth, State Governments, Education and Training organisations (TRITB Board Minutes, August 1984).

The TRITB 2000 Annual Report notes that the board had representation from all sectors of Tasmanian agriculture, the state and federal governments and the relevant union, and by their respected and knowledgeable industry leaders: farmers were represented by the primary organisation TFGA and its Commodity Council (dairy; vegetables; agriculture—poppies, pyrethrum, grains; meat and wool); the AWU; state and federal governments, Rural Youth, Women in Agriculture and Horticulture.

Whilst the development of ITABs was an important undertaking by government, industry and unions, they have to be considered in their relationship with the development of vocational education and training (VET) in Australia, particularly from 1945. This policy development is considered in the next section. Importantly it pays particular attention to issues which could be addressed by the ITAB network to improve the delivery of VET.

Post-Secondary Education and Policy Development in Vocational Education and Training 1945–2004

As has been stated in the introductory chapter, this thesis covers a twenty-year period from 1984 to 2004, with particular emphasis on the delivery of vocational education and training in Australia. In order to understand the context in which this work is developed it is necessary to consider the evolution of vocational education and training in Australia after World War II and how it became a recognised educational strand and part of the delivery of post-secondary education.

Today, in Australia, the post-secondary education scene is vastly different from what was available in the 1950s and reflects our changing global world (Porter, 1990). In the 1950s and 1960s the opportunities facing students leaving school were to find a job, undertake a four-year indentured trade apprenticeship or obtain a degree at an Australian university.

In 2004 the Australian economy and education were vastly different from that of the 1960s. There had been an increase in new universities, many following the Dawkins revolution in 1989, the development of Technical and Further Education Colleges (TAFEs) from 1971, the desire of parents, politicians and the community for students to complete Year 12 (the equivalent of Year 6 in 1961), the introduction of skills centres in secondary schools delivering technical and further education, and the reintroduction of technical colleges to encourage skills and skilled workers. The economy was now based mainly on the service sector, supported by manufacturing with a decline in dependence on rural exports which had fallen quite dramatically since the 1950s and had been replaced by mining, and an unemployment rate which was the best since 1974 (4.3%) (ABS, 2007, March Quarter).

The 1960s

The first major study about education and the future development of post-secondary education was the Martin Report 1964 (Committee on the Future of Tertiary Education in Australia, 1964–1965).

The Martin Report made a number of recommendations to the Menzies government. The author of the report, the Committee on the Future of Tertiary Education in Australia, considered that post-secondary education was seen as essential for the

stability and progress of the Australian community and economy, and it was seen as an investment for the future and economic growth was dependent upon a higher and advancing level of education (Committee on the Future of Tertiary Education in Australia, 1964–1965). The committee also found that it was important to extend the range of educational experiences and recommended the provision by the federal government of funding to support an extensive vocational and specialised skills training (Committee on the Future of Tertiary Education in Australia, 1964–1965). The committee noted there were more than 34,000 enrolments of technical students in 1963, specifically 34,300, as compared to 117,900 students studying at Australian universities.

The Martin Report was also concerned about the issue of technical education and it made a separate recommendation to address this issue. Recommendation 7 related to technical training and skills acquisition. The committee noted there was a rising demand for skills training to meet the evolving industrial requirements and as a result there was a need to expand technical colleges to provide for skills (Committee on the Future of Tertiary Education in Australia, 1964–1965). Later in the report, the committee stated there was a need to ensure the needs of industry were addressed. They suggested technical training had been undervalued because of the status of and emphasis on university degrees. To stress this point, the committee recommended the establishment of autonomous colleges to develop technical training which could include “technical colleges, agricultural colleges” (p. 183) and the creation of 2,500 Commonwealth Technical Scholarships for full-time students.

The Menzies federal government response was to provide 1,000 of these scholarships and, more importantly, support new technical institutions by providing funding for capital and recurrent expenses (Parliamentary Debates, Hansard HR, 24 March 1965).

This represented a major change in federal government policy towards skills training. Previously it had been argued by the federal government that technical and skills training was the province of the states and this argument was based on section 51 of the Australian Constitution which designated “education” as a state function.

Despite these changes, it was not long before further questions about skills training were being raised at a national level, especially the way training was currently being delivered in Australia and if it was providing the best possible outcomes and opportunities for students/apprentices and industry. The Minister for Labour and National Service, the Hon. Leslie Bury, arranged for a delegation to look at the training of skilled workers in Europe (Australian Mission to Study Methods of Training Skilled Workers in Europe, 1968–1969). The reasons expressed by the minister for setting up this undertaking were his concern for and the need to consider the standards of Australian and foreign qualifications at both trade and professional level. In the minister’s view, Australian federal and state governments had little idea of European skills and university training and he wanted to investigate if the Australian education system could learn or incorporate into their teaching methods ideas from training delivery in Europe (Australian Mission to Study Methods of Training Skilled Workers in Europe, 1968–1969).

A careful reading of the report indicates some genuine concerns about skills/vocational training in Australia. These concerns relate to the need for skilled workers and training

to meet the needs of a changing industry base, the development of new skilled occupations (for example computers and the electronic industry), the need to provide workers with a range of skills, that the underpinning theory should be delivered in vocational schools and that skills development should be seen as part of “lifelong learning” (Australian Mission to Study Methods of Training Skilled Workers in Europe, 1968–1969, p. 15).

The tripartite delegation looked closely at European development in vocational training and how these ideas could be used to improve skills delivery in Australia. One of the important initiatives the delegation learnt about was the investment made by European governments in vocational training and also the strong support it received from employers and unions. The report indicates a general dissatisfaction from the delegation that “the overall pattern of vocational training in Australia leaves much to be desired and falls behind that in Europe” (Australian Mission to Study Methods of Training Skilled Workers in Europe, 1968–1969, p. 83). It also reported that Australia needed to examine whether the current skills meet industry needs, whether the standard of training was high enough to meet the required skills needs and was the system adaptable to meet industries’ changing needs and how do you select the best features of the European systems for adaptation in Australia?

In its final report to the federal government and federal parliament, the delegation raised a number of core issues which needed to be addressed if vocational training delivery was to be improved in the nation. The delegates considered that financial support was critical and it had to be acknowledged that the provision of vocational education and training was costly (Australian Mission to Study Methods of Training Skilled Workers in Europe, 1968–1969, p. 84). Finally, the report stated “Australia is

not supplying sufficient funds for industrial and technical training” (Australian Mission to Study Methods of Training Skilled Workers in Europe, 1968–1969, p. 84). The delegation was impressed with the way Europe addressed the provision of “on and off the job training” (Australian Mission to Study Methods of Training Skilled Workers in Europe, 1968–1969, p. 85) and stressed the importance of “block release” which enables students to undertake theory training whilst “off the job” (Australian Mission to Study Methods of Training Skilled Workers in Europe, 1968–1969, p. 86). Importantly there was a need for proper teacher training for the delivery of vocational education and the ability to provide instruction to students/trainees whilst “on the job” (Australian Mission to Study Methods of Training Skilled Workers in Europe, 1968–1969, p. 86).

The report and its recommendations were not implemented and gathered dust in the Canberra archives. Many of the issues which were bedevilling the delivery of vocational education and training had been considered and highlighted. In hindsight, this report holds the kernel of many excellent concepts which finally saw the light of day in the mid-1970s.

The 1970s

The federal election in November 1972 saw a change in the Australian government and, after 23 years, the Labor Party replaced the conservative Liberals as the party in power at the federal level. The Labor Party manifesto for the 1972 federal election contained a commitment to improving vocational education and training. This was soon undertaken and in April 1974 the federal government was presented with a major report, the Kangan Report (Australian Committee on Technical and Further Education, 1974).

The Kangan Report is the first occasion when the delivery of technical and further education was seen as vital to the nation particularly “for technical development, a skilled workforce, personal work satisfaction and economic growth” (Australian Committee on Technical and Further Education, 1974, p. 1). The report was critical of the fact that vocational education and training had not been funded to the extent of university funding and that it was seen as a lesser tertiary education outcome in comparison with those obtaining university degrees.

Central to the report’s thrust was the provision of unrestricted access to post-secondary school education and the encouragement of students (of any age) into technical and further education. The importance of the Kangan Report was to ensure the availability of VET for all people irrespective of age and their gender, the need to cultivate lifelong learning and have relevance to employment opportunities in the Australian landscape which required the development of the skills (expressed in the report as manpower) to grow and develop the economy (Australian Committee on Technical and Further Education, 1974, pp. 3–6).

The outcomes of the Kangan Report were far reaching. It advocated the formation of Technical and Further Education Colleges (TAFEs) throughout the nation. The primary role of these colleges was for people to gain vocational skills and knowledge for “personal or job improvement” (Australian Committee on Technical and Further Education, 1974, p. 7). The findings also emphasised that TAFE should be seen as an alternative educational outcome which was “neither inferior or superior to other streams of education” (Australian Committee on Technical and Further Education, 1974, p. 25). Major issues which were noted in the report and which have impact on this thesis was the emphasis on lifelong learning and skills formation and the importance of vocational

courses being relevant to the needs of industry/ies. It also stressed that TAFE colleges would have a responsibility and a need to be aware of emerging industry trends and that teachers were of the utmost importance and must maintain their skills in order to meet the new paradigm. In turn this required a liaison between the TAFE college, industry and unions to ascertain the training needed to meet the many emerging technological developments. The Kangan Report also expressed a concern that it was important to link VET with industry/ies opportunities and ensure the availability of courses to existing and developing occupations. Importantly the report addressed the issue of funding requirements to meet the physical aspects of VET delivery—equipment and buildings. Finally, the report stressed that TAFE colleges were not to compete with the universities but rather they were to concentrate on training suitable for firms and industry/ies needing new or improved technical skills.

The Kangan Report touched on a number of matters which are relevant to this thesis. The report noted that persons “being educated in non-metropolitan areas should not be disadvantaged by lack of opportunity to gain formal qualifications that are not relevant to the local scene” (Australian Committee on Technical and Further Education, 1974, p. 10–11). This is supported by Recommendation 27 (Australian Committee on Technical and Further Education, 1974, p. 10) which stated “all non-metropolitan technical colleges should provide a sufficiently wide range of vocational education not only to match local employment opportunities but facilitate geographic mobility”. Flowing on from these comments, the report discussed the issues of country areas and community involvement in TAFE colleges. The author of the report, the Australian Committee on Technical and Further Education, was cognisant of the issue of country areas and made some pithy observations to address this emerging issue. The report acknowledged that

one of the problems in addressing country needs related to the number of people in an area and the difficulty in justifying expensive educational resources within the immediate locale. The report noted that the local industry and commerce will only be able to provide a limited range of occupations and employment, whilst the distance from universities will restrict the attendance of country students, except for those able and prepared to live away from home. As a result, the Kangan Report suggested that training in vocational courses at TAFE should be restricted to those in which local employment was available. They realised that the effect would be to steer people into courses that may not be suited to their personal aspirations. Despite this limitation the committee believed it was essential that training should be provided on the needs-basis of individuals and should allow them to study near their place of residence. In discussing this issue of country areas, the report made some suggestions in respect of how the community could become involved in TAFE. Particular reference was made to the Victorian model that had provided direction to technical school councils. The Victorian model allowed technical schools to develop their own identity, policy and programs and involve the community in this process. The committee considered this a model that other states and their TAFE colleges should seriously contemplate implementing.

The result of the Kangan Report was to see the nationwide development of TAFE colleges. In Tasmania, TAFE colleges were created in Hobart, Launceston, Burnie and Devonport with their central administration in Hobart. The idea of community involvement recommended in the Kangan Report was taken up in Tasmania, with each local TAFE college advised by a College Council made up of leading members of the

local community. This was also reflected in TAFE colleges in other states, for example in Orange, Warrnambool, Gatton and Darwin in the 1980s.

The 1980s

By the early 1980s TAFE training, with its focus on vocational education and training, was seen as a viable alternative education stream. Vocational education and training, however, had not attained the status given to university education and still suffered from lack of major funding support at the state and federal level. Yet despite these shortcomings, TAFE colleges were seen by the majority of employers as the means by which trade apprenticeships and vocational skills development could be achieved.

TAFE colleges met a niche which the Kangan Report had identified.

In 1983, the Hawke federal government was elected. Education at all levels was a high priority for the new government (Labor Party, 1984 Election Policy). In the following year the government commissioned two major studies which would have a major impact on the direction of vocational education and training, and which still underpinned skills training in the first decade of the 21st century. These two reports were:

- Karmel Report on “Quality Education in Australia” and
- Kirby Report or “The Report of the Kirby Committee of Inquiry into Labour Market Programs”.

The Karmel Report was handed to the federal government in 1985. It noted that in the period between 1975 and 1982 there had been a significant decline in young people commencing higher education, but that this had been offset by those over 25 years who

had increased participation and was reflected in the “enrolments in technical and further education” (AGPS, p. 189). In the report, the committee suggests that there needs to be a change in attitude to the “development of skills and ingenuity” (AGPS, p. 189), and that “Education and training arrangements in Australia have been based on the labour force needs of an industrial economy”, a “small minority of professional workers and highly skilled trade workers and a large majority of unskilled and semi-skilled workers” (AGPS, p. 190). The committee members considered this attitude was “obsolete in a post industrial economy” (AGPS, p. 190) and would require education to have a broader base on which to build the necessary vocational skills. This also reflected the social changes which had occurred in Australian society. The 1981 census indicated some 41 per cent of the nation’s population was derived from overseas or “born in Australia with at least one overseas parent” (AGPS, p.190). An effect of this change in the make-up of Australian society was being reflected in social values and the demands placed on schools. Students were finding it difficult to obtain jobs without completing their formal education to Year 11/12, employers were looking for higher education outcomes from students, and parents were seeking higher education outcomes for their children so they could compete in the “job market”. It also had a profound effect as there was now a requirement to significantly increase the resources available for higher education and in particular “TAFE in the next decade” (AGPS, p. 190).

More importantly the Karmel Report recognised the competencies needed by students in a general and specific sense. The report defined competence as “the ability to use knowledge and skills effectively to achieve a purpose” (AGPS, p. 190) and highlighted some general competencies required by all members of the community. These important competencies were defined as the need to acquire information, convey

information, apply logical processes, undertake tasks as an individual and be able to undertake tasks as a member of a group. The Karmel Report also identified that there were a number of additional competencies that were important, but the two most relevant were related to the individual and the commitment to ongoing education. These specific competencies became the foundation of curriculum and competency developments as they evolved in the next few years. They were formalised in the Mayer Key Competencies in the 1990s and will be discussed later in this chapter.

The Karmel Report was an important milestone in vocational education and training. It recognised that employment in the Australian economy was changing and with it a “changed nature of skills demanded in employment [together with]...a narrowing of boundaries between occupations mean that further training and increased retraining” (AGPS, p. 60). It also reflected problems and questions about the ability of young persons, entering this new and changing workforce, to have the competencies and skills necessary to meet the new challenges, particularly with the evolving technical and skills formation as the Australian economy went through a process of structural change. The report also recognised the importance of ensuring that the current workforce had the relevant skills training to meet these challenges. These changes required funding which in many instances was outside the ability of the states to meet, despite states having carriage of education under the Constitution (Australian Constitution, s. 51). The Karmel Report set out some implementation strategies to address areas that were highlighted in the report. These strategies which have implications for this thesis as they are related to negotiated agreements where the Commonwealth specified the funding, long-term specific purpose programs (particularly targeted at the unemployed or disadvantaged where the Commonwealth would manage the programs with long-

term funding) and directly administered initiatives where the Commonwealth undertook projects with specifically identified funds and outcomes (AGPS, p. 174). Through these policy settings the Karmel Report committee believed they could improve the delivery of schooling and vocational training.

Ultimately, the Karmel Report and its recommendations became the foundation on which the Kirby Report was predicated (Report of the Kirby Inquiry into Labour Market Programmes, 1985). This report became one of the foundations for vocational training and education from 1985 onwards. In a time of high unemployment in Australia—600,000 were seeking work and the unemployment rate was in excess of 9%—Kirby saw the need to rationalise labour market programmes. To this end Kirby recommended that there had to be greater coordination between labour market programmes and related post-secondary education, and this required greater attention to education and training in the mix of labour market programmes. In fact, the report made a telling point when it advised that, by 1984, 70% of Department of Employment and Industrial Relations expenditure was allocated to wage subsidies and short-term public sector job creation (Kirby Report, p. 5). The Kirby Report stated that this expenditure should be altered to ensure an increased share of resources for education and training, particularly in the vocational area. In this recommendation, the report considered the need to introduce traineeships for young people (Kirby Report, p. 6). The key proposal of the Kirby Report was a new system of traineeships for those aged 16–17, which provided a combination of work experience and accredited training based “on the job”, with “off-the-job” training. This was to be coupled with the creation of a special traineeship wage, negotiated by employers and the relevant union, which would follow the new training arrangements and reflect the time spent on the job and in the

formal off-the-job training. The report also had other major recommendations, but the most important with respect to this thesis relates to the establishment of new advisory and administrative arrangements, including a proposed National Council for Training and Employment. This new national council was mandated to secure the necessary institutional changes at state and federal level which would be necessary for the successful introduction of the proposed training system.

The report indicated there was no escaping the fact that particular groups of people had consistently borne a disproportionate share of the unemployment burden. The most vulnerable were women, young people, persons over 50 and those with disabilities. In many ways this reflected some of the changes which were occurring in the Australian and worldwide economies with the concept of “globalisation”. Kirby and his committee saw the report as an opportunity to develop a more effective and integrated set of labour market programmes in the nation that were particularly targeted at young people.

The Kirby Report struck a chord with the Hawke government which had become concerned with the rising youth unemployment and was looking at a way to address this important social issue. The Hawke government supported the establishment of the Australian Traineeship System (ATS) as it addressed this major issue of youth unemployment, an issue which concerned the government, industry and unions. The ATS was a major development in vocational education and training in that it provided structured vocational training for young people entering the workforce. It represented the first major vocational development outside the traditional vocational “time-serving” apprenticeships, and opened up vocational training in “non-traditional trade” areas such as agriculture, fishing and forestry. In supporting the ATS development the federal government stated that “It [was] additional to, and will complement, the higher

education and apprenticeship system” (Priority 1, p. 1). The target number of trainees for 1985–1986 was set at 10,000, rising to at least 75,000 by 1988–1989.

The ATS had a number of underpinning objectives, which were clearly enunciated, and in many ways have become integral to much of the subsequent development of vocational training. The most important of these objectives was an endeavour to achieve long-term fundamental reform in early post-school training arrangements, particularly in what is described as non-trades. An attempt was made to provide an alternative entry point into the Australian labour market, especially for early school leavers who maybe entering jobs with low skill levels and little prospect of future career paths. Thus with a combination of vocational training on and off the job, traineeships would hopefully break the cycle of “no experience and no skill – no job” (p. 2). Traineeships would enhance a person’s longer-term future career opportunities. This also required employers and training institutions to deliver relevant integrated industry training. With these objectives, the ATS evolved such that the key aspects of a traineeship were the establishment of a formal agreement between employer and trainee so that the trainee could acquire nominated skills outcomes and ensure that there was put in place structured “on-the-job” and “off-the-job” training provided by the employer and a TAFE institution or its equivalent. The training programme had to be registered with a state training authority who would issue the formal certification on completion of the training.

The rural industry training councils in Queensland and Tasmania readily embraced the traineeship concept (TRITB Board Minutes, February 1985). Industry training councils were tripartite bodies composed of employers, union and government representatives. By October 1985, Queensland and Tasmania had been invited by the federal and state

governments to develop traineeships in the rural area (TRITB Board Minutes, September 1985): Queensland an extensive agricultural traineeship (based around cattle/cotton and crops) and Tasmania an intensive agricultural traineeship (based around the dairy and vegetable industries). These were very successful and saw a regular intake in Tasmania of 60 new trainees each year from 1987 to 1999 (McCulloch, 1990; Hocking, 1992)) with 90% of trainees staying with their employer on completion of the traineeship.

As an idea, traineeships were nationally a great success in that they addressed problems associated with early leavers. In developing the traineeship curricula, the competencies noted in the Karmel Report became underpinning tenets in each of the traineeship subjects. Yet despite their success and uptake across all industry sectors, the number of trainees never reached the federal government's target and the unemployment numbers showed little variation (NCVER DATA, DEST, AGPS Unemployment).

One of the major educational issues highlighted by the development of traineeships was the lack of uniformity between states and the failure of states to recognise qualifications between states. To overcome this problem the federal government convinced the states in 1987 to form a national agreement whereby their vocational education funds—part of the education budget in each state—were placed in a central pool and managed by the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA). ANTA came into force on 1 January 1988 and had as its charter to supervise the development of a national training system, including the standardising of courses so that qualifications were “portable” between states and recognised nationally (Kelly, p. 3). Dawkins and Duncan (1988) saw this as an imperative and were able to cite examples of inconsistency in similar trades and professions across Australia. In fact, they saw “the co-ordination of a

nationally consistent system will be a major challenge” (Dawkins & Duncan, 1988, pp. 12–13).

The 1990s and 2000s

During the 1990s a number of other reports were published with respect to VET. The most important of these in relation to this thesis are as follows.

The first is *Young People’s Participation in Post Compulsory Education and Training*, which is a report of the Australian Education Council Review Committee known as the Finn Report (Australian Education Council, Finn Review, 1991). This report suggested there should be a narrowing of the concept of general and vocational education. It required the broadening of education and curriculum in schools to allow students greater access to vocational training. The report also stressed that the convergence of work and education was essential if Australia was to improve its productivity.

Second is the Mayer Committee Report. The Mayer Committee was established in 1991 by the Australian Education Council (AEC) and the government ministers at state and federal level who were responsible for vocational education. The Mayer Committee was charged with undertaking further work on the employment-related key competencies identified in the Finn Report and which the Karmel Report had first raised (Australian Education Council, Finn Review, 1991). The Mayer Committee Report (Australian Education Council, Mayer Committee, 1992) endorsed the six key competencies identified by the Finn Report. These were language and communications, mathematics, scientific and technological understanding, cultural understanding, problem solving and personal and interpersonal characteristics.

It was also felt there was an urgent need to provide people with better preparation for their initial employment, and provide a foundation for ongoing vocational education and training. The report also highlighted the need to develop clearer and more flexible pathways between education, training and employment by nationally agreed standards of performance in the employment-related key competencies and to implement nationally consistent approaches to assessment and reporting achievement.

The Mayer Committee saw Finn's key competencies as providing a general description of competencies which were essential for effective participation in the workplace and other possible settings. The key competencies focused on the capacity to apply knowledge and skills in an integrated way in work situations. Eventually the key competencies were to underpin the development of curricula and later the new industry competency standards.

In order to address continual rising unemployment, following the 1991 recession Prime Minister Keating announced in the federal parliament the formation of a job compact. The aim of the compact was to provide assistance for those who had been unemployed for longer than 18 months, with training, support and the offer of a job for 6 to 12 months. The objective of the Working Nation statement (of which the compact was part) was to make the long-term unemployed job ready. In his statement Keating declared that "Australian vocational training will be available through traineeships based in schools, TAFE, industry and labour market programs will be available to adults as well" (Prime Minister Keating, Working Nation Statement, HR, May 1994). Working Nation was the first case-managed, work-obliged, job-subsidised programme in the western world seeking to address long-term unemployment (Ray, 2001).

Working Nation was implemented by the federal government, through the federal Department of Employment, Education and Training, via a new body called Nettforce. Nettforce's role was to coordinate the take up of this new federal government initiative by liaising with industry training advisory boards, vocational providers and training brokers, and thereby reduce youth unemployment in particular by means of a rapid increase in traineeship numbers. Unpublished National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) data indicate trainee commencements rose from 15,437 in 1994–1995 to 48,662 in 1996–1997 (Ray, 2001), which represented a tripling of traineeship numbers. The advent of Nettforce traineeships also opened up the number of occupations which were available for training. It was a move away from traineeships or apprenticeships in the traditional declared trades, in order to embrace a wider range of businesses in the job market, e.g. the AFL Sports Traineeship (AFL, 1996).

The third report that relates to this thesis is the Carmichael Report (Employment Skills Formation Council, 1992). This report recommended a competency-based Australian Vocational Certificate Training System (AVCTS) be established. The AVCTS was to be focused on outcomes, skills and knowledge and be developed around industry-based competency standards, representing a move away from the traditional time-serving apprenticeship to one which recognised an individual's needs, lifelong skills acquisition and ability to perform the task as set out in the industry-developed competency standards. In going down this path, Australia was following the United Kingdom, Scotland and Europe where, as Griffin and Zichy-Woinarski observed in 1996, time serving was no longer the norm in acknowledging skills acquisition or competence to undertake the task. This development would require the recognition of prior learning, articulation and credit transfers by vocational providers. The report also supported the

introduction of the key competencies within the new AVCTS. Carmichael advocated introducing by 1995 the new competency-based certificate and recommended that the current traineeships and apprenticeships should be merged into the new AVCTS. This would in turn provide a fully articulated vocational pathway.

An examination of the “landmark reports” on the website of the NCVER indicates that the Finn Report was the last major vocational report which had an impact on the delivery of vocational education and training. Subsequent reports relate to reviews of policy development and in the early 21st century the major issues have a bias towards the delivery of university training and the future development of universities in Australia.

Summary

This retrospect review of VET policy development indicates there have been many reviews and suggestions to improve the delivery of vocational education and training in an endeavour to address skills acquisition to people needing them in order to improve their potential employability. Each of these reports has sought to address a problem, whether it be youth unemployment or the lack of basic life skills or employability.

Despite these many reports their implementation has been sporadic and in this context suggests the need for research such as this study, particularly to improve implementation strategies and long-term skills acquisition which will benefit the needs of rural industries, rural and regional towns across Australia.

Chapter 3 considers the literature relevant to this topic and identifies a number of themes which are relevant to this research and study.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

This thesis is concerned with vocational education and training policy and its implementation in rural Australia from 1984 to 2004. This chapter reviews the literature relevant to the topic. Literature was located through a search of the National Centre for Vocational Education Research database, the libraries at the University of Tasmania and Deakin University, books on loan from my Senior Supervisor, and electronic literature databases. The main search terms used were vocational education and training, adult learning, rural towns, rural and regional Australia, agriculture, primary industry/ies, rural industry/ies, rural Australia, leadership, advocacy, social capital and boundary crossers.

An important consideration in any discussion on VET relates to how adult learning and delivery is addressed, and for this thesis there is a particular emphasis with regard to rural and regional communities. The other themes that will be developed in the literature review with regard to Australia's rural communities and industries are social capital, advocacy, leadership and boundary crossers. These are important themes, particularly in regard to rural and regional Australia. They are the basis underpinning this study.

Adult Learning and Effective Delivery

An essential prerequisite for effective delivery of training is to understand how adults learn. This requires comprehension of the cognitive and developmental attributes so vital to making effective teaching and learning occur. The ability to learn has become increasingly important within the Australian population as it embraces and accepts the

concept of lifelong learning and with it the ongoing expectations and benefits which will devolve to the individual and society (Nordstrom & Merz, 2006; Department of Education and Workplace Relations, 2011). Chapter 2 considers a retrospect view with regard to the development of rural Australia and how vocational education and training policy evolved during that period.

Adult learning and delivery can be divided into formal and non-formal/ informal learning. Formal learning has been defined as learning that occurs within an organized and formal structure (Merriam, Caffarella and Baumgartner 2009: Colardyn and Bjornavold 2004). On the other hand non-formal/ informal learning can be characterised by the opportunity to learn from and with other people, such as a farmer's field day on a relevant topic. Thus non-formal/informal learning can take place in a variety of settings which are outside organized formal structures. Such learning experiences are valuable for those involved in the rural industries (Kilpatrick 1997: Eraut 2004: Bennett 2012: Mannuti, Pastore, Sardino, Giancrospro and Morciano 2015)

With the acknowledgement of both formal and non-formal/informal learning it is necessary to provide a qualification that the scope of this thesis will be limited to the formal VET system.

Piaget (1964) suggested that there are six stages in cognitive development through which we progress and that adult learning is characterised by the ability to reason and think abstractly. On the other hand, Merriam and Caffarella (1999) and Knowles, Holton and Swanson (1998) suggest that adult learning as a term is associated with notions of having no academic intelligence, practical intelligence, everyday cognition and practical thinking. Their argument was based on the premise that, as conventionally

understood, academic intelligence does not take into account the full range of adult cognitive abilities (Knowles et al., 1998). Tennant (1996; 1997) noted that adult learning resulted in the development of intellectual and cognitive functions. These ideas have been challenged and modified over recent years as it was assumed that adult cognitive function will gradually decline with ageing. Today there is an acceptance that adult learning is a more complex process, and that there are other concepts which have a role in explaining the nature and effectiveness of adult learning (Knowles et al., 1998; Bransford, Donavan & Pellegrino, 2000; Hansman, 2008; Merriman, Catfarella & Baumgartner, 2009). As Zichy-Woinarski (2000) points out, successful adult learning requires the ability to relate new knowledge to adults' existing cognitive frameworks. It requires an understanding of how adult learners think and what drives them. This is vital in enabling the development of learning strategies and in helping adult learners with their understanding and comprehension so they are able to apply what they have learned.

Falk, Kilpatrick and Morgan (1997) illustrate this complexity and suggest there are five factors which contribute to learning: the characteristics of the learner; the learning activities; the nature of the learning material; the critical tasks, and the site, institution and system purpose.

Tenant (1998) and Tenant and Pogson (1996) argue that there are other important characteristics which also need to be considered when understanding and implementing adult education and training. They suggest these embrace an acknowledgement that adults are able to learn for themselves as a result of their own cognitive skill and this in turn extends to their ability to learn at any age. The lifelong experiences adults bring to the learning process are particularly relevant in their learning process. There is also a

need for respect, openness and equality to be established between the learner and the trainer/facilitator because in adult learning these attributes act as a bridge between the learners and the learning. The trainer/facilitator is imparting knowledge, skills and training. The trainer/facilitator needs to be flexible and able to vary delivery if students/learners have difficulty in comprehension. The trainer/facilitator also needs to understand that ultimately he or she is simply a resource to aid and assist the learning process.

Foley (2000) provides another perspective when he suggests that it is important to take into account and consider the learners' view of education and training. This will include the need for clear support for adult learners and the ability for educators to understand and comprehend the dynamics of the clientele with whom they are working. Foley's work tends to reinforce the issues that Tennant and Pogson (1995) raised in their discussion on the important principles and guidelines for good practice in relation to the delivery of adult learning. These included acknowledgement that adults are able to learn for themselves as a result of their own inherent cognitive characteristics; that adults have the capacity to learn at any age, make judgements, solve problems and think critically; the importance of establishing a relationship between the learner and teacher/facilitator which is built on respect, openness and equality, and the necessity to meet the needs of adults by ensuring that practitioners involved in adult learning are aware of the complex differences between individuals in how they learn and how training is delivered to meet this complexity.

All of these issues interplay within the context of the purpose of learning. We need to be clear about the purpose of the learning programme (Tennant, 1996; Tennant & Pogson, 1995; Foley, 2000; Zichy-Woinarski, 2000) because, if we do not know, then

we cannot be confident that we have planned to meet those learning needs. The ways in which the characteristics of the learner, learning activities, the nature of the materials and the critical tasks of the learning process interact in the context of the adults' purpose for learning are shown in Figure 3.1.

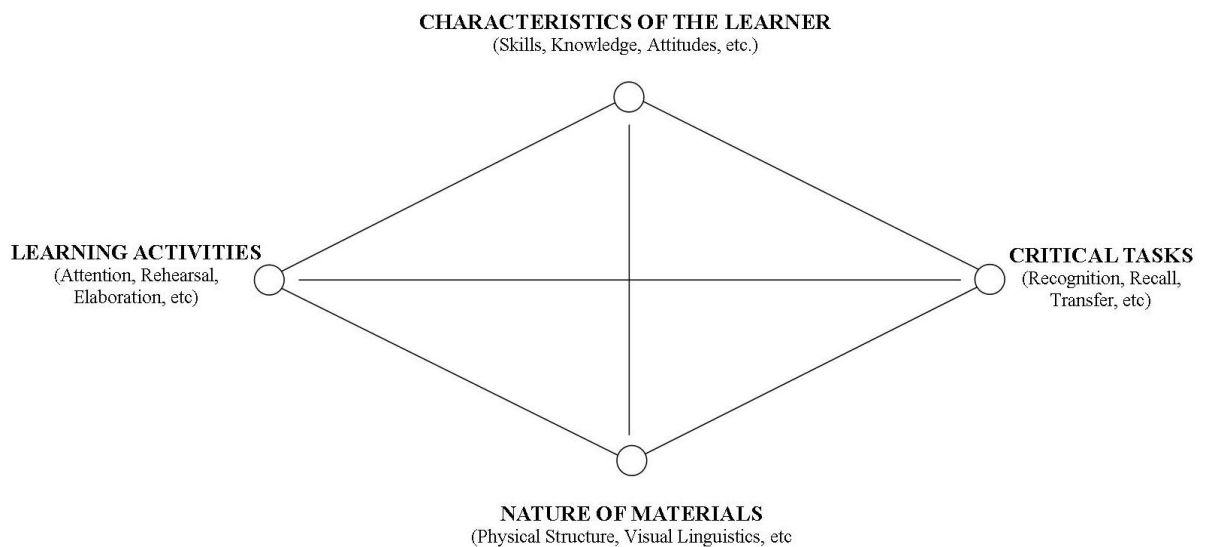


Figure 3.1: Purpose of Learning (Falk, Kilpatrick & Morgan, 1997)

Falk, Kilpatrick and Morgan (1997) add weight to Kolb (1984) who argued that learning styles are vitally important to how adult learning takes place. Kolb (1984) also argued that adults develop a dominant learning style. Sadler-Smith (1996) saw the learning style as a distinctive and habitual manner of acquiring knowledge, skills or attitude through study or experience. Kolb (1984) further stated that the dominant learning style developed by adults was related to the adult's occupation. As a result the dominant learning style has a great influence on an adult's ability to comprehend education and skills acquisition.

The “Purpose of Learning” diagram (Figure 3.1) suggests that, for effective learning to occur in an adult context, a genuine dialogue between each of the parties is required. This necessitates the development of relationships of trust and the provision of resources to support the learning process. It also requires a process which is problem-based and collaborative and has an emphasis on equality between the facilitator and the learner (Leib, 1991; Zmeyov, 1998; Fidishun, 2000). This stresses the need to understand the ways in which facilitators can assist adults to learn rather than imposing information, ideas or actions on them (Fidishun, 2000).

There is also a need to understand how the effectiveness of learning can be enhanced if learning style is considered together with a suitable delivery mechanism. Delivery mechanisms have to encompass the diversity of cognitive processes which adults will bring to the learning process. This may include self-directed learning; motivation and fostering to assist adults to learn; the lifelong experience that can be useful in enhancing the learning process, and the need to deal with real-life tasks or problems (Knowles et al., 1998). Pertinent to this discussion is the notion of “on and off” the job delivery. In the “off job” situation (formal learning) the learner is being provided the basis of new knowledge and skills, whilst the “on the job” context allows the learner, with the assistance of the employer or some other qualified person, to put these new skills into practice in a practical situation. In a practical sense “on the job” training helps employers to bridge the gap between learning and making use of what has been learned. It provides an opportunity for some useful work to be achieved during the learning period (Jacobs, 2003; Dymock & Gerber, 2002; Tynjala 2008).

Much facilitated adult learning takes place in a group setting. Figure 3.2 illustrates the learning process in the context of adults learning as part of a group.

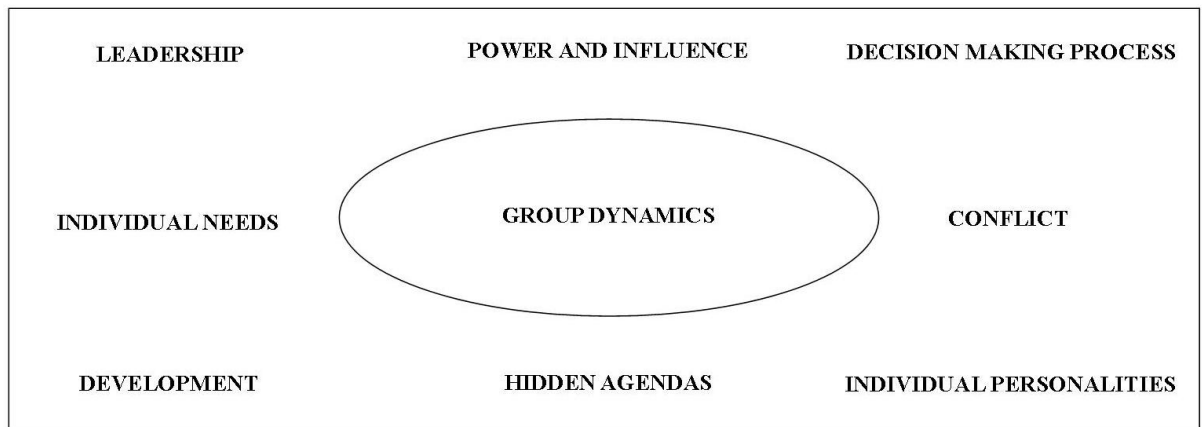


Figure 3.2: Group Dynamics, Learning Components and Possible Delivery Mechanisms

The learning process shown in Figure 3.2 provides the opportunity for trainers and facilitators consider a number of possible delivery mechanisms for a group (Rural Health Education Foundation, 2007). Rothwell (1998), Laird (1995) and Tovey (1997) suggest there is potentially a range of delivery styles available to trainers which take into account the group dynamics in order to enhance the learning process. These are summarised in Table 3.1 that follows.

Table 3.1*Potential Approaches to Possible Delivery Mechanisms*

Method	Description
Brainstorming	Many ideas about a topic
Case studies	A problem to be worked through: incorporates problems and issues associated with subject
Computer-managed learning	Learning via the computer
Field trips	Visit to real-life example
Group discussion	Discussions between learners about a topic
Lecture	Trainer speaks but must make training interesting
Seminar	Centred on a particular topic

Trainers/facilitators need to take into account these potential methods and styles when developing learning resources and considering possible delivery mechanisms, particularly when the planned learning relates to adults.

Learning Resources: The development of teaching and learning resources is an integral prerequisite in the provision of effective training delivery. Appropriate training materials rely on effective learning design and should reflect the different domains of learning, that is, “transmission, emergence, acquisition and accretion” (Siemens, 2005, p. 1). In some ways the development of learning resources and their content has

become a specialised skill and is often undertaken by those who may not deliver training (Background Connections, 2003). It is important that the teaching and learning materials focus on the teaching objectives so that they can meet the intended learning goals. Kato, Yamazaki, Suzuki, Kuzuoka, Miki and Yamazaki (1997) remind the developers of learning and training material that the needs of the students must be taken into account. It is essential that course designers be cognisant of the students, their competence levels and their individual characteristics; the nature of the course; the proposed teaching methods; how assessment will be addressed and the issue of quality assurance (Roskopf, 2004). The design of training and learning materials must reflect a thorough analysis of all aspects of the proposed training and all the circumstances associated with the learning experience and how this can relate to the acquisition of new skills and technologies (Preez, 1984). Other factors which need to be considered in the effectiveness of the delivery methodology will include the need for the training to be based on the relevant industry competency standards and that there is potential for assessment (Zichy-Woinarski, 2000).

Learning and Effective Delivery to Primary Industries: Griffin and Zichy-Woinarski (1996) observed that some of the delivery concepts adopted by the Open Learning Agency – Burnaby, Vancouver, British Columbia mirrored Kilpatrick's (1996) ideas regarding effective delivery of education and training. Kilpatrick (1996) argued that delivery needs to consider the target group, the cost of delivery, how outcomes will augment knowledge, skills and attitudes leading to improved work practices and ultimately benefits for the business and wider community. This relates to the range or rafts of delivery modes which is illustrated in Figure 3.3. These rafts of delivery have, at one end of the spectrum, group dynamics as expressed in a classroom

setting. At the other end of the spectrum is the individual who may be happy to work in that fashion or, due to circumstances such as rural isolation, undertakes learning in a single situation. As we move from left to right or right to left the range of possible/potential delivery modes will change and at the middle will reflect part classroom and part individual. Conceptually the spectrum draws together the learning process, possible delivery styles and how learning resources may be prepared.

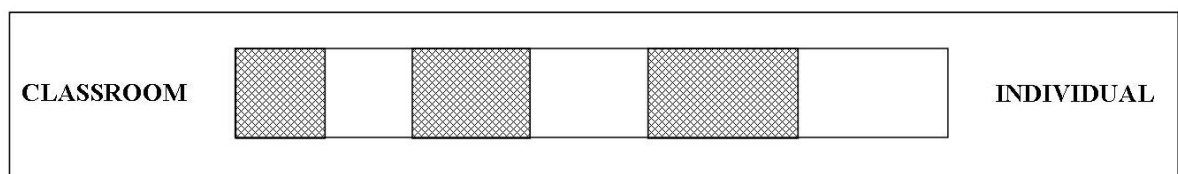


Figure 3.3: Potential Spectrum of Delivery Styles

The potential spectrum of delivery styles in Figure 3.3 provides course designers with an opportunity to consider how the training and education can be delivered to the client group. The training design may lead to considerations as to whether the training and education should be undertaken as a group/classroom activity or individually off campus. The spectrum suggests a breadth of iterations ranging over the full gamut of potential delivery styles. Another important consideration will relate to the age profiles of the participants. Ho (2003) makes a general observation that younger attendees are more ready to embrace the new delivery methods of e-learning, self-paced learning and use the new forms of social media—Twitter, Facebook and blogs—to keep in touch with their fellow students, whilst older students prefer face-to-face or workplace training. Ho's (2003) observation is slowly being reflected in the primary industry with the development of online learning materials by Rural Skills Australia (RSA, 2011).

The Scottish Agricultural College and its Advisory Service in Scotland, and the Agricultural Training Board of the United Kingdom with its Industry Training Organisation, provide two models which have been used to enhance training and delivery. These models use training co-ordinators (facilitators) who are involved with a group of farmers rather than adopting a “one size fits all” or “blanket” approach. Their role is to assist and match the needs of farmers who are seeking relevant short-course training rather than a longer more academic offering. Co-ordinators are in many ways acting as boundary crossers or training brokers in their liaison with appropriate training providers and their clients’ needs. Canada, the United States and Taiwan have adopted a similar model (Griffin & Zichy-Woinarski, 1996). The concept of boundary crossers will be discussed separately later in this chapter. For the purpose of this thesis the term is defined here and is based on Morse (2008) who indicates the term boundary crosser can either relate to an individual or an organisation. Boundary crossers play an important role in developing collaboration or partnerships, for example for a community.

The idea of actively matching training needs with suitable provision has become an important part of the training scene. Training brokers, industry consultation and advisory committees are a sophisticated response to ensure that the training needs of a client can be met by a suitable training provider whose role is to meet the perceived culture and needs of the client (Ankers, 2008). Ankers (2008) reinforces Kilpatrick, Fulton, Johns and Wetherly (2005) who defined the role of an intermediary as meeting the current and future training needs of a client and attempting to facilitate those needs by working with training providers whilst acting in the best interest of the client. A training intermediary can be described as a third party broker because they do not have

a pecuniary interest in training, their task is to match the clients to appropriate products and services (Kilpatrick, Fulton & Johns, 2004). The training broker concept is an alternative to Chapman and Tripp's (2003) suggestion of the establishment of local area training committees to provide advice and assist with the enhancement of local relevant education and training linked into the national delivery of vocational education and training or relevant industry training. The need for local area training committees has been further supported by the rise of training intermediaries who have an active and purposeful role in identifying training needs. Whilst local area training committees and training intermediaries identify these potential training needs, there is a requirement for the committees in the current vocational training regime to consider the recognition of prior learning (RPL). RPL has been defined as "formal acknowledgement of a person's current skills and knowledge, no matter how and when the learning occurred" (Queensland Government- Department of Education and Training, 2014; Griffin and Zichy-Woinarski 1996). Prior to the introduction of CBT in 2000, VET had been delivered through formal indentures or industry designed short courses based on an agreed curriculum which provided the participant with underpinning knowledge and which allowed them to practice and implement that knowledge in the work place. Until the implementation of CBT training in 2000, there was a formal articulation process within VET (Zichy-Woinarski 1996). The introduction of CBT necessitated the consideration of RPL in assessing the training needs of a potential student and only became relevant with this vocational change. For this reason RPL was not pertinent to this study.

The cost of education and training for primary industry has to be considered when selecting the delivery mechanism for effective training as it must be efficient in terms

of resources required. Education, training and enhancement of skills have to be weighed by the attendee against the cost of obtaining the information from other sources such as a professional internal body (Kilpatrick, 1996). The 2007 Tasmanian report on the FarmBi\$ program—a program funded 50% each by the federal and Tasmanian governments which was designed to encourage farmers, managers and senior staff to improve and enhance their knowledge and skills to improve output and productivity (DPIWE, 2007)—stated that the vast majority of participants regarded the training they had undertaken as effective and reported that it represented value for money. Cost effectiveness had to be considered in light of the 60% subsidy provided by Tasmanian FarmBi\$ for participants to attend the training. Griffin and Zichy-Woinarski (1996) noted that the non-structured training provided by, for example, organisations, firms and educators required payment from those who attended. Bonney (2006; 2008) found that payment for training had become the norm for the majority of training and education, whether this was structured or non-structured.

Barriers to Training: Barriers can be evident in training, and these can be either of a structural or of an attitudinal nature. Kelly (1994) suggested that some of the structural barriers in relation to training for farmers include location, cost and timing. Timing of training is of utmost importance as it needs to be flexible and able to fit in with the target group, particularly in the rural sector where there are variations in work cycles over the year. Timing must take into account the rural cycle—the busy and non-busy periods (TAFE, 1996; Kilpatrick, 1996).

Kelly (1994) also perceived attitudinal barriers as having an impact on delivery. These may include the fear of educational institutions resulting from a bad school experience and courses that do not meet the learner's needs.

The choice of delivery in the provision of education and training for adults requires consultation between the trainer/facilitator, participants and third parties who may be the funding body, state or federal authorities. The proposed method of delivery is vital to ensure effective delivery, the transfer of knowledge, the development of new skills and their implementation in the context of the learning.

The issue of social capital is also relevant to the context of rural communities. How social capital plays a part in the functioning of rural communities and rural training delivery is very relevant to this research. The next section picks up these themes as it looks at the ideas surrounding social capital and how the concept applies to rural communities and, in the context of the aim of the research, to policy development and implementation.

Social Capital

Social capital developed around the work of James Coleman (1988), Robert Putnam (1993), and Pierre Bourdieu (1986; 1998) among others. Adam and Rončević (2003) saw social capital as describing certain aspects of the community social structure which enable social action to occur. Portes (1996; 1998) and Portes and Landolt (1996) saw social capital as developing benefits which arose through membership within networks and social structures, whilst Guenther and Falk (1999) developed a three-dimensional model of social capital which included structural, relational and cognitive aspects of the society and community.

From these ideas a number of definitions have been suggested in respect to social capital. There appears to be no single definition because researchers/authors tend to have different frameworks or considerations/concepts when looking at social capital. Most, however, concur that social capital has a focus on the social relations that have productive benefits for the community (Dolfsma & Dannreuther, 2003; Foley & Edwards, 1997; Alder & Kwon, 2002; Adam & Rončević, 2003). Eastis (1998) considers that social capital is a multidimensional idea and should be seen in this context. Viewed from this perspective, it becomes necessary to understand how the various aspects of social capital mix and relate (Stone & Hughes, 2002).

Conversely (Claridge, 1986) notes that one of the major challenges in trying to define social capital is its complexity, particularly in the intricate interactions which occur in a community. This study accepts that there appears to be no single definition of social capital. Whilst accepting this premise, Bourdieu's (1980) definition of social capital appears to reflect a consensus approach when he states "[social capital is]...The aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable framework of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition" (p. 248). This definition focuses on the benefits accruing to individuals from participation in groups and the importance of sociability for the purposes of creating the social capital resource. Bourdieu's definition also stresses the importance of understanding the community social networks and the productive benefits which may arise from those networks.

Importantly, Bourdieu's definition raises the need to distinguish and acknowledge the various ideas about "capital" which may reside in a community. These can include

natural capital which embraces the community's natural resources; cultural capital which stresses local community values; human capital and the importance of education, skills acquisition, health, creativity and population; political capital, especially the role of governments and local councils; financial capital and the important role it plays in supporting the community from lending to saving; building capital which embraces a raft of infrastructure issues, and finally social capital which relies on the community to have a common vision and goals, leadership and a diversity of views (Flora, Emery, Fey & Bregendahl, 2005). Whilst observing the potential array and possible forms of capital, this section concentrates on the social capital and the role it plays within the community.

As noted, social capital resides within the community and belongs to the community/group. It can be used by the community/group either collectively or on an individual basis (Kilpatrick, Bell & Falk, 1998). This has been diagrammatically illustrated by Kilpatrick and Falk (2000) and more recently by Stone and Hughes (2002). The Stone and Hughes (2002) diagram provides a summary of the core measures of social capital and provides examples of how inputs may result in outputs through the conduct and interaction of potential various community situations. It also reflects the other capital inputs discussed previously which make up the social fabric of a community.

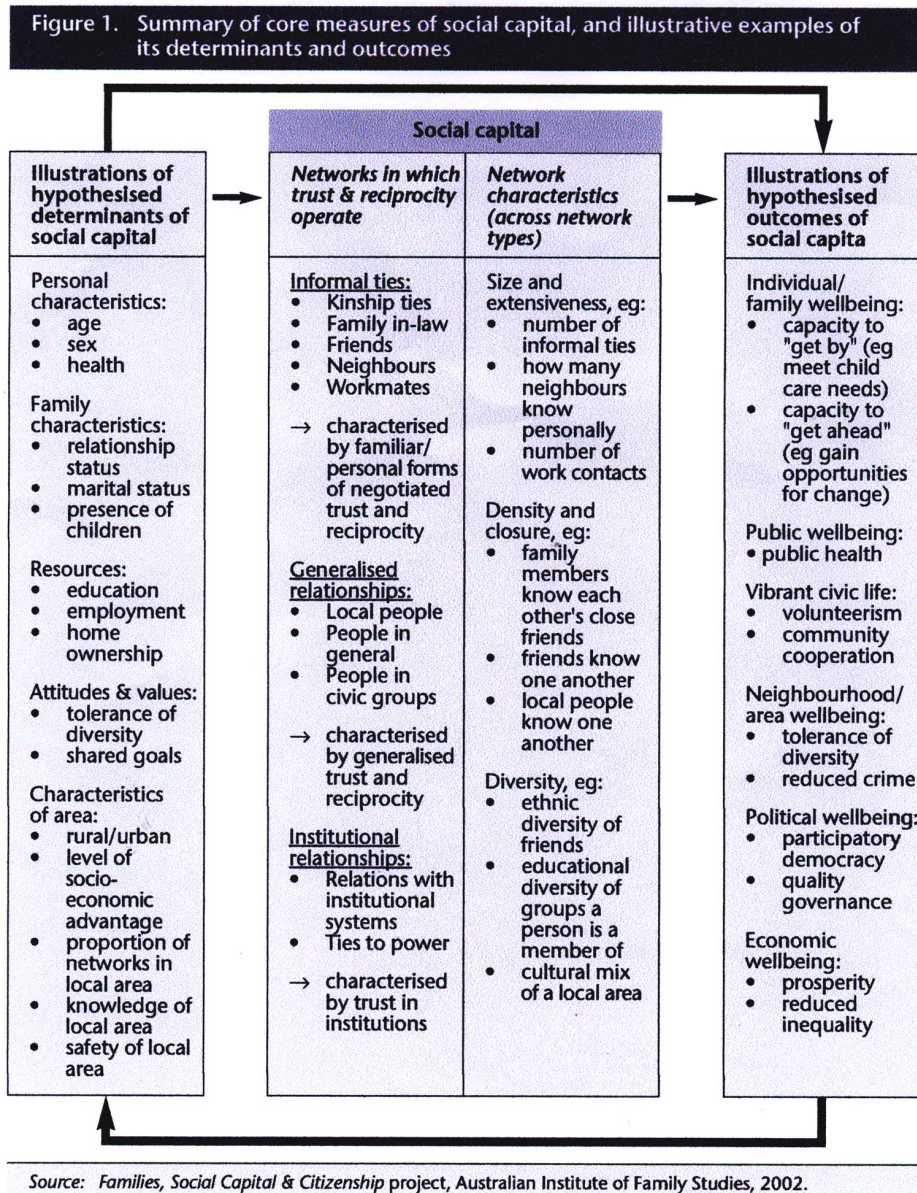


Figure 3.4: Core Measures of Social Capital and Examples of Determinants and Outcomes (Stone & Hughes, 2002)

As Stone and Hughes (2002) point out, “social capital should be understood as a resource for collective action” (p. 2), which in turn reinforces Bourdieu’s definition and other works cited previously. In this way, social capital can be seen as adhering within social networks, bonding people with similar views and may provide a bridge between people with diverse sets of views and ideals (Dekker & Uslander, 2001). Claridge (1986) expands on this, and considers that social capital is identifiable from the individual in a community to the totality of a nation. In this sense there is a need to take into account the various community institutions which can be associated with potential social outcomes. These may include voluntary, non-government, and government organisations as well as private enterprise. As a result of these interactions social capital may be created within a community and this idea will be expanded when considering the importance of leadership and advocacy later in this chapter.

Figure 3.4 has two columns marked social capital. The first column describes the network categories in which social capital may operate—household, families and the community. They are described by Stone and Hughes (2002) as the “informal realm”, “generalised realm” and “institutional realm” (p. 3) and indicate how network relationships will vary. In this study the “institutional realm” is of importance as it relates to trust in formal institutions—governance, fairness, official providers, resource allocation (Stone & Hughes, 2002, p. 4).

The second column in Figure 3.4 looks closely at what Stone and Hughes (2002) call “network characteristics”. This is important because the nature of social capital will vary from community to community depending on community structure and networks.

These variations will lead to different, changing and variable combinations of social capital. Coleman (1988) argues that networks have an important relationship to the nature of social capital, particularly with regard to how they can be shared amongst a diverse range of participants. Coleman (1988) and Stone and Hughes (2002) suggest that these networks can provide vital linkages across other diverse ranges of networks. Importantly, and relevant to this thesis, Figure 3.4 raises the consideration of bonding and bridging networks which are important in combination to the improvement of social capital within a community. The union of bonding, which considers the ties between organisations, community and individuals and bridging which embraces other sections of industry—for example the NFF, state and federal government departments—and external or linking networks exposes individuals and organisations to fresh information and ideas which may ultimately provide the impetus to help those in the community improve (Beugelsdijk & Smulders, 2003; Briggs, 1998; Putnam, 2002). The diagram also reflects those other areas of capital previously discussed, which will add to the overall social capital of the community, for example human and financial capital which can be found in education, employment and training or through the economic growth and provision of community facilities. Thus the outcomes of social capital and its development within the community/ies can have a profound impact on many different areas of human life and development (Grootaert & Van Bastelaer, 2002).

Social capital is a complex theory which works at the macro, meso and micro levels (Falk & Kilpatrick, 2000). In considering how communities develop, Kilpatrick, Field and Falk (2003) argue that social capital is a tool that can be used to assist community development. They suggest that social capital has a threefold effect on community

development through the use of existing resources provided within the community, that “public good” is part of the community ethos and that resources can assist in sustained ongoing development. Warner (2001) indicates that for social capital to be used in community development there is a need for the active, willing engagement of community members. Pretty and Ward (2001) reinforce this in the context of rural communities by suggesting developed or mature local community groups are often able to make better use of existing community resources than individuals working alone or in competition.

Falk and Kilpatrick (2000) suggested that community development cannot rely solely on the capital and resources which reside within the community but may need assistance from external resources that are “human, physical and financial” (Falk & Kilpatrick, 2000, p. 11) in order to provide opportunities for the community, for example a link between a government department and the community may enable the facilitation of a collective action to benefit the group (Knack, 2002). The ability of communities to embrace and build networks within and without may enable community members to use their skills and knowledge in conjunction with the skills and knowledge of others, especially those who may reside outside the community (Kilpatrick, Field & Falk, 2003). Importantly, this may enable the development of integrity and trust between individuals both inside and outside the community; integrity and trust are key elements of social capital.

One of the positive benefits which may arise from this external aspect of social capital is the possibility that it may allow the community access to policy makers and practitioners from different disciplines to enjoy an unprecedented level of co-operation and dialogue (Woolcock, 2001).

Utilisation of the integrity and trust which may be generated within communities, and the potential access to policy makers, relies on a number of common factors. Foremost of these is the concept of community leadership, particularly within and without the community of those persons who are able to drive and strive to develop and implement the community agenda. The next two sections consider the importance of leadership and how leaders can advocate positions which will advance and improve the welfare and social capital of their community.

Leadership

To paraphrase Field Marshall Slim (1956) and Montgomery of Alemain (1961) leadership is based around the following concepts which they expressed as:

- the leader is one who can get people to follow him
- the leader is a man who can be looked up to and whose personal judgment is trusted
- the leader must be a servant of truth
- the leader voices optimism and determination to persevere
- the leader should radiate confidence
- the leader is able to dominate and finally master events that surround him and as a result the ability to make the right decision and courage to act on these decisions.

Since the end of World War II, ideas relating to the concept of leadership have undergone a paradigm shift. No longer is the subject of leadership seen in the light of a military situation. Leadership is now seen as more inclusive and covering a wide and

diverse range of contexts, for example community leadership plays a significant role in rural communities. This section initially looks at the place of leadership in general. Following these observations it considers the types of leadership which are applicable and may work for the benefit of rural communities.

In the first decades following World War II, as a topic leadership was mainly the province of the armed services. Leadership education and training had evolved in the military over the years from the time of Sun Tzu “The Art of War” (500 BC). Most managers in the 1960s were leaders who had risen through the ranks. Any training and education they had received was to enhance their managerial skills to manage the change process and, in the majority of cases, they ruled in an autocratic manner. The subject of leadership was rarely discussed in business and community circles, let alone in the literature. Managers, supervisors and workers who participated in Australia’s part-time military force, the Citizens Military Force (CMF), were also exposed to leadership training (Australian Army Training Manuals, 1961). Therefore any “leadership training” was mainly that conducted by the military establishment. This was in complete contrast to other industries where a lack of any leadership training predominated.

Since the mid-1980s there has been a paradigm shift. Leadership training is now seen as extremely important for the future welfare of the nation and more particularly for our future leaders (Karpin, 1995). This shift in focus began with a leadership model proposed by Burns (1978). Burns saw leadership as a complex social process and no longer the province of the military establishment, rather it was part of the overall fabric of society. More importantly the leadership model described by Burns (1978) was based on mobilising persons with certain motives and values, and who had various

economic, political and other resources, in order to realise goals independently or mutually. This idea was regarded as transformational leadership. At its core is the focus on shared values in order to realise a common goal which may develop within the context of potential competition and conflict (Johns, 2003). This change in understanding leadership has become important, particularly in relation to how community leadership can evolve and be galvanised to address issues relevant to that community. This will be discussed further when consideration is given to the importance of community leadership below.

Leadership literature abounds with theories about leadership styles and how these styles may influence others in accepting the directions of the leader. Thus we have examples of spiritual leadership (Bolman & Deal, 1995; Fairholm, 1998); values based leadership (O'Toole, 1995), and moral leadership (Leithwood & Duke, 1998). Work undertaken by the Leadership Research Unit at Monash University (Sarros, 2002) suggests another leadership style based on the directions of the community in the management of their common affairs and is based on the virtues and moral principles of the leader. All these examples are based on consensus that the leader will act as an expert and, as a result, understand the needs and have the ability and know-how to interact with the followers.

These models were challenged in the 1990s. The "leader/follower" relationship had been based on the old military concept or traditional style (Slim, 1956; Montgomery of Alemien, 1961; Australian Army Training Manuals, 1961). On the other hand, Rost (1991) and Barker (1997) focussed on leadership which could achieve mutual goals shared by leaders and followers. This became known as "relational leadership". Rost (1993) defined this as "leadership [which] involves our influence relationship among

leaders and collaborators who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes” (p. 99). Relational leadership is more about interactions and the processes of influence between leaders and their constituents in order to accomplish intended changes. This is in contrast to the previous leader/follower relationship which rested on formal positions, authority, skill sets and the leader’s behaviour. The essential component of Rost’s definition is the desire to create a common purpose of action or intent. It also reflects a change from “follower” to “collaborator” in order to achieve an outcome. This common purpose is important to the achievement of a specific goal and it can be seen that the “leader/collaborators” are working towards a specific community objective. Given Rost’s notion of leadership, it is important to remember that he still has a focus on leadership which includes the leader’s abilities, characteristics and ethics. Rost (1991) also saw leaders having a level of power and certain attributes—reputation, status, personality, authority—which set them apart from the collaborators.

Whilst many organisations see leadership as the embodiment of power to direct the organisation, this may not be applicable to the requirements and needs of a community. Johns (2003) surmises that leadership in the community sector can be seen as a process which crosses traditional boundaries. This suggests there is a relationship either in the community or in a particular community sector such as a school, the local tennis club, the local council and civic leadership. As a result, leadership is considered a dynamic and collaborative process and leadership roles within the community may not be clearly defined.

The alternative view expressed by Johns (2003) and Barker (1997) suggests leadership is a social process within the community and this requires a collaborative approach to

realise collective goals. This suggestion is in sharp contrast to the views expressed by the military and business and government organisations.

Falk and Smith (2003) suggest that leadership is context dependent in that it is determined by the interaction of three essential points, namely the attributes of the individuals who play a part or role in the leadership process; the internal organisational roles within a community, and the external environment. How leaders react when faced with opportunities or difficulties can have an important bearing on the overall outcomes, particularly within in a community setting.

In the community context, how do Falk and Smith's three points inform us about leaders and the persons they are endeavouring to involve? Falk and Mulford (2001) suggest that this is empowering leadership and it vividly contrasts with the previous and more militaristic approach. The phrase "empowering leadership" is important. It reflects the context in which leadership needs to be "situated" in a particular location with particular outcomes in the form of enabling others. It provides an indication that this style of leadership may be important within the community by assisting in the creation and building of networks and that this leadership model is built on trust. If we accept this supposition it would imply that the "traditional leadership" model has been transmogrified within a community leadership context (Falk & Mulford, 2001; Falk & Smith, 2003; Falk, 2003).

"Community leadership" may provide the opportunity to have an input into policy settings whereby it is possible to achieve outcomes which provide community benefits. This may, however, require leaders at the local community level to be the drivers of change. Tacitly, community leaders must be engaged with the community so that the

community can see and measure the outcomes which flow from any planned action.

Falk leads us back to Rost and his definition of leadership and the important relationship between leaders and their constituents/community.

Relational leadership (Rost, 1993) is concerned about the interactions between leaders and their constituents/community and reflects a process which is contrary to the view that leadership rests on a formal position based on some sort of power or authority.

Community leadership is based on no formal authority—a contrast to the military organisation—but can be derived from the elected position the leader may hold or their personal standing in the community. This may encompass the local school council, fire brigade, the tennis club, Rotary, hospital board, the legislative council or the local doctor, leading farmer, school principal. As Pigg (1999, p. 196 quoting O'Brien & Hassinger, 1992) points out, community leaders “rely on networks and influence, with relationships developed through extensive interactions with community residents” who, as O'Brien and Hassinger (1992) suggest, in many cases will have different views and opinions. It should be of no surprise that in many rural/regional communities there may well be a potential crossover of influences relative to the interests of the individuals and their interaction with various functions and organisations which make up the community. It is therefore likely, in a small community, for members of one community organisation to include members who are actively involved in other community organisations, for example the local branch of the state farming organisation, rural fire brigade, golf club, the local chamber of commerce or the local progress association. This can impact on the role and leadership of that community organisation. Community leadership and its objectives may have multiple aims and

goals which contrast with organisational leadership and its necessary desire to achieve organisational goals. As a result the ability to influence outcomes is based on the leader's position, for example managing director, state manager and branch manager.

Essentially, community leaders and their leadership seek to produce identifiable changes in the community—for example better health facilities, a new school library, a new swimming pool, involvement in the local council, improved communications with the chairperson of the local farming organisation or representatives on the local or regional hospital board. Community leadership can be considered as shared leadership which evolves through and is the result of relationships developed in the community, and reflects a desire to improve the community and its social capital. In reflecting these desires, it is necessary for the leaders and the community to have an agreed common goal. Unlike organisational leadership, community leadership reflects no formal authority but rather the “Reliance of goodwill between leaders and the community” (Pigg, 1999). Community leadership rests on some essential communication skills which reflect the ability to achieve desired outcomes. These communication skills may also include links external to the community which have the potential to reflect broader vision of potential opportunities. Falk and Mulford (2001) suggest there are essential communication skills which reside in a community and these are enable, entrusting, engaging and visionary. They are based on trusting relationships between the leaders and the community. Specifically, these skills can be considered as empowering the authority to do something to make an idea possible; entrusting the responsibility for doing something; engaging (committed to a particular path to make the idea possible); existing (what is the operation at the particular time under consideration), and

envisionary, which is the ability to contemplate or consider as a possibility a potential desirable outcome.

When these skills are combined in a particular context then the effectiveness of the leadership process will be determined by the interaction between the dimensions. These dimensions are the attributes and skills of the individuals who play a part in the leadership process, the internal organisation roles of the individuals, and the external environment. Within a community these attributes facilitate the building of internal networks and enables links to the external networks and environment (Johns, 2003; Falk & Mulford, 2001).

Conversely (Sarros, 2002) suggests an alternative to relational leadership (Rost et al., (1993). Sarros (2002) refers to this as “The Heart and Soul of Leadership” and builds on both Rost’s (1993) and Barker’s (2002) definitions of leadership as “collaboration, wholeness, consensus, client orientation, civic virtues and freedom of expression” (Sarros, 2002, p. 5). The “heart” of leadership as expressed by Sarros (2002) encompasses influence and how the leader engenders trust and respect. The leader must also be a motivator with the ability to focus on expectations and vision. On the other hand, the “soul” rests on the ethical consideration that emanates from the leader’s own personal values. The Sarros leadership model is based around caring for the individual and holding to those enunciated ethical principles. This reinforces the centrality of the role of trust in leadership as raised by Falk and Mulford (2001) and Johns (2003).

Sarros also cites Bass and Avolio (1993) who consider leadership as the ability to “motivate others to do more than they originally intended and often more than they thought possible” (Bass & Avolio, 1993, p. 3). This suggests a leadership based around

influence—the non-threatening ability to promote change for the benefit of all, and an ability to understand the social responsibility for their actions.

Sarros (2002) argues that the “pursuit of leadership for its own sake...is a morally corrupt activity” (p. 11). Instead, leadership for the common good is the one-time road to success and can improve community social capital. He suggests an alternative leadership style in which he claims leadership is derived from the heart (compassion) and soul (integrity) of being human.

In many ways the Sarros leadership model reflects and modifies components of the transformational leadership model. Parry and Proctor Thomson (2002) define transformational leadership as a “style of leadership that generates a transformation in the minds of the followers” (Parry & Proctor Thomson, 2002, p. 77) and as a result leads to a higher level of motivation. Transformational leaders help followers to grow and develop into leaders by responding to their individual needs. Avolio and Bass (2002) consider that there is enough evidence to demonstrate that transformational leadership can move followers to exceed expected performance and this may well as lead to high levels of follower satisfaction (Bass, 1985, 1998). This form of leadership can be applied to any sector in order to achieve desired outcomes (Avolio & Yammarino, 2002). Importantly this form of leadership empowers followers and consequently directs attention to their individual needs and personal development (Avolio & Bass, 2002).

Avolio and Bass (2002) believe that there is enough evidence to support the effectiveness of transformational leadership. In particular, transformational leadership takes into account the variance in outcomes which occur between leaders due to their

personality and leadership style. This augments Bass's (1997) research which suggests that transformational leadership is a more effective form of leadership and highlights the differences to previously enunciated leadership models. This reflects the importance of transformational leaders having aims and goals that exceed their own self-interest and work toward the common ideals of their followers.

Elliott (2004) sums up transformational leadership by suggesting that in the previous ten years more articles had been written on this leadership style which considers organisations, communities and a mixture of both, at the expense of other possible models. In Elliot's view, the secret of transformational leadership reflects that people are motivated to do more than is expected of them, fosters creativity, innovation, and team orientation, provides a potential new way or manner to address problems and challenges and has a concern about people's personal development. This can have an impact on communities, cultures and organisations "because [communities, cultures or organisations] have goals that transcend their own self-interests and work towards the common good of the followers" (Burns, 1978, p 16).

One of the risks for small communities is the potential leadership styles exhibited by those with a leadership bent. This issue relates to the need to spread leadership. It is a downside which is reflected in smaller regional towns, whereas larger regional towns may have sufficient population to overcome this particular problem. In many small communities, a handful of local leaders may emerge and contribute to the process of community action to the exclusion of others or accept the burden on behalf of their community (Falk & Mulford, 2001).

A developing idea in leadership theory in the 21st century has been the idea of shared leadership. As a concept it has been defined in a number of ways, but in essence it can be regarded as leadership practised by a group. Shared leadership can be seen as sharing power among a set of individuals—for example the TRITB board—rather than centralising into the hands of a particular individual which has been the basis of most leadership writing (Pearce & Sims, 2001).

Shared leadership is a new phenomenon and researchers suggest that it has advantages at the individual, team, organisation and community levels (Crevani, Lindgren & Packendorff, 2007). Carson, Tesluk and Marrone (2007) see shared leadership consisting of three dimensions: covering purpose where members understand their collective goals; support where members make an active contribution to achieve positive outcomes and voice where they have input into the overall outcomes.

These dimensions provide potential for interactions to evolve and provide opportunities for a common source of direction which is characterised by a shared understanding of purpose (Carson, Tesluk & Marrone, 2007). Shared leadership also provides members an opportunity to use their individual abilities, and also to allow different leadership styles to be exhibited (Bergman, Rentsch, Small, Davenport & Bergman, 2012). Bergman et al. (2012) also suggest that shared leadership allows for leadership styles rather than the authoritarian vertical leadership.

Kilpatrick et al. (2002) see leadership as a process and there is often a group of people happy to make decisions, others who may like to be involved in the work and yet others in the community/group may not wish to be involved or to do anything. Leaders emerge from groups and sectors. There is also a need for communities to be aware and

concerned about leaders who may be in the process of “burnout” or who “wear too many hats”. How often do communities sit back and allow certain leaders to drive the community without questioning the direction? This in turn points to the importance of enabling or empowering leadership which has been discussed earlier. These considerations may be encapsulated by community members appearing to have strong sentimental and emotional attachments to where they live and this may be a strong motivating factor for community leaders. Leaders who are strongly attached to their community, however, may be restricted in their involvement in obtaining external information and networks.

Do these issues reflect differences in community leadership style where in one community people are waiting to be led by some external factor, e.g. local council, whilst in another there is the characteristic of shared responsibility and a willingness to have a go? Or does this “how can we” reflect, as has been already considered, the importance and the ability of community members to tap into those external links, as reflected in Figure 3.4 which outlines potential community links, and as a result have a wider vision of potential opportunities for the benefit of all? (Pigg, 1999; Sorensen & Epps, 1996). As an issue this question has important implications, particularly as it relates to how rural communities can influence policy settings.

Whilst leadership may be distributed throughout the whole community (Skerratt, 2011), Schaubert and Kirk (2001) suggest that community leaders can take responsibility to address what may be best for the community. This may arise when community members become concerned about possible threats to their community. Such circumstances may see community members coming together to address these threats. On the other hand there are often persons who have held positions within their local

community organisation for many years and such fixed formal leadership has the potential to stifle the capturing of new ideas so that new approaches can be engendered (Stirling, Orpin & Kilpatrick, 2011). Their community position gives them a leadership status they may not otherwise have and eventually it may become to them more important than the community interest (Zichy-Woinarski, 1996).

In summary, a key component of community leadership involves the identification of a common purpose. A community leader's most important ability is to bring together a diverse range of people who have a variety of interests in order to facilitate this common purpose. There is also the need to ensure that leadership in the community is sustainable and renewable, particularly over the longer term. To paraphrase Falk (2003), "the greater the engagement the better the outcomes". Greater engagement ensures that the strategies developed by community leaders will embrace the needs of the social group.

Whilst leadership within a community is extremely important, leaders need to be able to advocate their position to persons/interest groups in authority, power or who hold the purse strings. The next section discusses the issue of advocacy and how this needs to be circumscribed and undertaken if community ideas, plans goals and ideals are to have any success in implementation.

Advocacy

There is survey evidence that the public does believe that the political system responds to pressures from big interests rather than to ordinary citizens and that public officers including politicians are self-serving.

(J. Warhurst, 2007, p. 79)

Advocacy has become an established part of the Australian political landscape (Lanham, 1999; Fitzgerald, 2006; Warhurst, 1996; 2007; Zhang, 2010). Marsh (1997) estimated that there were countless groups within Australia who were seeking to influence decisions. His estimate of those numbers were:

Table 3.2

Estimated Numbers of Advocates in Australia in 1997 (Marsh, 1997)

Number	Occupation
1,200	Environmentalists
1,500	Businesses
2,450	Ethnic communities
37,000	Welfare sector
700,000	Community organisations

All of these bodies/groups seek to undertake some form of representation on matters important to them, whether it be to the local councils, state and federal governments, the private sector, industry associations or the “not-for-profit” sector. The numbers estimated by Marsh (1997) reflect the increasing importance of advocacy as a means by which political decisions can be influenced. The literature search found numerous articles discussing advocacy/lobbying in a particular industry or single issue, for example health, climate change, music and children. Whilst seeking to advance these single causes, these articles have some applicability for consideration by rural

communities. Yet, despite these specific articles, recent literature concerning the overall ideas relating to advocacy has been difficult to find.

Despite the paucity of recent research, approaches to how advocacy can be undertaken maybe changing in the 21st century with the arrival of new social media via the internet, Facebook and Twitter for example, as well as texting and blogging. By harnessing these media, communities may be able to advance their cause (Lenhart, Purcell, Smith & Zichuhr, 2010).

The growth of the advocacy sector in Australia is a reflection of and mirrors developments in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom (Fitzgerald, 2006). Fitzgerald (2006) suggests that in 2006 that there were 34,700 registered advocates in the United States who were paid in excess of \$A2 billion to help influence state legislatures, congress, senate and federal agencies. These advocates' aim is to make a positive impression on congressmen, senators and staff in federal agencies and they do this by raising funds from clients to support political campaigns and have been known to assist in the voting of legislation (Fitzgerald, 2006). The United Kingdom, with its Westminster system, and in most instances an electoral majority for one party, sees the most attention and pressure applied to the Prime Minister and Cabinet Office. Canada on the other hand regulates its advocates, an industry in 2006 estimated to be worth \$C300 million. In Australia there have been discussions, along the lines of the Canadian model, to put into place either legislation or regulations to ensure transparency, disclosure and to prevent improper influence (Fitzgerald, 2006). This may provide an opportunity for smaller unrepresented community organisations to have an input into the advocating process.

Advocacy in Australia has come a long way since the end of World War II in 1945. As Warhurst (2007) points out, the first advocates in Australia were “trade and tariff consultants” (p. 306) and were concerned with ensuring Australia’s post-war trade barriers were maintained. Darke (1997) notes that many advocating policy makers in Australia are in many instances offshoots of major legal, accounting and public relations firms. They have the know-how and ability to exert influence (Ward, 2006). On the other hand, large firms such as BHP, Origin, Rio-Tinto and General Motors Holden prefer to advocate directly. The same can be said about professional associations, for example the Australian Veterinary Association, National Farmers Federation, and the Australian Local Government Association. Their long-term aim is to promote or defend their own special interests for the benefit of their members. Often these benefits have a direct correlation to their ability to advocate on behalf of the membership. These benefits may be manifested through specific legislation to ensure licensing regulation for a particular professional group such as the Australian Medical Association on behalf of Australian doctors or licensing arrangements for plumbers and electricians. In this way it provides the legal authority to control entry into a profession or trade (Salisbury, 1970). These groups also have a wide membership base, good financial resources, well-developed political skills and organisational sophistication (Marsh, 1997). There are also in Australia a number of smaller firms who assist businesses or individuals in providing access to decision makers or, with their specialist knowledge, understand the stages through which policy decisions evolve and are passed. These firms, such as Corporate Communications Tasmania and the Institute of Public Affairs, are available to assist in the advocating process and may provide an avenue for rural communities to have their voice heard.

According to Bently (1949, quoted in Salisbury, 1970) and still of some relevance today, underpinning advocacy is the “dominant role the pressure groups play in economic and political life” (p. 9). Bently (1949) believed that group pressure was the basic force underpinning everything and this group pressure was the major determinant of government policy. His theory implied that the larger the group the greater the power and Bently (1949) states “larger groups tend to outweigh smaller pressure groups” (quoted in Salisbury, 1970, p. 11). Bently (1949) considered that an individual’s interests were subsumed by the overall group’s interest because that reflected the collective view of the individuals. Truman (1951) on the other hand suggested that, as society evolved and became more complex, more associations of like-minded interest groups would emerge to satisfy society’s increasingly complex needs. This increased number of advocate groups would all be competing with each other in pushing policy and ideas which aimed to influence government decision making. Truman (1951) suggests that the development of large and powerful economic advocates are the by-product of organisations, made up of individuals, whose strengths and support is derived from their ability to act on behalf of individuals and advocate for the collective good of the group. This reinforces Bently’s (1949) view that various group interests compete and conflict with each other as they try to assist in determining government policy. Thus advocacy organisations, in Truman’s (1951) opinion, are based on a group of individuals who have a collective authority to act, who provide positive inducements for the group and the individuals in the group, and in turn provide a means for a captive membership. As a result we can have organisations which have:

- (1) A lobbying and economic function where the aim of the organisation is to influence the development of government economic policy in order to benefit its members;
- (2) An advocacy and social function where the aim of organisation is to influence and draw to the attention of the government the needs of the less fortunate in society and seek means to redress these issues;
- (3) Or a mixture of both where the organisation tries to influence government policy on behalf of its members while at the same time it may be raising issues in respect of members' welfare as the result some disaster or other cause.

Bently (1949) postulates an alternate suggestion as to why some organisations evolve and have a need to embrace political activity. This he calls "Theories of Proliferation and Equilibrium" and he argues that in any population there will be "specialised sets of people who will have a specific social goal" (p. 33). This he suggests will lead these specialist groups to create formal associations and they will emerge to represent "the conflicting claims of each differential set of interested parties" (Bently, 1949, p. 34). In this way associations are developed to articulate the interest of the specialist group and this in turn provides a more effective measure of bargaining power. As a result there evolves an independent power which can be used by the specialist group to participate in the political process.

An alternative concept assumes that there is differentiation between particular social groups or classes based on education and technological innovation relevant to the

particular group (Zhang, 2010). As Nelson (2011) points out the time invested and resources used are the key determinants in considering the relevant power of a “group”. In turn Meyers and Associates (2014) support Nelson by suggesting the importance of understanding the advocacy process in order to benefit the outcome the group/client is seeking. This may result in the manifestation of an organisation or association which could become the change agent which seeks to represent their members in matters relevant to their continuing future (Truman, 1951). There is the possibility, if this view is considered, that the number of organised groups/associations will increase over time and that the total membership will also grow as they evolve. In any political system there will tend to be a gradual process and spread of the organisation and its experience, and the success will depend upon the accumulation of capital which is invested to form a long-term viable organisation (Bently, 1949).

Clark and Wilson (1961) indicate that one of the reasons why organisations and associations are formed relates to their social and political purposes, and the benefits which may accrue from such participation. These benefits or rewards may happen as a result of “socialising, congeniality, group membership and identification” (Clark & Wilson, 1961, p. 47). They also point out that whilst benefits from the association may accrue to the individual, they noted that these benefits may also accrue to others who took no part in the effort to secure them. Clarke and Wilson (1961) highlighted how derived benefits can become part of the community fabric and potentially increase the overall social capital. On the other hand, Salisbury (1970) suggests that groups invest capital and human effort in order to “create a set of benefits for a price” (Salisbury, 1970, p. 49). Salisbury (1970) believes that the benefits derived by an association reflect an economic benefit as the result of advocacy/negotiations with relevant

political and statutory bodies, for example the National Farmers Federation and the Australian Workers Union. Yet these negotiations may fail over time and if there appears to be no perceived benefits forthcoming it is highly likely that individuals or organisations may withdraw. Such was the case with the South Australian Farmers Federation who seceded from the National Farmers Federation in 1999 due to a reduction in its membership numbers and what it considered were the lack of benefits derived from its membership, especially in matters relating to animal welfare and the issue of water rights in the Murray Darling River basin (South Australian Farmers Federation Media Release, 1998). This also raises the context of how “fringe” groups are able to impact on public discussion. Salisbury (1970) considers that diverse, single-issue groups may generate satisfaction within the group for the very reason that they focus on a particular single issue. Zhang (2010) suggests that these single-issue groups understand that with their grassroots support, raising such matters in the public arena may be a more effective tactic in generating media attention and raising the issue in the public arena.

As discussed earlier, there are three potential advocacy groupings. A basic premise of any association/organisation is its potential to provide benefits for its members. The delivery of these outcomes to those in the association/organisation will see ongoing support by the members. This is important because representation is funded by the members or individuals, and gives larger membership-based organisations resources that can be used to advocate for members’ interests, unlike small local groups who may not have sufficient funds to support their efforts. Without funding behind them these small local groups may have difficulty in undertaking long-term advocacy (Clark & Wilson 1961).

In Australia, America, Canada and the United Kingdom, advocacy has become a particularly important part of the landscape. Garceau and Silverman (1954) outline how groups can apply pressure in order to meet the needs of the group and members they represent. Garceau and Silverman (1954) emphasise that an organised interest group is not the body which enacts the legislative laws of the sovereign state. Rather the organised interest group has to consider ways in which they can gain access to the legislators so that they can influence the political decision-making process. They also suggest that advocacy is more successful and effective when no firm opinion has been reached and the matter is still fluid (Garceau & Silverman, 1954). Conversely Garceau and Silverman see those making representations as providing legislators with a source of information and attitudes towards the proposed legislation.

This suggests that, for advocacy to be successful, a communication strategy needs to be designed so that representations will be favourably considered. The organisation applying pressure needs to be seen in a favourable light by those being lobbied (Milbrath, 1963). Milbrath (1963) suggests that good advocacy needs to be credible and must be backed up by good research data, also the organisation itself must be credible and have a good reputation, integrity and trustworthiness. Those of an opposing advocacy view will seek to find mistakes or misrepresentations in order to destroy the credibility of other representations (Milbrath, 1963). Legislators need to have confidence in the advocacy group—they do not want to be misled. This requires a trust evolving between the two parties and is firmly based on integrity. Thus advocates will use a variety of methods to influence legislators based on this trust and integrity. Such methods may include personal presentations by senior executives pointing out issues that legislators need to consider, research findings of the group may not tally with the

legislative proposal and strong representations can be made for reconsideration, using constituents to add weight to the advocacy by contacting their local council member, state parliamentarian, federal or senate members, letter and email campaigns to apply pressure on the legislation/matters from association members and other interested parties, and offering to assist in the preparation and development of the legislation (Fitzgerald, 2006). A recent example of this power to influence a government agenda was the introduction of the “Mining Tax” in Australia in 2010. As Mitchell (2012) points out, the large mining companies hired a string of advocates to feed a stream of anti-tax stories to handpicked newspapers and radio stations suggesting investment would dry up and many thousands of jobs would be lost and the Australian economy would grind to a halt.

Milbrath (1963) reminds advocates that their advice, discussions and input can assist with any legislative proposal, but ultimately it is the legislators who will stand or fall by the legislation they enact. Advocates also compete with other sources of advice, particularly those from the relevant public service area involved in the proposed legislation. As Milbrath (1963) succinctly puts this issue, “Remember lobbyists do not have a vote” (p. 416). Depressingly Milbrath (1963) suggests that advocacy in America has become so powerful that in his opinion consumer groups have no-one to represent them against these formidable organised interests. If well organised, can these groups influence the outcome of a seat in the election process or who is to govern? A recent example has been the success of Cathy McGowan, standing as an independent and not attached to either of the major political parties, in the 2013 Australian federal election. In this case the organisation by the local community for someone to better represent the electorate saw the defeat of the sitting member. This can be viewed as a healthy

component of a robust democracy, serving as an intermediary between the community and government (Maddison 2009; Dennis, 2005).

Ward (1999) expressed his concerns with Milbrath's (1963) arguments and suggests that those with the ear of the government through advocacy are able to influence outcomes in Australia at the expense of consumer groups. He argues that those with the insider's power command the attention of the minister and his advisers. Insider power is derived from advocacy, and large organisations such as the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Australian Industry Group, and the Australian Council of Trade Unions have considerable influence and input into policy development and legislation because they are able to represent the view of wider and larger constituencies. These bodies have economic muscle, institutional standing, expertise and a large national membership base. Bell (1994) points out that this expertise is reinforced by the provision of useful submissions, carefully worked out potential policy solutions and personnel who are able to assist with the development of public policy. On the other hand, Ward (2006) argues that those who are on the outside or periphery of the political process have little ready access to ministers or their staff. To be successful, these fringe groups will need to agitate to pursue their case and it will need to garner sufficient national popular support to compel ministers and the government to heed their concerns. Those on the outside of the system, such as community activists, will need to use the media to mobilise and promote their message and have the ability to frame the issue so that it resonates with the public (Zhang, 2010). Fitzgerald (2007) supports Ward's (1999) and Zhang's (2010) contention and raises the issue of inequality of access. He suggests that this inequality is the result of the outsourcing of delivery and the use of non-government organisations to implement that policy. This has opened

the door to advocates to work to ensure that industry is not disadvantaged and this has seen the rise of a new phenomenon with “outsourced public servants assisting these lobbying organisations in tendering for public contracts” (Fitzgerald, 2007, p. 2). As Fitzgerald indicates, these non-government organisations “have a seat at the table” (Fitzgerald, p. 2), whilst the constituencies to whom these programmes are targeted may not.

The federal government realises that it pays to subsidise peak national advocacy groups as this allows the government the opportunity to monitor and control their activities. If an advocacy group is highly dependent on government funding it is less likely to be critical of its financial provider (Fitzgerald, 2007). This financial assistance together with the funding streams of industry advocacy groups allow them to collect and provide data to the government. Without the funding streams of industry advocacy groups, community organisations in many instances are reliant on volunteers, a need “to pass the hat around” to raise funds to employ a consultant to prepare a submission and maybe use the press to prosecute their case (Fitzgerald, 2007).

Fitzgerald (2007) noted the importance of financial funding streams from outside the traditional sources to assist in the provision of advice and advocacy. He noted the willingness of advocacy groups to work closely with governments and the possibility that they may receive funding from the government purse. As Fitzgerald points out, this development in advocacy in Australia may well be to the detriment of community input. As a result, less-well-resourced community groups may not have the same power or influence as the advocates.

Apart from assisting advocacy groups financially, Australian governments have become very close to advocacy groups. Advocacy groups and advocates are seen as having greater sway in setting the political agenda than diverse multi-interested communities. Warhurst (2007) believes this development in many ways offends the core democratic values of transparency, equity and access. As former Prime Minister John Howard stated in a speech:

...can I say that I have valued very much the contact the Government has had with IFSA [Investment Financial Services Australia] over the last nine and quarter years We've had some very close collaboration in relation to issues that bear on the nation's savings...can I thank IFSA for the collaborative co-operative approach it has taken to working with Government...[and] appreciate very much the practical input you make...and I am pleased to say that a number of things that you have advocated, we in a different way have been able to accommodate. (John Howard, 2005)

Lanham (1999) stresses that in Australia, with pressure groups and advocates as part of our political framework, it may seem that politics is advocating and targeting ministers, parliamentarians, their staff and public servants (Lanham, 1999). Most of this advocacy is conducted behind closed doors, in private and much of it goes unreported. The Rudd government (2007–2010) had attempted to address this issue with its regular community forums and consultations conducted in regional centres throughout Australia, for example in Launceston, November 2008 (Examiner, 8 November 2008). The key point of advocacy is to aim for and ensure the retention of the “ear of” government and to win influence, and to provide solid research to assist in the

development of public policy (Meyers & Associates, 2014). This requires advocates to spot and seize opportunities to transform ideas into policy (Ward, 2007). It is also important to recognise that advocates must understand how policy may be publicly interpreted and endeavour to get policy makers to realise and be informed about these perceptions (Leek, Baumgartner, La Pira & Semanko, 2005). As has been noted earlier, the new social media makes possible the instant mobilisation of your constituents, provides a cheaper way to send a message and in turn apply pressure on politicians/organisations at all three levels of governance. Similarly there is the opportunity through mobilisation of the new social media to also use the traditional media outlets to advocate their cause (Fog, 2004).

For rural communities to advance their causes they need to understand the principles and theory which underpin advocacy. Unfortunately, rural communities and other communities have to compete with well-funded industry organisations who more often than not have the ear of those in authority and through their exhortations and personal representations are able to influence policy (Fitzgerald, 2006).

It needs to be acknowledged that the rise of the new media technology may provide communities with an opportunity to challenge the current status quo and will possibly make it easier for them to organise and send messages in an endeavour to influence the political debate. Using social media may enable communities to influence the political agenda and provide expert input into the political agenda, which may lead to conflicts between the current advocates and those representing the community interest with those in power (Lovett, 2011).

The main issue which arises from this discussion on advocacy is the importance of having a well-resourced member-based organisation which is able to gain the ear of the

government. To achieve this outcome there is a need for a common goal and an understanding by the organisation of what they seek to achieve and how this concept may be implemented. The literature also suggests that champions who are seen to represent their organisations are viewed favourably by those in power. Successful advocates work closely with those who hold power in order to influence potential legislative or regulatory in order to achieve positive outcomes for their members.

Through this literature review, adult learning and effective delivery, social capital, leadership and advocacy have been identified as important issues which lie within the fabric of a rural community and will influence the success of education and training. Enhancing the fabric of the community may require the facilitation by community members or external persons or groups who act as boundary crossers. This proposition is addressed in the next section which suggests that the boundary crosser has a vital role in facilitation and assistance in providing possible solutions for the community for issues such as appropriate and effective VET provision.

Boundary Crossers and Boundary Organisations

Boundary crossers have an important role in acting as credible facilitators within communities and have been defined in a number of studies. Boissin (2009) relies on Guston (2001) who saw them as institutions that cross the gap between two different domains, whilst Cash (2001) and Cash, Clark, Alcock, Dickson, Eckley, Guston, Jager and Mitchell (2003) saw boundary crossers as allowing information to flow across boundaries to allow discussion and exchange of ideas to take place, at the same time allowing the boundary crosser to maintain their authority. Morse (2008) considers

boundary crossers as “formal relational structures” (p. 344) that enabled linkages to be created across traditional boundaries.

Morse (2008) suggests that the term “boundary crosser” should embrace both “boundary organisations” and “boundary crossers” who may be organisations or individuals. For the purpose of this review the term “boundary crosser” will refer to organisations and individuals.

The definition implies that the boundary crosser can play an important and credible part in developing collaboration and partnerships for community and economic development by facilitating collaboration across boundaries and thus enabling interactions to occur (Morse, 2008). As Boissin (2009) points out, the authority of boundary crossers “relies on the fact that they allow opinions to be expressed” (p. 939) and to encourage an interaction between the various parties/players in order to assist in the decision-making process. Arias and Fisher (2000) perceived boundary crossers as having the ability to connect people across boundary lines that have traditionally divided the community. They saw boundary crossers as having the ability to outreach their usual territory and become community builders who also had the advantage of spanning community sectors so that they became the forums for thinking and action. Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002) believe that there is a need to cross boundaries in today’s complex world. This must not be seen as a single issue or organisation. They suggest most communities are not confined to one single practice or organisation but a multitude competing for attention. Wenger (1998) and Star (in Bowker and Star, 1999) argue that this may be part of a balancing act between well-developed communities and active boundary management. Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002) see boundaries

in communities as learning assets which create opportunities and provide a catalyst for people to connect with other groups and people across other boundaries as well as becoming forums for thinking and action. They also suggest that moving knowledge across boundaries is particularly difficult. Yet as organisations and groups mature, so it may become difficult to clarify the community focus and the role of boundaries.

Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002) believe that in a maturing community it may be necessary to redefine the boundaries.

To paraphrase Boissin (2009), there is uncertainty in the world which allows discussion between agents and exchange which allows discussion between experts. Importantly Wenger (1998) builds on this discussion in that he sees boundary crossers, whether individuals or organisations, as having a brokering role and (defined in the section related to adult education in matching needs between the client and a third party) a relationship with the community. Star and Griesemer (1989) found that brokers are able to adapt to local needs and constraints whilst Konkola (2001) considers brokers and boundary crossers as having the freedom to operate which may not exist due to the nature of the current system. Star and Griesemer (1989) also suggest that brokers and boundary crossers must ensure a common identity and goal. Wenger (1998) considers brokers as having the ability to make new connections across communities, facilitate co-ordination and at the same time open up new possibilities to the community. Star and Griesemer (1989) reinforce Wegnar (1998), Boissin (2009) when they suggest that brokers and boundary crossers must ensure a common identity and goal. Wilkinson (1991), Cheers, Cock, Hylton, Kruger and Trigg (2005), and Kilpatrick, Cheers, Gilles and Taylor (2008) note that boundary crossers obtain an understanding of the

community by operating in several social fields which are consistent with community interaction theory.

Community interaction theory was advanced by Law (1981). He considered events which occur in a community as the result of interaction between the individual and the social groups to which the individual belongs. Law's (1981) findings were expanded by McMillan and Chavis (1986) who built on Law's conceptions of community interactions. Whereas Law believed community interaction was influenced by expectations, feedback, support, modelling and information, McMillan and Chavis (1986) set out a theory based on the sense of the community. The theory included a number of elements which are relevant to the role of the boundary crosser within a community. These elements include membership or a sense of belonging, influence or making a difference, fulfilment where the individual is able to meet the needs of the group and finally a shared connection where there is a belief that members have shared in the experience.

The elements described by McMillan and Chavis (1986) are important issues for boundary crossers, particularly in the area of influence. Within a community a boundary crosser will have the potential to influence the development or uptake of an idea or need. The idea of influence is considered by Flint, Lilloff and Theodori (2010) who considered membership, influence and community in regional communities. They argue that these communities reach out to build cooperation and this provides boundary crossers with the opportunity to create synergies and improve the community well-being.

Whilst there are many contexts in which community change can occur, it is boundary crossers who can act as a catalyst for change (Kilpatrick, Fulton & Johns, 2007; Farmer & Kilpatrick, 2009; Morse, 2008). As Morse (2008) suggests, sustainable partnerships don't simply happen because of the "turf" mentality or a "keep out of my patch" attitude (Macquaire Dictionary, 2009) which is often a characteristic of an organisation or an authority. It is the boundary crosser who acts as the catalyst for the partnership and spans the perceived or actual differences in views so that, as an individual or an organisation, they become facilitators for cross-boundary thinking and action.

Boundary crossing activity also provides facilitators with the opportunity to operate in innovative ways and to seek co-operative solutions to identified community issues.

Miller (2008) and Farmer and Kilpatrick (2009) point out that one of the other outcomes of boundary crossers' activity is developing community capacity and social capital and, as has been suggested, community capacity and social capital can take many forms. The important context is whether boundary crossers have the capacity to assist communities to link knowledge to action over the long term, especially when faced with complex social issues and with a continuous political electoral cycle which may raise many uncertainties. (Miller, 2008) suggests that in grappling with a complex problem, the solutions that boundary crossers assist in developing and implementing should be of value to the community, and learning from the process may be useful when the community is faced with its next challenge.

Wenger (1998), Beach (2009) and Kilpatrick et al. (2002) stress the importance of educational institutions as knowledge-producing organisations. They found that the benefits which may arise from different activities involving co-operation with the community can be useful to all those parties involved. Such collaboration makes it

possible to develop a shared vision that crosses the community-educational institution boundary so that knowledge can be understood and implemented for practical purposes.

Wenger (1998) acknowledges that implementing knowledge is an important aspect of vocational training. The basic issue relates to the content of knowledge transfer and to what extent the skills that have been acquired in relation to a problem or situation will be able to be used within a similar problem or setting.

Beach (2009) looks closely at how students can become boundary crossers between school and work, especially in vocational studies. He perceives students acting as boundary crossers by bringing new ideas to the workplace and questioning current workplace practices, or conversely students bringing work practices to keep teachers abreast of industry development. Students can be boundary crossers, brokers and mediators between vocational institutes and employers. Consequently this can have an influence on the role of learning and knowledge in social change and the development of individuals (Salto, 2009).

The ideas of boundary crossing suggest that the effectiveness of boundary crossing may vary depending on the elements of the process and the tools that the boundary crossers bring to the process of change, and their nature and quality. Figure 3.5 illustrates the contexts in which this process can operate.

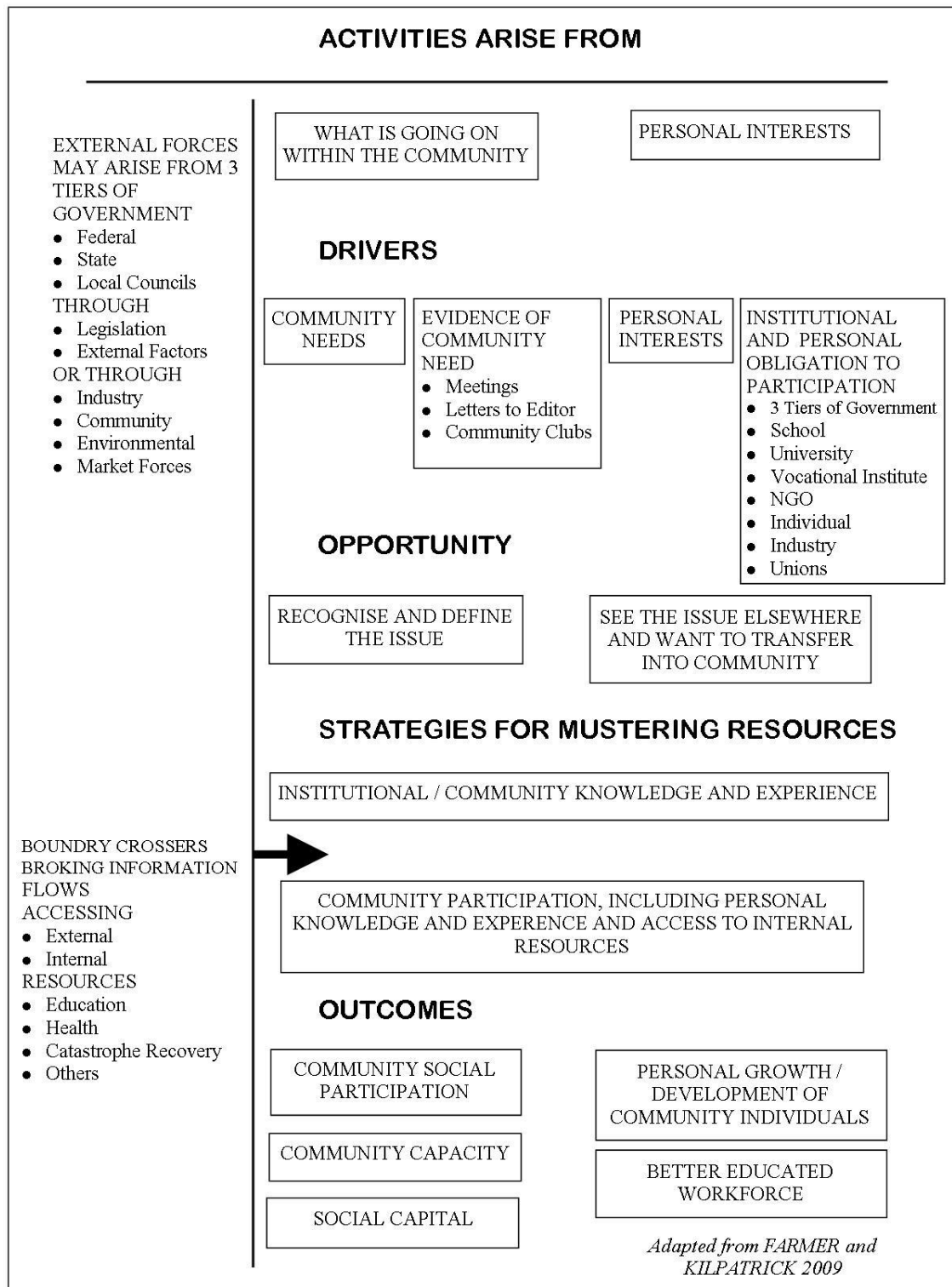


Figure 3.5: Activities which can Influence the Role of Boundary Crossers
(adapted from Farmer & Kilpatrick, 2009)

This modified diagram (adapted from Farmer & Kilpatrick, 2009) provides a meaningful context as to how the activities of boundary crossers in rural and regional communities can evolve. External drivers may influence community needs, which may provide an opportunity for the community to embrace an issue, particularly if it is one that is of concern and has arisen as the result of outside forces. Importantly, boundary crossers have the ability to bring the external and community forces together. As demonstrated in the diagram: through their broking and facilitation process, boundary crossers can produce positive outcomes across a range of purposes.

As Farmer and Kilpatrick (2009) noted, the drivers for action within a community can be based around needs for change which may be influenced by external factors, such as those that may arise from legislative or regulatory imposition. Other drivers may involve personal or family interests or community needs. These later drivers can lead to possible solutions which may have been identified by individuals or the community. The possible solutions could lead to benefits for the individual or the community and may also provide boundary crossers with the knowledge necessary to facilitate change and make a contribution to the issue.

Finally, the issue of boundary crossers or brokers raises another important fundamental concept which Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002) define as trust. Trust, as discussed in the sections on social capital and leadership is situated within the community. Trust works at all social levels and is vital for the development of communities and individuals (Falk & Kilpatrick, 1998). Whilst there is trust within community, there also needs to be trust at the boundary or intersection external to the community. Interestingly, little discussion occurs in the literature on boundary crossers or brokers about trust and leadership. Falk and Kilpatrick (1998) argue that trust is vital

to the community and its expectations. Trust underlies and contributes to the quality of interaction between people and this can be of particular importance in relation to co-operative behaviour. Trust is a critical component of social cohesion that underlies the actions of boundary crossers and brokers. If boundary crossers are not trusted by members of the community, they are unlikely to achieve positive outcomes.

Conclusion

The research questions related to this thesis seek to identify issues relevant to policy settings which may allow rural communities to influence policy decisions. Importantly, for this study which pays particular attention to the provision, delivery and implementation of VET policy, the literature reviewed discusses how issues relevant to policy settings impact on the community. A key feature is the potential to raise and improve the community/ies' social capital, including through boundary crossing.

Initially this chapter looked at the importance of considering adult education principles and delivery methods. The literature reviewed in this first section suggests that consultation between the parties providing delivery and the third parties who provide the funding plays a significant role in the success of VET delivery. The literature reviewed suggests there is a need to understand the issues and composition of rural communities and how by not taking these considerations into account impediments can occur which will hinder effective delivery. The development and social fabric of rural towns and how they have undergone change and consolidation, as discussed in Chapter 2, is a crucial aspect of the context for effective delivery of VET. The outcomes of VET and its delivery should improve the social capital of the community. This part of the literature review demonstrated that it is essential that policy makers understand the

rural community and how its various parts are integrated. If this is done the community will benefit from VET policy implementation.

Whilst understanding adult education delivery, effective learning, composition of rural towns and social capital are important, three other topics emerge from the literature review which impact on the research questions. The first of these relates to leadership and how a diverse range of either individuals or community groups can come together in a rural community and provide the focus and drive to benefit the community. The focus and drive also provides momentum for the community to augment its leadership profile by ensuring both sustainability and ongoing renewal over the longer term.

Leaders also need to be advocates for their community and understand how to find the ear of those in power. This requires a solid understanding of how advocacy works and the ability to transform that understanding into positive ideas which capture the imagination of the community and those whom the community is trying to reach. There is also a need for rural communities to realise that unlike big business or unions they are minor players in the advocacy arena. The acceptance of this proposition requires rural communities to develop strategies to advance their cause. The third and possibly the most important idea which has evolved from this literature review has been that of the boundary crosser, whether it be an individual or an organisation. The ability of a third party inside or outside the community, acting as an interface, provides an opportunity to advance issues such as those which relate to the provision of education and training and VET. The boundary crosser has an important role to play in helping the community access services or other resources and implement ideas, and build community social capital. Boundary crossers must be seen as credible individuals or

organisations by both rural communities and those they are trying to influence outside the communities.

The major themes which have arisen in the literature review will be drawn upon in presentation of the case studies and in the discussion chapter. The next chapter is concerned with the research design and methodology used to develop the case studies.

Chapter 4: Methodology

This thesis seeks to understand community action and change with particular reference to Australia's rural communities and industries and how community action can influence VET policy settings and implementation. This research problem is considered through the lens of the following four subordinate research questions:

1. How did rural communities and their related industries influence VET policy settings and their implementation from 1984 to 2004?
2. How did the evolution of these policies, processes and implementation meet the needs of target groups in building and improving the community's social capital?
3. What are the key criteria which will enable policy, process and implementation to occur in order to meet identified community needs?
4. What policy settings will be needed in the future to ensure that Australian rural communities and their rural and related industries have a valued and effective input into VET policies, processes, development and their implementation.

The work is based on qualitative design and the use of case studies. This chapter sets out and justifies the research design and methodology chosen to answer the research questions. It starts by considering the research design and this is followed by considering the issue of a qualitative research approach rather than a quantitative approach, why the case study methodology was selected and the nature and purpose of the document analysis. The details of the case studies are then identified and this is

built on by discussing the interview process and finally a consideration of the issues relating to data analysis.

Research Design

Social research needs a design or structure before data collection or analysis can commence. “The function of a research design is to ensure that evidence obtained enables us to answer the initial question as unambiguously as possible” (New York University Research Design Study Notes, p. 9). This requires obtaining evidence and, when designing the research, it is necessary to specify the type of evidence needed to answer the research question (Rubin & Babbie, 2007).

As Yin (1989) points out, research design deals with a logical problem not a logistical problem. Thus in a social research context we must consider data collection and the question “what evidence do I need to collect”. Research design is different from the method by which data are collected. How data are collected is irrelevant to the logic of the design (NYU, p. 9). This can be represented in the following diagram (Figure 4.1).

Design Type	Experiment	Case Study	Longitudinal design	Cross-sectional design
	↓		↓	↓
	↓			
	Questionnaire	Questionnaire	Questionnaire	Questionnaire
Method of data collection	Interview (structured or loosely structured)	Interview (structured or loosely structured)	Interview (structured or loosely structured)	Interview (structured or loosely structured)
	Observation	Observation	Observation	Observation
	Analysis of documents	Analysis of documents	Analysis of documents	Analysis of documents
	Unobtrusive methods	Unobtrusive methods	Unobtrusive methods	Unobtrusive methods

Figure 4.1: Possible Approaches to Research Design

This research has adopted the multiple case study approach. Case study research allows us to understand a complex issue and may add to what is already known. As a method, case studies provide a detailed continual analysis and, as Yin (1984) points out, “the case study research method [is] an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life content” (Yin, 1984, p. 23).

The outline of the research design is illustrated in the following diagram.

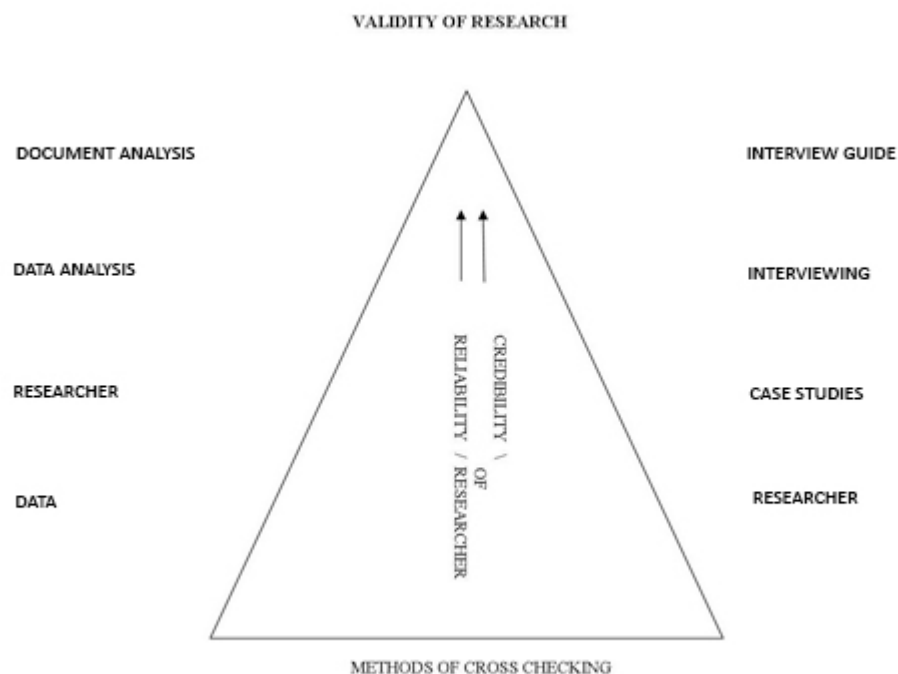


Figure 4.2: The Research Design Triangle

The research design is multiple case studies, selected through document analysis of a comprehensive set of minutes and papers from the state industry training coordination and oversight body, the TRITB. The data from the papers relating to the three selected cases are supplemented by interviews with key players in each of the cases. Key

players were also identified from the papers. Data from the two sources were compiled into individual case studies, which were analysed for within-case themes, followed by cross-case thematic analysis.

In developing the research design it is necessary to be cognisant of the idea of triangulation which is “the use of more than one approach to the investigation of a research question in order to enhance the ensuing findings” (Bryman, 2004, p. 1).

Triangulation is a surveying idiom and refers to the use of a series of triangles to map out an area (Oxford English Dictionary, 1998, p. 1776).

The concept is very much related to the measurement of social research. Webb, Campbell, Schwartz and Seckrest (1966) suggested that a proposition could be confirmed by two or more independent measures and in this way uncertainty can be reduced. Yet as Webb et al. (1966) observed, whilst triangulation may yield findings, we need to be wary of concluding that these results are undisputed. It could be that both sets of data are flawed.

Denzin (1970) suggested four types of triangulation, namely:

- Data Triangulation – gathering data through several sampling strategies.
- Investigator Triangulation – using more than one researcher to gather data.
- Theoretical Triangulation – the use of more than one theoretical position in interpreting the data.
- Methodological Triangulation – using more than one method to gather the data.

It is the last type which is most often used in social research and is the common meaning of the term triangulation. Interestingly Denzin (1970) suggests there is a further distinction or triangulation when it draws a distinction between:

the within-method: “the use of varieties of the same method to investigate a research issue” (Bryman, 2004, p. 3) and

the between-method: “the use of contrasting research methods” (Bryman, 2004, p. 3).

Bryman (1996) argues that triangulation should be reserved as a term for those times when we seek to check the validity of our findings by cross-checking them with another method, e.g. questionnaire and observation.

This multiple case study design incorporates triangulation by gathering data from multiple sources (documents and a number of interviewees) and two methods (document analysis and interviews) within cases and allowing comparison of phenomena across cases. The two methods employed in considering the research questions are document analysis of the TRITB papers and minutes and semi-structured telephone or face-to-face interviews.

Researchers need to be aware, when developing the research design, that they need to address a number of issues. One of these relates to the credibility of the research.

Unlike quantitative research, where researchers seek to replicate their findings, qualitative research is based on the original documentation and the interpretation of the interviews. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) point out, credibility is one of the most important issues in ensuring trustworthiness in the research. This will involve a whole

raft of approaches which will include the procedures involved in conducting the interview process (Yin, 1994); the consultation and analysis of the relevant documentation (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen 1993); the issue of triangulation (which is addressed further later in this chapter); ensuring a rapport is developed between the researcher and the participants but also having the ability to allow a participant to withdraw (Shenton, 2003), and the discussion between the researcher and supervisors to reflect on the interview process and how this may enhance the case studies and documentary evidence (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). These are strategies which can address the credibility issue so that the data are reflected in the findings of the research.

This study supplements traditional qualitative thematic analysis based around themes drawn from the literature with elements of grounded theory approach to data analysis. Strauss and Corbin (1994) define grounded theory as an approach for developing theory that is grounded in the systematic gathering of data which is subsequently analysed. Glasser and Strauss (1967) in postulating grounded theory, challenged the accepted notion that “quantitative studies provide the only form of systemic social scientific enquiry” (Charmaz 2000; Dillon 2012).

Grounded theory rigour allows the researcher to consider the generation of ideas critical in the development of a theoretical outline. In adopting this approach grounded theory permits an interpretive approach to an understanding of the relevant data associated with the study.

This thesis has addressed the credibility issue by conducting an extensive analysis of the primary documentation, the TRITB board minutes and supporting documents to

those minutes, when developing the case studies. To reinforce this approach, there has been a structured interview process with key identified personnel who have been deeply involved in each of the case studies.

Research Design Bias

The issue of bias in research is an important one, and demands special attention and discussion in any qualitative thesis.

Denzin (1989) comments that all research is really about the researcher, but in order for the research to be of value it must move beyond the researcher and the researcher's situation. This emphasises the responsibility that qualitative researchers have and the need to examine their relationship with their research (Berg & Smith, 1988). Mehra (2002) stresses that bias and subjectivity are commonly understood as inevitable and important by most qualitative researchers.

In designing the research, research questions and conducting interviews, bias can arise from:

- Seeing the research as an assembly of anecdotal and personal impressions.
- Unlike quantitative research, it lacks reproduce-ability. The research is so personal that there is no guarantee that another person looking at the same data would arrive at the same conclusions.
- Generation of a large amount of data and detailed information about a small number of settings (Mays & Pope, 1995; Babbie & Rubin, 2010).

To overcome these issues it is vital that a major objective in qualitative research is to have freedom from bias. As Babbie (2005) suggests, the research has to be good, solid

and craftsman-like which produces knowledge that has been cross-checked and verified. In striving for objectivity and subjectivity Rubin and Babbie (2010) are particularly concerned that researchers need to understand their own personal prejudices. It is important that researchers ensure that in undertaking qualitative interviews and questionnaires they comprehend there is a potential towards bias. Researchers must encourage respondents to answer the questions raised in interviews without imposing their own beliefs (Rubin & Babbie, 2010). Babbie (2005) suggests that people will answer through a filter of what will make them “look good”. To reduce this risk, Babbie (2005) poses an important question that needs to be addressed by the researcher as to how they may have answered the topic. This raises the issue of how questions are framed as it is difficult to anticipate how interviewees will respond. It suggests a careful examination of the purpose of the thesis (Babbie, 2005). Gomm, Hammersley and Foster (2009) also acknowledge this issue and suggest the way to overcome perceived bias is to “seek to be helpful and not provide answers”. Gomm et al. (2009) consider that the interviewer’s behaviour and manner can influence responses. Elwood and Martin (2000) and Berrien (1976) support this postulate.

Researchers using a qualitative analysis approach need to be mindful of bias, particularly regarding interviews. This can manifest itself in a number of ways, for example errors by the respondent (forgetting, misunderstanding, peer pressure, poor interview); intentional bias by interviewee; interviewer’s personal expectations; a failure to probe, and the influence of interviewer through tone and attitude when undertaking the interview which leaves the interviewee grasping for potential outcomes raised in the interview (Neuman, 2006).

As Babbie (2005) suggests, on the one hand those being interviewed may answer in a manner which will make them look good and on the other hand the interviewer may introduce bias by asking questions which encourage a respondent to answer in a particular way. While taking care to avoid this possibility, open-ended in-depth interviews provide the interviewees with the opportunity to step back and reflect (Miller & Glassner, 1997). In many ways this becomes an exercise and an opportunity for the development of knowledge and understanding in relation to the information being provided.

Whilst accepting the possibility of bias in the research design, Lofland and Lofland (1995) advance three criteria for consideration by researchers. The first relates to theoretical candour which is an open explanation of the analytical process and how the data has been organised. Secondly is “the ethnographer’s path”, providing a description of the processes and interaction with those involved in the study, and finally “field note evidence” describing how one assembles and processes and presents the information and data that have been generated.

This approach allows the reader to make an assessment as to the “trueness” of it, as opposed to the approach that attempts to build reliability and validity into the formal process in order to address the issue of bias. Aspects of this approach have been utilised in this research as a way to address research design bias.

Maxwell (2013) reminds researchers that in a qualitative study, particularly in analysing data and conducting interviews, bias can be a critical self-reflection and that it is necessary to monitor and control any potential or prospective bias. This may be

reflected in working the data to fit the study, whereas there is a need for accuracy to portray what was actually understood (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Triangulation can reduce bias. Triangulation allows us to combine several research methods in order to consider the research question, in this case document analysis and interviews. It is a useful means of capturing more detail while at the same time minimising the risk of bias and ensuring a balanced research study (Thurmond, 2001). Not only is it necessary to be mindful of bias in data collection and analysis, it is also possible to use triangulation to ensure the functional validity of the method used for data collection in order that it addresses the research questions. In this thesis the interviews were compared to the document analysis of the TRITB board minutes which provide grounds for corroboration or refutation (Thurmond, 2001). The selection of interviews provides a range of perspectives, as will be described below. The various ways in which possible bias is addressed in this research design are noted as the detail of the methodology is explained below.

Qualitative Research Approach rather than Quantitative Research

This research is based on qualitative methodology as opposed to a quantitative methodology. The rigour of qualitative research arises from the research design and data analysis (Barbour, 2001). Denzin and Lincoln (1994) point out that qualitative research embraces a wide range of methodologies and encompasses a number of disciplines. They offer a general definition of qualitative research:

Qualitative research is multi method in focus involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret,

phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 2)

Silverman (1993) suggests a model that places emphasis on research which is theoretically driven, rather than “what can be measured, what can be sampled” (Silverman, 1993, p. 29). The concept of theory in this sense refers to a relationship between variables but also to the process which generates this type of relationship (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983 cited in Silverman, 1993). Thus qualitative research contrasts with the quantitative approach which “emphasizes the measurement and analysis of casual relationships between variables” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 4). The qualitative approach acknowledges the impact of the researcher on what is studied, whereas the quantitative approach seeks to discover the real truth (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). The qualitative methodology used in this work involves the use of document analysis to select case studies which are further explored through open-ended/in-depth semi-structured interviews. Qualitative methodology is used because it allows the case study story to be told and is based on a series of events in a real-life context (Rubin & Babbie, 2010; Yin, 1994). The case study story is best told by using qualitative methodology.

One of the limitations of qualitative research, compared to quantitative research, relates to transferability and generalisability. Generalisability refers to using the research findings and applying them in the widest possible context. On the other hand, as Merriam (1998) notes, transferability reflects the need to be aware of and describe the scope of this qualitative study so that its applicability in different settings can be considered. Bassey (1981) proposes that the usefulness of a qualitative study may be reflected in the degree to which others can determine how the findings may apply in an

alternative context. Cole and Gardner (1979) stress the importance of ensuring the boundaries of the study are noted in the research design and in the outline of the case studies.

Case Study Approach

Anderson (1993) sees case studies as being concerned with how and why things happen, and Lee (1989) and Galliers (1991) argue that the case study strategy is particularly useful for practical-based problems. A case study is not intended as study of the entire system, rather it seeks to focus on a particular issue. Patton (1987) views case studies as particularly useful where one needs to understand some particular problem or situation, such as the influence of rural communities and industries of VET, in great depth. Gomm et al. (2009) interpret the case study approach as the use of documentary research, survey or ethnographic methods in order to make a detailed study of some naturally occurring event. Case studies are distinguished by their focus on a particular case—in this research, three cases—and the use of the evidence gathered by qualitative research. Rubin and Babbie (2010) argue that the rationale for using the case study method is “the availability of a special case that seems to merit intensive investigation” (p. 220). Thus the case study of an event or happening and its impact might be useful in developing policy considerations (Rubin & Babbie, 2010).

Pare and Elam (1997) argue that the case study approach can be used to achieve a variety of research aims using data collection and analysis methods. This is consistent with Yin (1994) who suggests the case study needs to be undertaken in its surroundings and as result will utilise a number of potential data sources. By using the case study approach we are able to investigate a variety of data to produce evidence that will lead

to the understanding of each case and how this understanding will help answer the research questions. Case studies can be supplemented by documentary evidence. Official documents that are used to support the case studies can corroborate a multiple qualitative technique and can enhance the validity and reliability of findings (Noor, 2008). One of the advantages of the case study method is that it allows the researcher to select cases to represent a variety of phenomena of interest. In this research the focus is on training, within a range of diverse parameters that represent the phenomena.

Yin (1994) views the case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a recent event within its real-life content. A key strength of this process is that it involves using multiple sources and techniques in the data gathering process. Tools to collect data can include surveys, interviews and documentation analysis. Yin (1994) also argues that the case study should encompass specific techniques for collecting and analysing data which reflect the research paradigm. In this research, the data that were collected comprised comprehensive board minutes of the TRITB (and its various iterations from 1984 to 2004) including advice, papers, ministerial pronouncements (both federal and state government), letters, input from relevant state and federal community, VET providers, farming organisations and interested individuals. These were later supported by in-depth interviews from appropriate personnel relevant to this research.

Stake (1995) suggests there are two types of potential case study: the intrinsic approach (which is unique and not representative of others) or the instrumental concept which may provide insights or develop an existing theory. Yin (1993) considers Stake (1995) but differentiates his approach by suggesting three types of case study:

- Exploratory – in which he suggests that data are collected before theory or research questions are postulated.

- Causal – this looks at the cause and effect relationship. Yin (1993) prefers this approach as he sees it as providing the conditions under which the case study becomes the research strategy of choice.
- Descriptive – in this case Yin (1993) suggests a theory will be needed to guide the collection of data.

The following table (Table 4.1) summarises these concepts.

Table 4.1*Potential Approaches in Undertaking a Case Study*

Criteria	Type of Case Study
Nature of the case	Intrinsic: unique and extraordinary Instrumental: developing theories and insights Collective: more than one instrumental cause
Theoretical aims	Descriptive: requires theory to guide data collection Causal: search for causal explanatory theories Explanatory: data collected before theory
Number	Single Multiple

Yin (1993) suggests that case study design should take into consideration selection and the research method. The case study design must set out clearly the stated objectives and how these link to the major and subordinate research questions (Stake, 2013). The case studies considered in this work are based on the nature of case criteria as reflected in the first column of Table 4.1. Whilst each case study is unique in how they relate to VET implementation in rural and related situations, together they provide the opportunity to develop theories, ideas and insights. They may also provide the opportunity to assist rural communities and related industries in improving and meeting their expectations in respect of VET. According to Table 4.1, the case studies in this research have elements of instrumental but are largely causal and involve multiple considerations.

The case study method has been adopted as it provides an opportunity to gain insights that focus on how a set of events and actions influenced the implementation of VET in rural Australia. The choice of the three case studies is an appropriate strategy for this thesis because the three cases reflect different processes, players and context whereby rural communities influenced, or attempted to influence, VET policy for rural industries.

Case Studies

Three case studies are investigated.

The case studies were selected to represent a range of responses by rural organisations, industry and rural communities to issues which had the potential to impact on them.

The first case study compares an existing vocational programme in Tasmania and Queensland with the evolution of an Australia-wide programme designed in response to a policy announcement that addressed youth unemployment. The second case study concerns the development and implementation of a training programme for Australian rural enterprises in response to a major legislative change which changed the taxation system and rural enterprises' reporting requirements. The third case study considers responses to a major policy change in how vocational education and training in Australia was to be implemented, delivered and assessed.

More specifically, the three case studies selected were:

1. The Development and Implementation of the National Rural Traineeship

1994 – this evolved from Prime Minister Keating’s “Working Nation” speech to the House of Representatives in May 1994 and the ideas and policies outlined in his speech to address youth unemployment (1994). It provided an opportunity to expand the existing rural traineeship—which had developed as the result of the Kirby Enquiry (1985) but only operated in Queensland and Tasmania—into a national package. It led to a large uptake in rural trainees on rural enterprises throughout Australia and the expansion of vocational education and training delivery for the rural sector.

2. The Introduction of A New Taxation System (ANTS) and the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and the Australian Farming Community 1999–2000

– which related to major changes announced by Prime Minister Howard to the Australian taxation system in 2000 and were addressed in the programme that is the subject of the GST case study. These legislative changes had major implications for the Australian farming community. The response of federal and state rural organisations led to the development of information packages about the new taxation system as well as producing a nationwide education and training programme on how to handle the new tax system within the financial records of rural enterprises and how to meet the administrative requirements of the Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

3. The Introduction and Development of Competency Based Training in

Australia 1996–2004 (CBT) – the policy shift from time-serving

apprenticeships to competency based training was announced in May 1997.

It represented a paradigm shift in delivery and assessment of vocational education and training, and allowed for acknowledgement of competencies acquired through lifelong learning. As a result students were able to complete their training once they had demonstrated competence and were no longer bound by the previous time serving constraint.

The research received ethics approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee (Tasmania) Network and Deakin University Ethics Committee (Appendix 1). A condition of ethics approval was that every effort be made to ensure that the contribution of individual interviewees, as presented in outputs of the research, did not reveal their identity. For this reason all quotes in this thesis are attributed only to ‘an interviewee’ or the interviewee’s position.

Document Analysis

The first stage of this research was to undertake a comprehensive analysis of a primary set of documents, particularly the TRITB board minutes which include advice, papers, ministerial pronouncements from both federal and state governments, letters, evaluations and input from state and federal departments, state training authorities, farming organisations both state and federal, and interested individuals. The board minutes became an important primary source and the minutes and agendas were

analysed. The extensive analysis of the board minutes identified the key documentation and this approach—document or content analysis—led to a rigorous dissection of the board minutes (Patton, 1990; Babbie, 2004; Krippendorff, 2004). The interpretive approach becomes extremely relevant when undertaking data and document analysis. It formed the basis for the data to be analysed and grouped into ideas from which a number of potential case studies evolved. It also has relevance when undertaking the interview process as it again allows ideas to be grouped.

During this comprehensive document analysis of the board minutes, a number of possible case studies which would allow exploration of the research questions became apparent. These potential case studies were considered in order to select three for further ongoing analysis. The case studies were selected to reflect the widest range of the board's activities and innovative undertakings to raise the standard and implement education and training for rural industries and rural communities.

The records relevant to each of the selected case studies were dissected and colour coded according to emerging categories. The categories were determined according to themes identified in a review of literature relating to rural training policy and development. Themes drawn from the literature review were supplemented by a grounded theory approach which allowed for additional themes that emerged during the document analysis (Charmaz 1983) The high level categories used in the analysis were policy settings and reasons behind these; developments of responses to policy announcements; consultation regarding responses; and evaluation and outcomes of responses. Each category was examined and analysed for themes that assisted or hindered the development and implementation of, and successful outcomes from, the

three case study programmes. Crucial personnel involved were noted for possible selection as key informant interviewees in the second stage of the research.

The Interview Process

The underlying premise in this research is that knowledge is created by the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This knowledge is developed through the interview process and also involves the interpretation and elucidation of the facts provided by the interviews. By this method the outcomes in this research are based on interpretation of the answers provided during the interview process (Gubrium & Holstien, 1997; Miller & Glassner, 1997). In using the interview process there is requirement for the researcher to consider how to approach a number of issues relevant to the interview process. These include:

Development of Interview Guide: An interview guide that included researcher prompts was developed based on the literature review to assist in keeping the interviews focused and relevant (Appendix 5). The interview guide was used as the basis of the interviews, whether they were face-to-face or by telephone. Lewis-Beck, Bryman and Liao (2004) reflect that the semi-structured interview is organised around an “aide memoire” or interview guide. This contains topics and themes, or areas to be covered during the course of the interview. The use of open-ended questioning provides the participants with an opportunity to frame the topic in their own terms. By adopting this approach, the interview guide was the basis used to seek data and evidence to support and investigate the themes which evolved in Chapter 3 (Literature Review).

Selection and Recruitment of Interviewees: The key people relevant to each case study who emerged from the document analysis were invited to participate in a semi-

structured interview, either face-to-face or by telephone. Selection of participants resembled a purposive sampling method which involves the selection of individuals based on the important characteristic under consideration (University of West England, 2006). To limit bias, those selected for the semi-structured interviews included all the various groups and individuals involved in the case studies; vocational deliverers, policy makers, state and federal government training agencies, farm industry leaders, farmers, union officials and employers.

Invitations to participate in an interview were posted by Primary Employers Tasmania (PET) who acted as the third party recruiter (Appendix 3). PET then advised the researcher of the names and contact details of those people who had agreed to be interviewed. This approach had been approved by the University of Tasmania Ethics Committee and Deakin University Ethics Committee (copies of the requirements from both universities are to be found in Appendix 4).

The organisations represented by the key individuals were identified through the document analysis for each case study and they were invited to participate in the interview process. The organisations represented were:

Case Study 1: The Development and Implementation of the National Rural Traineeship:

Technical and Further Education (TAFE) – Tasmania

Department of Vocational Education and Training – Tasmania

Department of Employment Education and Training – Commonwealth

TRITB Board Member

Employers

The number interviewed was four and one declined to participate.

Case Study 2: GST and the Farming Community:

Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association

Australian Taxation Office

Tasmanian Farmers

TRITB Board Member

Evaluation

The number interviewed was four but some individuals represented more than one organisation and one declined to participate.

Case Study 3: The Introduction and Development of Competency Based Training in Australia:

Technical and Further Education (TAFE) – Tasmania

Tasmanian Farmers

Department of Vocational Education and Training – Tasmania

Department of Education and Training – Commonwealth

The number interviewed was three, one of whom represented more than one category and one declined to participate.

How the Interviews were Conducted: As has been previously noted, in-depth interviews were undertaken in a semi-structured manner with individuals who agreed to participate and who had been involved in the case studies. These were undertaken either face-to-face or by telephone.

A feature of the interviews was the informal way in which they were conducted.

Kaufman (1994) suggests that in-depth interviewing is “a data gathering technique used...when the goal is to collect richly textured, person centred information...It is used when the researcher wants to investigate what is meaningful to the individual” (p. 123).

Whilst in-depth interviewing is an important concept, semi-structured interviewing is flexible and fluid (Lewis, Beck, Bryman & Lias, 2006). Kaufman (1994) suggests that they give the interviewee the ability to put forward an opinion which reflects their relationship to the matters being addressed and considered. This method is particularly appropriate when understanding the participant's role in each of the case studies.

The interviews sought from the key individuals what they saw as their role in the implementation of the initiative, how advice was sought, how implementation was undertaken and whether this involved another agency to assist in the process. Based on these responses, the interviewer sought to gather data to be used to ascertain and evaluate the strength and weaknesses of the initiative in each case study being considered.

Initially the interview followed a broad outline and then sought to "hone in" specifically on issues relating to rural industries and rural communities, particularly as they related to the case studies. This led to a question which sought to ascertain what the interviewee believed were the policy settings required to ensure this cohort has an input into policy development. Depending on those replies, advice was sought as to whether rural industries and rural communities did, or should have, influence in relation to the development and implementation of VET. If the interviewee believed they did not, they were asked to comment or suggest how they might exert some influence. The final question was specifically related to each individual case study and sought information which was focused on the themes in the primary and subordinate research questions.

The researcher found the whole interview process effective. This approach supports Gubrium and Holstien and (1997) who contended that rather than being simply a

process to collect information about something, the interview, whether face-to-face or by telephone, “Skype” or video conferencing, becomes an exercise in, and an opportunity for, the production of knowledge and understanding in relation to the information that has been elicited. It was apparent during the interview process that the interviews provided important insights into processes and issues related to the case studies.

All interviews were recorded by hand in the researcher’s doctoral file. The interviewees were advised at the outset that handwritten notes would be taken and confirmation was sought about the validity of their consent form which they had signed either prior to the telephone interview or at the time of commencing the face-to-face interview. They were also advised that on completion of this doctoral thesis the researcher’s handwritten interview notes would be forwarded to the researcher’s supervisor and held by the University of Tasmania “in confidence” for a period of five years following the completion of the thesis.

Data Analysis

With the completion of the interview process, responses were analysed for themes and coded. Various coloured stickers were used to code the major themes which had been discovered during the interview process. In undertaking the coding approach the researcher was looking for themes which emerged from within the data. The thematic analysis sought data to support themes from the literature while allowing other themes to emerge, consistent with a grounded theory approach (Charmaz 1983) Data analysis seeks to consider themes that derive from the data and are associated with the research questions. The approach adopted reflects the interviewees’ perceptions and experiences

and allows them to discuss the topic in their own way in respect of the particular case study (Guest Namey & Mitchell, 2012; Saldana, 2009; Crabtree & Miller, 1999).

The themes which emerged from the thematic analysis and coding process supported and confirmed the themes which had been previously identified in the literature review (Chapter 3) and related to implementation, advocacy, leadership, a need to provide VET in a manner suitable for adults to learn and the importance intermediaries or boundary crossers to act as the interface between the client group and decision makers.

Combining the Document and Interview Analysis: In this research, the interviews in conjunction with the comprehensive document analysis of the TRITB board minutes and supporting documents provided the data necessary in order to consider the research questions. Combining data sources may be done by testing the analysed interview data against the document analysis and is consistent with the previous discussion around triangulation (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

As Charmaz (1983) suggests, the process of triangulation of data sources occurs when the material from both the document and interview data analysis are summarised. The researcher is able to analyse the documents and interview data to capture the settings which make up the case studies (Patton, 2002; Agar, 1986), and how they relate to each other (Stake, 1995). The iterative data analysis process of within-case followed by cross-case analysis identified a number of themes that influenced development, implementation and outcomes. From joint consideration of the document and interview data analysis, there was a reinforcement of the themes which emerged separately from each data source. These are the themes which play an integral role in each of the three case studies: advocacy; leadership; adult learning; social capital and boundary crossers.

Figure 4.2 of this chapter illustrates the research design which has been adopted. The qualitative approach is appropriate for the exploratory nature of the research which investigates how rural communities can effectively influence VET policy and its implementation. The research design chosen ensures validity.

Limitations of Research Methodology

As has been discussed previously it is acknowledged that one of the limitations in this research, as for qualitative research more generally, relates to its potential transferability in other similar contexts. Merriam (1998) noted that transferability reflected the need to be aware of the scope of the qualitative study. More importantly Cole and Gardner (1979) remind researchers of the importance in defining the boundaries of the research. In defining the research boundaries the researcher indicates what will and will not be studied in the scope of this work. The boundary purposefully sets out the depth of the study (Baxter & Jack, 2008) and ensures the research questions are continually kept in focus. These boundaries have been noted in the research design section.

Another consideration relates to the small number of case studies undertaken in this research, which also limits the generalisability of the findings, particularly when combined with the fact that they all centre on one organisation, the TRITB. Time and resources available prevented the investigation of more cases. Three case studies were chosen from the myriad of work and implementation the board undertook between 1984 and 2004. The three case studies chosen reflected on the research question, relating to how bodies like the TRITB were able to influence government policy at both state and federal level to the benefit of rural and regional Australia, identifying success and also why in one case the process failed. The focus on one central organisation had

the advantage of allowing rich and deep investigation of the operation and influence of that organisation over the time period for the research of 1984–2004.

The other issue which can be a limitation for qualitative research relates to the interview process. Frey and Oishi (1995) see the interview as a conversation between the interviewer and the respondent in order to gain information on a particular area under consideration. Nichols (1991) defines interviews as either structured or informal. The interviews were designed to seek more detailed answers to the question than a structured interview format allows. The use of semi-structured interviews has the potential to lead to bias (Wimmer & Dominick, 1997) because it relies on the interviewer being objective, yet it can provide valuable data. Researcher bias can also occur in analysis of interview data and the document analysis. The researcher was aware of the potential for bias and took every precaution to maintain an objective approach.

The next chapter, Chapter 5, considers how each of the case studies evolved, the issues which arose in the context of this thesis, and the themes that have emerged.

Chapter 5: The Three Case Studies

CASE STUDY 1: Traineeships in Tasmania and Rural Australia 1985–2000

Preface

This case study is based on the following documentation:

1. TRITB board minutes for the period June 1985 to September 2000.
2. TRITB executive minutes for the period August 1985 to January 1996.
3. Three evaluation reports undertaken on the traineeship in 1988, 1990 and 1992.
4. Interviews with persons involved as employers of trainees; teachers delivering the Rural Traineeship; senior staff at state and commonwealth departments involved in the development and certification of the traineeship.
5. TRITB correspondence for the period June 1985 to September 2000.

The interviewees for this case study were selected from:

Technical and Further Education (TAFE) – Tasmania

Department of Vocational Education and Training – Tasmania

Department of Employment Education and Training – Commonwealth

TRITB board member

Employers

The number interviewed was four and one declined to participate.

Introduction

May 1985 was a landmark month and year for vocational training, with two major reports being delivered to the federal government: first the Karmel Report on “Quality of Education in Australia” (AGPS, 1985), which was complemented by the Kirby Report “Report on the Committee of Inquiry in Labour Market Programmes” (AGPS, 1985). The Karmel Report highlighted the need for employers and unions to determine the skills required by students entering the workforce. Kirby built on this determination by stressing in his report skills formation, the performance of post-Year 10 students and the need for mandatory skills for all students. The Kirby Report became the foundation on which traineeships were progressed and the instrument used to address skills formation for students who left school at the completion of Year 10, rather than completing a full secondary education to Year 12.

This case study considers how the Kirby Report influenced rural industry and rural communities, the delivery of vocational education and training for the agricultural sector, and how the Tasmanian farming organisations, Tasmanian farmers and the board responded to Kirby’s challenges.

The Kirby Report

The Kirby Report recommended that the federal government must have a continuing commitment to the policy of full employment. The restoration of full employment must be the underlying rationale for government intervention in the labour market. It was an important recommendation at a time when Australia had been in a period of high unemployment—but more particularly youth unemployment which was in excess of 20% and in the 16–19 year old age group even higher. Kirby and his committee

propounded a new strategy for consideration by the federal government in respect to labour market intervention. In essence, they—like others—believed there needed to be a commitment to full employment through conventional macro-economic policies.

What was new and even more important was that Kirby suggested that substantial gains could arise for the nation if there was greater freedom in how we combined education, training and family responsibility. The report argued it was essential to accept this “paradigm shift” which would mean rationalisation of existing labour market programmes and a greater co-ordination between related post-secondary education, and using the unemployment benefit to provide relevant training. The report also indicated that greater attention was required in the provision of education and training when considering the mix of labour market programmes: there needed to be more flexible working arrangements and that any government initiative had to target women, youth, the indigenous population and those with disabilities. In sum, the Kirby Report recommended the development of traineeships for youth aged 16–17 years, which would combine part-time employment and part-time formal on/off-the-job training. This in turn would require greater flexibility in relation to the individual industrial awards, and these would need to be registered by both industry and union bodies.

The Hawke government embraced the Kirby Report. In August 1985, the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations (DEIR) circulated a document in which was set out the Australian Traineeship System. The essential features of the traineeship outlined by the government were:

- targeted 16–17 year olds
- the traineeship was a minimum of 12 months with 13 weeks spent in approved off-the-job training
- state training authorities needed to certify the programme
- wage rates would reflect time in training off-the-job and awards needed to be amended to reflect this and were to be negotiated by the individual parties
- employers and training providers would receive a fee to ensure high-quality training and
- no traineeship would be allowed where there was an existing state-recognised apprenticeship scheme.

The DEIR paper also set out the mechanical operations which were required to implement the traineeship.

The TRITB's Response to the Federal Government Initiative

The TRITB board minutes (TRITB Board Minutes, September 1985) record that the question of the Kirby Report and the traineeship concept were canvassed and discussed by board members. The board supported the recommendation and considered the proposed traineeship provided an opportunity to address perceived skill and labour shortages in rural Tasmania. This was supported by the TFGA and the executive officer was instructed to develop, in conjunction with TAFE, a traineeship model for Tasmania. He was also requested to discuss with DEIR and the state government Department of Education and Vocational Training (DVET) the formation of a Rural Industry Working Group to advance the development of rural traineeships.

Following negotiations, DEIR and DVET agreed to establish a Rural Industry Working Group. The membership consisted of representatives from DEIR, DVET, TRITB, TFGA, the Training Authority of Tasmania (TAT) (who certified the traineeship and awarded the qualification), TAFE and the relevant union. The working group was chaired by a member DEIR and allowed the interested groups to discuss issues affecting the traineeship and provided reports to the constituent bodies.

By December 1985, the TRITB executive was advised of some of the concerns in the DEIR outline for traineeships, and the potential these had to impede the implementation of the traineeships in rural Tasmania. These concerns had arisen as the result of discussions on the proposed rural traineeship at the TFGA executive meeting in December. In a memorandum addressed to the board by the TFGA executive director, the TFGA raised issues on which they sought advice from the board. These were:

...concern at the potential difficulties of effectively setting up the rural traineeship due to obvious problems associated with student travel, accommodation and TAFE holidays coinciding with optimum time for some enterprise traineeships. Consequently the board's advice on proposed programmes and solutions to the Association's concern would be appreciated.

(TFGA executive director memo to the TRITB board, 19 December 1985)

To address these concerns the board wrote to the state manager of DEIR requesting that the federal government revisit the traineeship parameters. Concerns and issues raised by the board included the age of the participants in the scheme (i.e. 16–18 years), which limited rural trainees because they would not be able to drive farm machinery on public roads, and how trainees from around Tasmania would be able to get to Burnie TAFE

(the agreed industry provider of training for the traineeship) if DEIR was unable to provide transport. On this matter the board recommended to DEIR and DVET that an essential prerequisite for potential rural trainees should be a current driving licence. Other concerns addressed related to living away from home allowances whilst at Burnie TAFE and what funds had been set aside to address this matter; whether or not TAFE had the buildings, facilities and staff to undertake and deliver the proposed traineeship; whether or not the traineeship delivery—particularly the off-the-job component—would need to respond to the farm cycle, and not be hampered by declared holidays or the TAFE and school calendar (it was essential that training be taken at a time suitable to the employer) and finally the nature of the relationship between the farm apprenticeship and traineeship. The federal government guidelines also indicated that a traineeship would not be allowed where there was an existing declared apprenticeship in place. In 1982 farming had been declared a vocation in Tasmania. As a declared vocation, farming in Tasmania was a recognised trade apprenticeship, and it was supervised by the Training Authority of Tasmania. For the first time in the state, young persons were able to undertake a course of study in agriculture and farming practices and gain a recognised qualification. The farm apprenticeship was a 4-year scheme of training which had been approved by the TFGA and the union and administered by the Training Authority of Tasmania. It had proved very popular with Tasmanian farmers from inception, with an annual intake of around 15 new apprentices each year. The board minutes (TRITB Board Minutes, January 1986) reflected this concern and suggested there was a place for both traineeships and the apprenticeship. The board minutes record “...the Board would be looking to use traineeships as one of the prerequisite considerations for persons wishing to later undertake an apprenticeship”,

but more importantly the farming members of the board saw the traineeship as a way in which "...[the agricultural sector]...could develop better standards and skills within the rural workforce" (TRITB Board Minutes, January 1986) and enable trainees to offer themselves to prospective employers, in comparison to the farm apprenticeship which required higher academic standards.

The issues raised by the TRITB led to considerable discussions with senior members of DEIR, DVET, TAT and TFGA. At these meetings the TRITB was represented by the chairman, the union representative on the TRITB board and the executive officer. All of the issues were worked through during 1986 and, by the end of that year, the representation by the TRITB to the appropriate bodies had seen a more useful and malleable framework pertaining to the whole traineeship system. In the case of the proposed Rural Traineeship it was agreed by all parties that:

- trainees would require a drivers licence
- facilities, staff and building requirements for the Rural Traineeship would be funded on a 50/50 basis by the federal and state governments
- TAFE facilities would be open all year for the delivery of vocational training—except the week between Christmas/New Year and the week following Easter
- off-the-job training delivery would be designed and delivered around the farm cycle and
- allowances would be paid to trainees for living away from home, and an amount would be provided for the trainees to get to and from the Burnie TAFE campus.

The major sticking point in advancing the traineeship related to the issue of farming having been declared a vocation by TAT. On this issue DEIR would not budge, despite

many telephone discussions and personal representations by the board. In a letter to the board from DEET in January 1997 the department reiterated their position: “The traineeship guidelines state there will be no traineeship where there is a declared vocation, for this reason we cannot support the development of the rural traineeship” (TRITB Board Minutes, March 1987).

It was during this period of extensive negotiations that the executive officer proposed to the board that perhaps a way round the impasse was to consider how the Rural Traineeship could be articulated into the Farm Apprenticeship. The executive officer suggested the successful completion of the Rural Traineeship should be credited as the whole of the first year of the four-year Farm Apprenticeship. This concept did not however alter the view of the Tasmanian representative of DEET.

In August 1987, with the proposed Rural Traineeship still in a state of limbo, the TRITB president and executive officer were in Canberra for a national meeting of the Rural Training Council of Australia. Prior to visiting Canberra, the board president had personally contacted the federal minister and arranged to meet him in his Canberra office. At that meeting the president outlined the problem of getting the Rural Traineeship underway in Tasmania because of the “apprenticeship” clause in the federal government traineeship outline. The federal minister was advised of the of the board’s proposed articulation in Tasmania from the Rural Traineeship into the Farm Apprenticeship. At the conclusion of the meeting the minister advised the president that he would approve the Rural Traineeship in Tasmania, despite there being a Farm Apprenticeship. The minister also asked the president to keep his department briefed the on the articulation concept “[as the Minister] considered it an ‘imaginative

approach’ to enable those who had the completed traineeship to continue with further formal accredited training which would enable them to advance their skills base and knowledge” (TRITB Board Minutes, September 1987).

Implementing the Rural Traineeship in Tasmania – 1988

The board minutes at the beginning of 1988 reflect the work being undertaken to get the Rural Traineeship completed and implemented. This included the industrial agreements, curriculum, marketing the traineeship to the target group, facilities, staff and accommodation. These developments were based around a model for an Intensive Agriculture Traineeship prepared for TAFE Tasmania (Bonney, 1986; TRITB Board Minutes, September 1986).

The board minutes of September 1987 record that after extensive discussion with Tasmanian farmers and ten validation meetings around the state, the Rural Traineeship, after fine tuning, was completed and awaiting approval by DEIR and TAT. At this board meeting, the board members were presented with the proposed Training Record Book, Training Plan and the Syllabus. The only remaining impediment to implementation was the finalisation of the amendments to the federal and state industrial awards. The union representative on the board advised;

...an agreement had been reached between TFGA and the AWU regarding the traineeship wage. To amend the award it was necessary to create a dispute...this process had been undertaken by the national secretary of the AWU with TFGA...a hearing was listed for 21st October 1987. (TRITB Board Minutes, September 1987)

Resulting from this advice the board decided to discuss with TAFE Tasmania the implementation of the Rural Traineeship in February 1988.

The relevant changes to the industrial agreements were completed in November 1987. This allowed DEIR and TAT to approve the Rural Traineeship as a scheme of training.

By November 1987, whilst the approval for the Rural Traineeship had been completed by DEIR and TAT, it had not been funded by governments at federal and state level. This prevented the board from advising Tasmanian farmers of the Rural Traineeship and the planned marketing campaign. The TRITB executive undertook extensive advocacy of the federal and state representatives. Following the board's representation, it was agreed in December 1987 that the first Rural Traineeship in Tasmania would be funded and commence on 14 March 1988. An extensive press and marketing campaign was undertaken by the TRITB board and TFGA in February 1988. This included meetings throughout the state to advise TFGA members of the structure and outlining the benefits of employing a trainee.

Availability of Training Facilities

Whilst the negotiations over the Rural Traineeship were taking place, the farming members of the board had become concerned that TAFE, with all the best intention, may have difficulty in undertaking the off-job-training component. At the September 1987 board meeting the farmer members requested that the TAFE representative on the board "... prepare a report outlining the needs of the School of Agriculture to meet the "off job" training for apprentices and trainees" (TRITB Board Minutes, September 1987).

The board farm members were aware that the current Farm Apprenticeship relied on many local farmers in the Burnie area allowing students to access their equipment and farms to undertake the apprenticeship training. Their concern was further reinforced with the feedback from the statewide traineeship marketing meetings undertaken in January and February 1998 which indicated a latent demand for farmers to employ trainees. Indications were that rather than one intake per year, the board saw TAFE having to be funded for three or four, which would put enormous pressure on the local farmers and their facilities. The board's TAFE representative presented the submission on the School of Agriculture to the March 1988 board meeting (TRITB Minutes, March 1988). In the submission, the school sought the acquisition of land to provide students in the Rural Traineeship and Farm Apprenticeship with a training farm to reinforce the off-the-job training component. This would allow apprentices and trainees to practise their skills in a controlled environment. The TRITB executive took up this issue, and spent a considerable time lobbying the state government, DVET and TAFE to support this proposition. Underlying this approach was an indication that the trainee numbers for 1988 would be 60, and already there was a waiting list for 1989. After considerable discussion at all levels of the state government, the state premier announced, at the Burnie Agriculture and Horticulture Awards night in May 1988, the purchase of a 112-hectare property which would provide trainees and apprentices with the opportunity for greater practical experience during their courses. The TFGA president also advised that the state farming organisation and agri-business would support and assist the development of the newly acquired land. The board and TFGA insisted that TAFE had to run the farm as near as practicable to a working farm. Since the farm's purchase,

industry and the farming organisation have funded such items as new tractors, growing contracts and equipment to reinforce these important practical skills.

During an interview, the issue of skills acquisition by trainees was described by an interviewee as "...vitally important that trainees practised their knowledge on a real-live commercial working farm to understand the farm cycle but more importantly to return to their employers with a basic understanding which could be developed on-farm".

At the September board meeting (TRITB Board Minutes, September 1988) the board was advised by the president that the Rural Traineeship had been a great success. By the end of 1988 there would be three Rural Traineeships in place. He also advised that already there were 47 employers and trainers registered for 1989. The ongoing board minutes from 1988 to 2000 (when competency based training was introduced) indicate a yearly intake of trainees in Tasmania of 40–60 over the period 1988 to 2000.

With the number of trainees undertaking the Rural Traineeship, the Rural Industry Working Group recommended to the board (TRITB Board Minutes, January 1989) that the Rural Traineeship should be evaluated. The board felt this was important in order to ascertain the relevance and outcomes of the traineeships. A rural consultant was appointed to undertake this task.

Evaluation, Quality Outcomes and the Rural Training Consultant

The increasing numbers undertaking the Rural Traineeship had highlighted a problem in respect to the quality outcomes and a number of difficulties which had arisen between the tripartite relationship of TAFE, the employer and trainees. One of the early

concerns raised by the evaluator (TRITB executive officer, personal communication, May 1988) was the need to improve the understanding, responsibility and role of the employers and trainees and the need to address better communication between TAFE staff, the employer and trainee. These comments resulted were initially discussed at the Rural Industry Working Group in July 1989 with a recommendation to the board that a training consultant be appointed to improve communications and the understanding of the role each party had in the traineeship. The board's executive accepted the Rural Industry Working Group recommendation (TRITB Executive Minutes, August 1989) and undertook discussions with DEET and DEIRT regarding the employment and funding of a training consultant for the rural industry. DEET and DEIRT agreed to fund the position of a training consultant, who was to be responsible to the TRITB board for the efficient operation of the Farm Apprenticeship and Rural Traineeship programme. The training consultant would also be required to develop and market the Rural Traineeship in response to the needs of industry which had been identified by the board (TRITB Board Minutes, January 1990). This position was filled and commenced on 1 February 1990, and had an immediate impact on the out turn of the Rural Traineeship. Employers and their trainees were in regular contact with the training consultant and this led to a better understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each party and also improved communication outcomes with TAFE staff. The rural training consultant in his report to the board in March 1990 noted "...many farmers had never employed young people in a training situation and had difficulty in comprehending their part in the overall training scheme" (rural training consultant report to the TRITB board, March 1990).

To overcome this difficulty the board prepared a *Trainees Booklet* which set out the roles and responsibilities of the staff at the School of Agriculture TAFE, the employer and the trainee and what was required for a successful traineeship outcome. The introduction of the industry training consultant was so successful that it was maintained and funded until 2006 by the state and federal governments. *The Evaluation of the Tasmanian Rural Traineeship* (1990) highlighted issues which the board had already begun addressing and arose from comments expressed by employers to TRITB board members. Recommendations from the evaluation that received priority by the board (TRITB Board Minutes, January 1991), and were addressed with senior staff at DEIRT and TAFE Tasmania, related to:

- the training plan and record book
- the need for an employers' handbook outlining their obligations
- the need to update the curriculum to meet current industry standards
- how to ensure the provision of adequate training resources
- the need to fund the position of a rural training consultant.

The board was advised that it needed to consider how to address issues relating to the understanding of the role of the employer in the traineeship. The board saw this as part of the rural training consultant's role, and it became mandatory for all employers to attend an induction session at Burnie TAFE during the first off-the-job training block being undertaken by their trainee.

The report also noted that 80% of the trainees had continued with their employer in a full-time position on completion of the traineeship. Most of the employers considered

the traineeship as worthwhile, particularly their role in assisting with the on-farm practice to enhance what had been taught at Burnie TAFE.

The board minutes (TRITB Board Minutes, March 1990) also noted in the rural training consultant's report to the board the need for the expanding the current traineeship:

“...that a horticultural stream was required to meet the needs of Tasmania's apple and pear growers” (TRITB Board Minutes, March 1990).

The board then sought funds from DEET to develop a Horticultural Traineeship aimed at the Tasmanian apple and pear growers. In view of the success of the Rural Traineeship, the increasing trainees employed and the support of Tasmanian farmers, DEET advised they were prepared to fund the development of the traineeship and assist with its implementation. The union representative on the TRITB board undertook to discuss the award implications with the TFGA industrial organisation and arrange the relevant notice of award variation with the state and federal industrial commissions (TRITB Board Minutes, April 1991).

At the April meeting of the board (TRITB Board Minutes, April 1991) a report from the rural training consultant was considered. This report had been requested by the funders of the rural training consultant's position—DEET and DEIRT. This request arose because DEET and DEIRT did not consider the position important in the context of the overall outcomes of the Rural Traineeship. The board advocated for the continuation of the position of rural consultant in discussions with senior officers in DEET and DEIRT. The major factor which influenced the continuation of the rural consultant position was the argument advanced by the board and the report which expressed a concern that education and training was a new concept for the Tasmanian

rural community. Often board members and the executive officer spent considerable amounts of time with employers explaining how the traineeship worked. The board also considered the rural training consultant had increased the level of awareness and the importance of education and training amongst those involved in the state's rural community.

The board also pointed out that failure to fund this position could jeopardise the whole Rural Traineeship, and the potential of approximately 60 young persons who each year undertook the Rural Traineeship in order to find employment in rural Tasmania. The board's view was that the lack of provision of a rural training consultant may have a long-term detrimental effect at a time when the Rural Traineeship had raised the awareness and importance of education and training in rural Tasmania (TRITB Correspondence, April 1991). After protracted negotiations, the rural training consultant position was continued and, despite variations in funding, remained in place until 2006. The evaluations of 1990 and 1992 stressed the important role the rural training consultant played in the success of the traineeship and in raising the awareness of rural education and training in rural Tasmania.

As one employer pointed out during an interview, the Rural Traineeship provided:

...[an] opportunity for a young person with little time for school but interested in the rural industry to become trained in rural skills and with his employer's assistance an important member of the farming unit and also the community he worked in.

During 1991 and 1992 the Rural Traineeships continued with 117 enrolments during that period, and a 91% completion rate, with 80% of the trainees remaining with their employers on completion (advice from TAFE, TRITB Board Minutes, January 1993).

The Arrival of the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA): A New Policy Framework

In 1992 a new overarching body to supervise vocational training in Australia was established, the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA). Its role was to supervise the development of a national training system, including the standardisation of courses so that qualifications were portable between states and recognised nationally.

In July 1992 Prime Minister Keating announced a new comprehensive package of training and employment initiatives. These were a direct result of the federal government's national meeting on youth employment and training. The employment measures addressed the question of long-term unemployed youth. ANTA was directed to implement these new measures in conjunction with the federal and state governments. The initiative which had implications for this case study related to the changes made to the traineeship system operating in July 1992.

The new traineeship outlined by the prime minister was to be known as the Career Start Traineeship. It was to be an important bridge towards the implementation of the Australian Vocational Certificate training system as recommended in the Carmichael Report. It aimed to allow young people to move into the workforce while they obtained accredited training. Its key features were:

- Structured training time
- Registered training agreement
- Training consistent with the needs of industry and the workforce.

Career Start Traineeships in the Tasmanian Context

The TRITB Board Minutes (January 1993; September 1993) indicate that the board embraced the Career Start Traineeship proposal. As it was aimed to commence on 1 January 1994, board members suggested that a small sub-committee be created to look into transfer of subjects, apprenticeship, recognition of prior learning (RPL) and assessment. These issues were considered by the board as important issues especially considering how the Career Start Traineeship might articulate with proper accreditation into the Farm Apprenticeship.

The board received a report from the sub-committee and the proposed outline of the Career Start Traineeship and how this would provide greater articulation into the Farm Apprenticeship (TRITB Board Minutes, September 1994). As the new traineeship required skills to be taught in modules, the board regarded this as an opportunity to address some criticisms of the current traineeship which had been raised by employers with the board, TAFE and TFGA. One of these concerns related to the difficulty some trainees had in understanding and completing a training module whilst other trainees, who had a better understanding and wished to expand their knowledge and skills in the subject, were limited because of the way the current Rural Traineeship was written. The Career Start Traineeship model adopted by the board, and supported by DEET and DEIRT, addressed these concerns and the issues the sub-committee was asked to consider. Training modules were divided into a part “A” component and the more

extensive and theoretical part “B” of the subject. Students who only completed the basic “A” component would receive their Rural Traineeship and articulation into the first year of the Farm Apprenticeship, whilst those who completed both “A” and “B” parts of the module were able to advance into the second year of the Farm Apprenticeship. This increased the off-the-job component contact hours from 390 to 520. The industrial parties, AWU and TFGA Industrial, agreed to amend the award to take these changes into account. DEIRT and the TRITB were provided with funding to redevelop the existing traineeship which reflected the success of the Rural Traineeship since its inception in Tasmania. The new Career Start Traineeship commenced in March 1994. As one interviewee commented, “the [career start traineeship] recognised that some young people had a quicker grasp on the traineeship modules and gave them an incentive and recognition”.

And the June 1994 board minutes note: “due to the popularity of the Career Start Traineeship, intakes were filling rapidly...and consideration needed to be addressed with TAFE for a third intake in 1994” (TRITB Board Minutes, June 1994).

The Federal Government’s Response to the Rise in Youth Unemployment

Having just implemented the Career Start Traineeship in March 1994, the TRITB board was faced with another traineeship issue. This issue arose following the Kelty, McKay and Fox “Australian Road Show” between February and April 1994. Funded by the Australian government, it was tasked at looking at the then current high youth unemployment. They visited all states and territories, particularly the major regional centres and rural towns. These visits included civic meetings with community leaders, educators, businesses, social workers, parents and unemployed youth. They reported

back to the prime minister and cabinet on the growing level of youth unemployment and the urgent need for the federal government to address this matter. The federal government issued a White Paper on Youth Unemployment in May 1994. The major thrust of the White Paper was the creation of Nettforce. The objectives of Nettforce were to obtain business and industry commitment to increasing the number of jobs available for unemployed people and a commitment from business for more entry-level training through a new proposed traineeship (AGPS, 1994).

The TRITB executive officer reported to the president that he had been advised by his counterpart in NSW that a considerable sum of money had been given to NSW TAFE by DEET to develop a number of training packages for the agricultural sector (note of a telephone call from executive officer to president—executive officer working day book, 1994). As the president in a memorandum to board members (July 1994) noted, “[the] proposed Nettforce Traineeship has the distinct possibility of cutting across Tasmania’s articulated pathway which had been implemented with the career start traineeship” (TRITB president’s memorandum to board members, July 1994.)

This concern was heightened when the material developed by NSW became available. The proposed Nettforce traineeship for the agricultural sector was considered by Tasmanian TAFE teachers and industry representatives who met in July 1994 to review the training material developed by NSW TAFE. The meeting considered the material from NSW TAFE as very second rate when compared to the current Tasmanian product and was not acceptable in Tasmania in light of what was being delivered currently.

The TRITB president arranged an executive meeting to discuss the possible impasse. As the executive minutes (July 1994) recorded, there was a very heated debate about

the proposed Nettforce Traineeship. At the end of the executive meeting, the AWU representative on the board undertook to arrange a meeting with the federal minister when he was in Tasmania later in the month.

Later in July, representatives of the board met with the federal minister and expressed concerns about the Nettforce traineeship and the material which had been developed by NSW TAFE. The president of the TRITB advised the minister of how the Rural Traineeship operated in Tasmania, its success in attracting trainees, the co-operation of Tasmanian farmers, the positive employment outcomes and the ongoing raising of the standards of agricultural education in the state. He also advised of the close co-operation with the University of Tasmania, particularly the articulation between vocational and university study in the agriculture sector. In view of these concerns, the board was unable to support the Nettforce traineeship in Tasmania. The federal minister expressed his views as to why the Nettforce traineeships were needed. He also stated he was impressed with the developments in agricultural training in Tasmania and understood the Tasmanian participants' frustrations. Following further discussion the minister enquired whether the board was prepared to consider expanding the Tasmanian Rural Traineeship into a national offering. The president advised the minister that the board was working to that end and hoped to have a national traineeship with the help of DEET and the Rural Training Council of Australia (RTCA, the national rural ITAB) by June 1995. As an interviewee stated:

...this was the moment when those meeting with the Minister had to advance the idea of developing a national rural traineeship sooner than proposed in

order to provide both industry and the Minister with a “win-win” outcome. We readily grasped that opportunity.

The federal minister and the board members then discussed this idea and it was agreed that the development of the National Rural Traineeship should proceed “post-haste”. The federal minister also indicated that he would like the newly developed and completed National Rural Traineeship by 15 October 1994. This timeframe would allow him to use the National Rural Traineeship when addressing rural communities about possible solutions to youth unemployment around Australia over the coming months.

The following day, the TRITB president arranged a telephone conference with the relevant senior staff in the federal and state vocational and training authorities who would be involved in the accreditation and development of the National Rural Traineeship. DEET agreed to provide the funds through the RTCA for TRITB to undertake the curriculum writing and validation across Australia. The state department, DEIRT, advised on the telephone conference and confirmed during an interview:

...[they] had contacted their State equivalents advising them of these new developments and seeking their support to implement this national approach and that Tasmania would be placing the National Rural Traineeship on the National training register.

This support was provided because during an interview it was indicated that:

...the board through its work and representations had raised the profile of agricultural education in Tasmania, increased enrolments, industry support,

argued for improved training facilities and a national offering provided an opportunity to expand what had worked so successfully in Tasmania.

The ability of the TRITB president to discuss the possibility of a NRT with both state farming and training organisations and those responsible at both state and national level indicates the credibility of the board as seen by those involved in agricultural vocational training and education. The board acted as a catalyst between the various parties and in effect acted as a boundary crosser bringing the various entities together to arrive at a positive outcome. At the same time the AWU and the TFGA Industrial organisation were to undertake and arrange the relevant award variations at a state and national level which reinforced the boundary crossing role of the board. The current TRITB president stated that the executive officer would have overall responsibility for the project. Any issues needing to be addressed at a state and federal level would be handled by the board's executive.

The National Rural Traineeship: A Successful Outcome

Within a period of nine weeks, a national curriculum was developed and forwarded to each state a week before the validation meetings; validation meetings were undertaken; changes made to the curriculum or new modules added as the result of relevant local concerns and signed off by all states on 27 September 1994. The completed National Rural Traineeship was presented to the Tasmanian Accreditation Authority on 11 October 1994, then accredited and handed to the federal minister on 15 October 1994, by the national executive officer. The federal minister used the training package in discussions in rural centres around Australia.

In the period January 1995 to December 2000—when the National Rural Traineeship ceased with the move to competency based training—in excess of 6,800 trainees undertook the traineeship. This is a remarkable outcome when, until that time, only Queensland and Tasmania had a Rural Traineeship in place. Once in place and accredited, the other states were able to market the training package through their farm organisations and vocational providers. It was noteworthy also that the federal minister used the National Rural Traineeship as a national model which he suggested other industries should follow.

A positive outcome from the development of the national rural model was a request to the board from the Victorian Horticultural and Agricultural Industry Training Board—the TRITB's counterpart in Victoria—in May 1995 (TRITB Board Minutes, June 1995) advising that the horticultural industry was seeking to prepare a national offering for their industry and would the board grant permission to use modules from the National Rural Traineeship in their arrangement. The board agreed to this request (TRITB Board Minutes, June 1995). The National Horticultural Traineeship was completed and accredited in 1995, with approximately 60% of the curriculum based on the National Rural Traineeship modules and the balance representing the specialised skills of the horticultural industry.

Conclusion

A number of interesting issues arise from this case study which will be drawn together in the discussion of the case studies in Chapter 6. The major and important issues which will be expanded relate to:

Advocacy	the TRITB identified the training issues associated with the various traineeships. The board interacted with the stakeholders to ensure the client group, Tasmania and at a later date Australian farmers were able to undertake discussions and advocacy with the state and federal governments, the industrial parties through the TRITB board, and TFGA representatives to address these matters.
Boundary Crossers	the importance of having persons in place who were able to liaise effectively between the state and federal governments and their departments, the farming community and families who were seen as having credibility by the client group.
Leadership	the role played by the TRITB, TFGA and the industrial parties in providing leadership at a state and federal level to develop and deliver a national offering.
Social Capital	drawing on the advocacy and leadership points, when trusted networks were established and where the importance of leaders/advocates were seen as credible, both within the farming community (bonding and capital) and externally (bridging social capital).
Rural Communities	the Rural Traineeship and National Rural Traineeship provided a source of training to encourage rural communities to embrace the concept. It had the effect of addressing rural youth unemployment by providing accredited rural training.

Policy Development as a result of advocacy, the TRITB board was able to have major input into how the federal government's initial policy for traineeships and Netforce was varied to meet the special needs of rural Australia.

Chapter 5: The Three Case Studies

CASE STUDY 2: The Introduction of A New Taxation System (ANTS) and the Goods and Services Tax (GST) to the Australian Farm Community 1999–2000 with particular reference to Tasmania

Preface

This case study is based on the following documentation:

1. TRITB board minutes for the period April 1999 to January 2001.
2. Two evaluation reports, Stage 1 November 1999 and Stage 2 July 2001.
3. Interviews with the developers of the ANTS programme, participants and deliverer.
4. TRITB correspondence for the period April 1999 to May 2001.

The interviewees for this case study were selected from:

Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association

Australian Taxation Office

Tasmanian farmers

TRITB board member

Evaluation

The number interviewed was four but some individuals represented more than one organisation and one declined to participate.

Introduction

The Australian Treasurer in the Hawke government, Mr Paul Keating, proposed in 1985 a broad-based consumption tax during the Tax Summit held in July that year. The idea was dropped due to pressure from the Australian Council of Trade Unions, welfare groups and business (Press Interview with Treasurer, July 1985). The idea was further advanced by the Liberal Party Leader of the Opposition, Mr John Hewson, with the development of his “Fightback” slogan for the 1993 federal election. Following defeat by Keating at that election, the Liberal Party dropped the idea of a consumption tax in 1994.

In 1999 Prime Minister Howard legislated for major changes in the Australian tax system. On 8 July 1999 “A New Taxation System (Goods and Services Tax)” received royal assent and the legislation set a date of commencement as 1 July 2000.

The ACT: A New Taxation System

Whilst the Goods and Services Tax (GST) was the major focus of the press and media, A New Taxation System (ANTS) also introduced a whole series of measures that had a major impact on the Australian agricultural sector. These other measures included: accelerated depreciation, capital gains tax, trading stock, the GST concept and import tax credits, existing contracts spanning the introduction of GST, partnerships, succession planning and standing crops (this addressed how the GST would be handled in respect of farmers with long-term crop-growing contracts which had been signed prior to the introduction of the GST legislation).

The first consideration by Tasmania’s farming organisation, the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association (TFGA), on how to address the proposed legislation was

raised at the April 1999 board meeting of the TRITB by the executive director of the TFGA. The TRITB minutes summarise the discussions by board members and noted:

...the importance of developing a comprehensive education and training programme to implement ANTS and the GST legislation especially with regard to the implications this may have for Tasmanian rural enterprises. The board also agreed that any associated training with the new legislation would be organised and conducted by the TRITB for agricultural and horticultural enterprises in the State. (TRITB Board Minutes, April 1999)

It was also agreed that any advocacy relating to ANTS would be undertaken by the TFGA and TRITB, particularly with the national farming body, the National Farmers Federation (NFF).

The Proposal to Assist Australian Rural Enterprises

Following discussions by all state farm bodies with the NFF, the NFF agreed to set up a national steering committee. This was made up of a representative from each state and the NFF. The major aim of the steering committee was to develop an educative programme to assist the Australian agricultural sector to implement the GST and ANTS and undertake any advocacy which might be needed in respect of matters affecting the farming community as a result of the new legislation. The inaugural meeting of the steering committee was held in Canberra in May 1999 (TRITB Board Minutes, June 1999). The steering committee agreed that as Tasmania appeared to have a better understanding of the GST and ANTS it would undertake the preparation of the national submission which would be presented by the NFF to the federal government (TRITB Board Minutes, June 1999). As an interviewee commented:

...the Board had shown through the National Rural Traineeship work that it had the ability and acceptance to undertake national projects.

The submission prepared by the TRITB for the NFF (TRITB Minutes, June 1999) had as its major aims to provide:

1. Advice to the farming community on what was in the GST/ANTS package.
2. An intensive training programme to assist Australian farmers in understanding the new taxation package and how this would impact on their record keeping and accounting requirements.

According to these aims, the proposal was divided into two stages:

- Stage 1: An introduction to the GST/ANTS, which would raise awareness of the new tax package and highlight the issues for the Australian agricultural sector.
- Stage 2: Accounting needs, which saw the development of a training manual to assist enterprises with their accounting procedures, how to report to the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) and develop the necessary forms to show how GST and other taxes need to be accounted for by the agricultural sector.

This submission was accepted by the national steering committee. The NFF forwarded the submission to the Small Business Unit attached to Minister Reith's office, with a generous budget for national delivery of between \$16–\$21m (TRITB Board Minutes, June 1999, letter from NFF to TFGA). Following discussions between the NFF and the federal government, the training proposal was accepted and \$14m was provided by

Canberra to undertake the work. When allocating the funding, the federal government indicated that the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (DAFF) would have carriage of the project and funds with the NFF and be undertaken by the national steering committee. DAFF was to be represented on the steering committee as liaison for the federal government, and the NFF and the state farming bodies were also represented on the steering committee.

One major issue which arose at this time, and had an effect on the development of the national training delivery, was the ever-moving goal posts at the Australian Taxation Office (ATO). The ATO kept changing the ground rules—in many instances as a result of advocacy from those with vested interests, and other political pressures outside the rural and farming sector. On a number of occasions the development work being prepared in Tasmania had to be restructured due to ATO decisions or a change in emphasis. As the board minutes record, this also had an effect on delivery of Stage 1 of the Tasmanian programme as well as on other stages, particularly when the ATO made four major last-minute changes to the taxation package. These changes had a major impact on trainers and participants. Not only did it make training delivery difficult, but it also provided a huge logistic task to ensure trainers and participants were kept informed and up-to-date.

Later changes promulgated by the ATO, as the board minutes note, also had a dramatic effect on the initial Stage 2 proposal. As a result, Stage 2 became a more “hands-on” practice in the associated accounting/recording process, utilising either “pen and paper” or computer packages. The participants would be guided through a series of graduated

examples, then classify and record sample transactions, and finally complete a sample GST return—known by the ATO as the Business Activity Statement (BAS).

Implementation Issues addressed by Steering Committee

With the acceptance of the NFF proposal and the allocation of funding, a number of vital issues needed to be addressed by the steering committee in order to implement the two stages. The steering committee were cognisant that, in 1999, 37% of Australia's population lived outside non-metropolitan areas, with over a third living in larger centres were population numbered between 10,000–100,000 persons. Added to this remoteness was another major barrier to implementing this training programme. The steering committee was aware that formal educational qualifications of rural enterprises indicated that only 25% of Australian farmers had achieved a school leaving certificate, trade or higher qualifications (ABS, 1992). Chudleigh (1991) suggested that 11.7% of new entrants into Australian agriculture each year had tertiary agricultural education. On the other hand, Synapse Consulting (1998) suggested that there had been an increase in the number of farmers completing post-school study and suggested this had risen to 32%. This perceived lack of education had an important bearing on how the training programmes were developed and how knowledge was provided and implemented. As the NFF president stated in a steering committee meeting "...our members live in rural and remote Australia and have difficulty in accessing education. As a result the implementation of ANTS many farmers will have difficulty in understanding the proposed changes" (TRITB Board Minutes, September 1999).

The steering committee decided to use Kilpatrick's (1997) research as the basis of planning the training delivery to Australian farmers. Kilpatrick (1997) had indicated

that farmers learn best when programmes are delivered locally and by credible facilitators. Research suggested that Australian farmers preferred short, relevant, flexible courses which have a project base or action learning. This was reinforced when the learning material was relevant, they were amongst a small group of peers, and the learning had applicability to their own situation. This was also supported by the National Council of Vocational Education and Research (1999) who suggested that small businesses are interested in training only if it provides a solution to their problems. The introduction of the ANTS/GST package raised with the steering committee an in-depth discussion on how the two identified stages were to be delivered, particularly as the potential participants had varying ages and educational outcomes. In order to encourage farmers to participate in the GST training programmes the board considered it was essential that the training be problem based and practical. For the training to be successful there needed to be an interaction between the training activities undertaken so that the training was effective and provided the foundation for future development (TRITB Board Minutes, September 1990). Reflecting these considerations, the GST programme needed to be customised to suit the needs of Australian and Tasmanian rural enterprises. Another issue which had to be addressed during the implementation of the programme was that persons of non-English speaking background and the indigenous population owned 60% of all cattle properties in Western Australia and the Northern Territory (NFF & DAFF, 2000). Whilst they formed a significant minority in rural and remote Australia they were also a target group which had to be taken into consideration.

One issue that caused considerable discussion amongst members of the steering committee was the idea of using training co-ordinators. Tasmania was very keen to

develop this idea, but the other states rejected this suggestion, preferring instead to use their local branch networks as the facilitators of any workshops. Tasmania argued that local training co-ordinators would enhance the programme by organising the venues, meals, local halls, liaise with the Tasmanian steering committee and co-ordinator as well as acting as the pivot for the local district farmers. This provided an opportunity in Tasmania to implement one of the recommendations made by Griffin and Zichy-Woinarski (1996) which suggested that using local training co-ordinators would improve the uptake of education and training for those involved in the agriculture sector. The ANTS implementation provided a unique opportunity to develop this co-ordinator role to support the training package in Tasmania.

The board papers demonstrate the Tasmanian steering committee, in developing GST Stages 1 and 2, were also cognisant of Kilpatrick (1997) which suggested some key features for the delivery of a successful training programme. In setting out how delivery would be undertaken, the board, after much discussion, decided that interactive training was vital in order to convey this major governmental change. It was necessary also to ensure the topics undertaken in the training were relevant and applicable to the target group. As Kilpatrick (1997) pointed out it was important for farmers to respect facilitators and perceive that they were able to provide knowledge and skills which were relevant to their own farms. The use of area co-ordinators allowed groups of people who were in the local area to attend the training sessions—this was most important in undertaking interactive group training and discussion and was an issue that was reinforced during the interview process:

...our board focussed on the rural community and its constituents and understood our needs in coming to grip with the new system.

Persons outside the local area maybe perceived with suspicion and this can affect training delivery. Within these parameters, the training material was developed with the assistance of a Launceston firm of accountants.

Tasmania: GST for Farmland Rural Business (Stage 1)

After many hours of debate and discussion the steering committee decided that the Stage 1 workshops needed to achieve a balance between the theoretical GST concepts, practical applications of these concepts and what implications they would have for farm and rural businesses. It was also decided that after each major theme had been presented, a practical “hands-on session” was to be conducted, and aimed to assist participants in understanding the GST and prepare them as to how the ANTS/GST would affect their farm operations (TRITB Board Minutes, September 1999).

To assist the knowledge sharing and understanding, a comprehensive advertising campaign was undertaken. At the same time the Tasmanian steering committee appointed 29 local area co-ordinators. Their role was to organise the venue, take names of those who wished to attend, complete the attendance register, organise refreshments and forward evaluation sheets to the evaluator. An evaluator had been appointed to provide the Tasmanian steering committee with an independent view of the strengths and weaknesses of the training and areas which may need to be addressed. In the presentation of the evaluation report on Stage 1 to the TRITB board, the evaluator noted:

The appointment of local organisers was an excellent decision, not only because it simplified the organisation of the workshops but more importantly because it gave a local focus to the activity and ownership. The local area coordinators contributed greatly to the success of Stage 1. (TRITB Board Meeting, January 2000)

With regard to these training arrangements, an interviewee stated:

...having the training in our local area was great, we did not have far to travel, it was organised at times to suit our farm enterprise and we were among friends.

From the delivery of the first workshop on King Island in October 1999 until the last Stage 1 workshop in May 2000, some 52 workshops were undertaken throughout the state and attended by 2,247 persons (TRITB Board Minutes, June 2000). As the evaluation report of Stage 1 presented to the board indicated, the training had been highly successful, well organised, competently delivered and well received by participants.

The general feeling in the farming community was that the workshops had been an excellent beginning in mastering the basics of GST and the manuals provided at the workshops would be of great assistance. As one farmer stated:

...at last I had some material which I had worked through and could use to understand the new GST.

Development of Stage 2

While Stage 1 was being undertaken, the Tasmanian steering committee began concentrating on the development of Stage 2. This stage turned the theory into “hands-on practical” application and how Tasmanian and Australian farmers would need to prepare their accounting records so that they could complete their Business Activity Statement (BAS) and report to the ATO either monthly or quarterly. The state and national steering committees decided that the developmental work and the understanding of the accounting issues would again be left to a firm of Launceston accountants and the executive officer of the TRITB. One other decision made at this time (January 2000) with respect to the delivery of Stage 2 in Tasmania, was to advertise for 18 trainers who could help to deliver the use of the cash book component and also advertise to find a suitable vocational provider capable of designing a computer program which would be based around the cash book component and delivered to those who were computer literate and more comfortable in doing their books on their computer.

The TFGA executive director reported to the board:

At a national level, the final programme was agreed to and the national steering committee charged Tasmania with training the deliverers in each state once the programme had been trialled and, if required, modified to address issues which might arise during the trialling stage. (TRITB Board Minutes, February 2000)

DAFF staff on the steering committee agreed to advise the Treasury of the developments in the rural sector and confirmed their on-going support. The only

problem which arose at this stage related to the New South Wales Farmers Association who decided they would accept the material Tasmania developed but wanted to train their own trainers and use their own network for delivery. This decision was to have some interesting implications later in the year (TRITB Board Minutes, April 2000).

The national steering committee left the Tasmanian committee to liaise with DAFF and the ATO on issues which may arise during the development of Stage 2. In particular this related to levies, taxes and commissions deducted from farmers at point of sale—some being subject to GST and others were excluded. It also became apparent that any training delivery in Stage 2 would need some sort of ongoing support. At this point it was decided by the developers of Stage 2 that to support the cash book component of Stage 2 it was a necessary to develop a manual cash book, specifically designed for Australian farmers and which reflected the requirements of the ANTS and the Business Activity Statement (BAS).

Considering the success of local co-ordinators in Stage 1, it was decided to continue with this approach in Stage 2. Added to this—as discussed previously—was the need to employ and train trainers to deliver the next stage. Advertisements were placed in the three major Tasmanian newspapers, seeking trainers who were required to have an accounting background and a knowledge of rural enterprises. A total of 48 applications were received and 13 chosen to undertake the “train the trainer programme”, prior to delivering Stage 2 in their local communities.

The Need for Major Changes to the ANTS Accounting Practices

In March 2000, the training programme was trialled with the selected trainers and it proved to be a disaster. As a presenter noted:

...it was impossible for any of us to complete the BAS and it was obvious that a major change was needed and this had to be taken up urgently by the national steering committee and the federal department of Treasury.

The major issue which evolved was the difficulty in completing the cash book and the completion of the BAS being a matter of “hit and miss” (TRITB Board Minutes, April 2000).

The Tasmanian steering committee realised that unless major changes were made to the accounting practices set out in the legislation and regulations, the introduction of ANTS/GST in Tasmania and the Australian farming community would fail. To emphasise this, the Tasmanian steering committee invited all Tasmanian Senators and House of Representative members to attend the same session as the trainers had undertaken. Six federal politicians attended, and they agreed that Tasmania had uncovered some major complications in the recording of accounting transactions (TRITB Board Minutes, April 2000). As a result, the Tasmanian politicians indicated they would make suggestions and seek changes from the Treasurer to ensure Australian farmers could report in accordance with the legislative requirements. This advocacy proved unsuccessful and the Treasurer was adamant no changes would be made to the government’s legislation (TRITB Board Minutes, April 2000).

After much discussion with DAFF and the national steering committee, the Tasmanian steering committee took the programme to Canberra. The programme was trialled for a

select group, comprising individuals from the ATO, DAFF, Prime Minister and Cabinet, NFF staff and a ministerial advisor. All of the participants agreed that (Evaluator's Report, June 2000), based on the current legislation, they were unable to complete the accounting data or finalise the BAS. In view of the concerns that had arisen from the Tasmanian and Canberra trials, the NFF advised the federal government that unless the issues, which had been identified at workshops and which needed to be rectified immediately, were not undertaken, the NFF would be advising their members by television, radio and letters to all federal politicians that they could no longer support the ANTS/GST legislation (Tasmanian Steering Committee Minutes, April 2000).

...it would be fair to say that the whole programme hang in the balance, particularly as the ATO staff present could not accept the difficulties we had discovered in completing the BAS.

Following much strong and heated discussion with the departments of Treasury and Prime Minister and Cabinet by the national steering committee, it was finally agreed that changes would be made to the legislation to accommodate the issues which had been raised by the NFF, DAFF and the national steering committee.

The national steering committee gave the Tasmanian steering committee five days to revamp and re-organise the programme so that it would be applicable at a national level. The revamped and adjusted programme was taken back to Canberra seven days later and the same participants ran through the programme and agreed to sign off on new changes. The government members advised that they would prepare an appropriate

minute for the minister at that time, and an undertaking was given to the NFF that these changes would be confirmed by Easter 2000 (TRITB Board Minutes, April 2000).

The revamped programme was presented to the Tasmanian trainers at the end of April 2000 and they all agreed that it was a vast improvement on the earlier version.

Delivery of Stage 2

The first provision of Stage 2 was delivered at Latrobe in May 2000.

In Tasmania, Stage 2 was more practically based and had two strands:

- one based on manual bookkeeping records
- one based on computerised records.

Workshops were organised, using different strategies for the manual and computer delivery. A key factor in the organisation was once again using the regional co-ordinators who had been involved in the manual workshops in Stage 1. They contacted all those who had undertaken Stage 1 in their area, and this was supported by an extensive advertising campaign for Stage 2, nominating regional co-ordinators as the point of contact in their district for those wishing to attend a Stage 2 workshop.

Regional co-ordinators also had another role of passing on to TAFE Tasmania the names of potential participants who wished to do the computer-based Stage 2. TAFE Tasmania had been the successful tenderer to deliver the computer-based Stage 2.

Stage 2 saw 108 manual workshops conducted in 32 different venues, attended by 1,442 persons. A total of 48 computer workshops were conducted in 12 rural and urban locations, attended by 391 persons. In all, 156 workshops were delivered attended by

1,833 persons. Interestingly Stage 2 saw a greater involvement by women; whereas in Stage 1 there had been around 50/50 male/female ratio, Stage 2 saw a 30/70 male/female ratio. This reflected the important role women play in the farm enterprise and their management of the accounting records (Evaluator's Report, TRITB Board Minutes, June 2000).

The professional way in which the training was delivered by the Tasmanian-trained presenters was appreciated by all participants. As the evaluator reported, "...the choices and organisation of venues was excellent and participants appreciated workshops being offered close to their homes" (TRITB Board Minutes, June 2000).

The principles of local workshops, small groups and practical issues were appropriate for Stage 2 of the delivery. The thorough preparation of the programme presenters and workshop materials were obvious reasons for the outstanding success of the manual and computer-based workshops (TRITB Annual Report, 1999–2000). As the evaluator reported to the board, "Participants generally left the workshops with greater confidence in their ability to meet the requirements of GST and the BAS" (TRITB Board Minutes, June 2000).

Refresher Courses

The Tasmanian steering committee decided to run a number of refresher courses throughout the state in October 2000 prior to the first BAS reporting period.

Consequently 29 statewide courses were held which were attended by some 613 individuals (TRITB Board Minutes, January 2001). Anecdotal evidence provided by attendees led to many positive comments, an example of which was provided in a letter read at the TRITB board meeting in September 2000 where an attendee in a letter

circulated with the board agenda stated "...the workshops concentrated on the most important issues relating to farming...[compared]...to some other seminars which were too broad based...[and]...resulted in confusion with participants (TRITB Board Agenda, September 2000).

In addition to this were the remarks of a senior ATO officer in Tasmania, advising the TRITB executive officer in December 2000 "...the BAS returns for the September quarter from Tasmanian farmers were the best in the State". (TRITB Executive Officer Daybook, December 2000)

More importantly, members of the TFGA General Council and TFGA Commodity Councils advised that one of the significant results of the GST seminars had been participants' improved awareness of farm financial accounts and enterprises costs, which they reported had led to better decision making.

Train the Trainer Programme for the Other States and Territories

While the Tasmanian Stage 2 programme was being undertaken, two members of the Tasmanian steering committee were working with DAFF to modify the Tasmanian delivery to meet the needs of the rest of Australia. After this modification was completed it was decided by DAFF that two Tasmanian trainers would deliver the "train the trainer programme" to the other states, except NSW. In all, over 250 trainers were introduced to the Stage 2 process. DAFF, in its final report in which it acquitted the money that had been allocated, advised that the Stage 2 training programme "...was the most successful training programme that DAFF had been involved in" (DAFF Annual Report, 2001).

Farmcard Cash Book

The final issue which evolved from the ANTS/GST exercise was the development of the TFGA Farmcard Cash Book which was based on the concepts used in GST Stage 2. The cash book has proved very popular. Many thousands have been sold in every state and territory and, twelve years after the introduction of the ANTS/GST, they are still being purchased (letter from TFGA, November 2011).

Conclusion: A Successful Outcome

The evaluation of the whole Tasmanian programme sums up the success of this major training initiative, particularly where the evaluator states, “The principles of local workshops, small groups and practical issues were appropriate for the workshops. The thorough preparation of the programme presenters and workshop materials, together with the excellent delivery of the programme presenters were obvious reasons for the outstanding success of Stage 1, Stage 2 and Revision seminars” (TRITB Board Minutes, January 2001).

A number of interesting issues arise from this case study will be presented and discussed in Chapter 6 which considers the case studies. The major themes which will be expanded relate to:

Advocacy	having identified the issues affecting farmers in the new ANTS/GST package, to ensure the client group (Australian farmers) were able to advocate with the federal government through their senior representative body, the NFF, to address these matters.
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Boundary Crossers	the importance of having persons in place who were able to liaise effectively between the federal government and the farming community, and who were seen as being credible by the client group.
Leadership	the role played by the NFF, the national steering committee and the Tasmanian steering committee in providing leadership at a state and national level.
Social Capital	this was drawn on in the advocacy and leadership points when trusted networks were accessed and the leaders/advocates were seen to be credible, both within the farming community (bonding social capital) and externally (bridging social capital).
Adult Learning	the implementation of adult learning principles to provide a sound basis for the training delivery.

Chapter 5: The Three Case Studies

CASE STUDY 3: Competency Based Training and its Introduction as the Principal Basis of Vocational Training in Australia

Preface

This case study is based on the following documentation:

1. TRITB board minutes for the period January 1990 to June 2003.
2. Interviews 4 persons involved in the development of Competency Based Training in Australia and Tasmania.
3. TRITB Overseas Study Report, June 1996.
4. TRITB correspondence for the period January 1990 to June 2003.

The interviewees for this case study were selected from:

Technical and Further Education (TAFE) – Tasmania

Tasmanian farmers

Department of Vocational Education and Training – Tasmania

Department of Education and Training – Commonwealth

The number interviewed was three, one of whom represented more than one category and one declined to participate.

Introduction

Case Study 3 reflects two different philosophical approaches to vocational education and training.

The first relates to the TRITB's involvement in working with the state government, through their vocational education and training department, to foster and develop a comprehensive industry policy in relation to Competency Based Training (CBT). In this case the idea was to develop CBT through an industry and departmental approach, which would meet the needs of industry but also overcome some of the identified shortcomings of the current traineeship and apprenticeship system operating in Tasmania. The Tasmanian government was seeking a consensus approach to CBT which provided positive benefits to industry and vocational delivery.

The second approach followed the election of the Howard government in 1996. The new federal minister for education was determined to impose CBT at a national level to assuage issues and concerns of the current apprenticeship "time-serving" contract, raised by major employer advocates on many occasions prior to the 1996 election, e.g. Australian Industry Group (AIG). This ultimately saw a major change in vocational training delivery in Australia in 2000 as curriculum was replaced with CBT outcomes. CBT was an imposed change to vocational education and training and its introduction did not provide the opportunity for a consensus between industry and providers as the guidelines were laid out by the federal department of education.

Defining Competency Based Training

For the purpose of this case study, CBT is an approach to vocational education and training that specifies what a person can do in the workplace as a result of completing a programme of training or as the result of workplace experience and learning. As discussed in the methodology chapter, CBT is not based on a fixed period of time for learning, rather as soon as a student has achieved or can demonstrate the required competency they are able to advance to the next competency. In this way students may be able to complete a programme of study much faster if they reach the required level of performance.

A competency standard describes work outcomes. Each unit of competency defines a specific work activity, conditions under which it is conducted and the evidence that may be gathered in order to determine whether or not the activity is being performed in a competent manner. National standards define the competencies required for effective performance in the workplace. Units of competency are determined by industry. CBT's foundation is based on the idea that people can learn transferrable skills and most training is transferrable.

Importantly, CBT recognises that many current employees may already have the skills and knowledge that will enable them to be competent without having to take part in a total training programme. These skills and knowledge may have been gained through study, self-tuition, work or life experience.

TRITB – CBT 1990 to 1993

The first reference to CBT in the TRITB board meeting minutes was in January 1990.

During the course of a discussion in relation to the 1989 Tasmanian Farm

Apprenticeship Review, the representative from the state government's Department of

Education, Industry Relations and Training (DEIRT) suggested to the board that in

DEIRT's opinion "competency based training is a logical extension of the Farm

Apprenticeship Review" (TRITB Board Minutes, January 1990).

DEIRT saw the Tasmanian rural industry as well placed to introduce CBT as the

current curriculum was underpinned by the National Farm Skills Training Guide

(NFSTG). The NFSTG Committee had analysed over 500 on-farm tasks and had

identified the skills required for each of these tasks. The NFSTG had been written as an

early form of agricultural competency standards in that tasks had been broken down to

their core components and provided the potential to assess the competence of students

and the current workforce. DEIRT advised they would assist in developing CBT, both

in the theory and practical application as it related to rural training. At the meeting, the

board formally agreed to consider the introduction of CBT training. The board minutes

record: "TRITB Executive Officer to liaise with the nominated representative from

DEIRT to prepare a memorandum for consideration by the board on why it should

support the introduction of competency based training for Tasmania in the rural sector"

(TRITB Board Minutes, January 1990).

Subsequently at the June 1990 board meeting (TRITB Board Minutes, June 1990) the

representative from DEIRT proposed a plan to deliver CBT in Tasmania. The proposal

provided information on what was involved in moving to CBT and how CBT differed

from the current curriculum system used for the Farm Apprenticeship and the Rural

Traineeship. Following this presentation, the board minutes noted “a lively debate ensued...with a number of points of concern raised by Board Members” (TRITB Board Minutes, June 1990).

These points of concern included the fact that the NFSTG was written in terms of outcomes and was similar to CBT. By standardising the Training Record Book, the on-the-job and off-the-job training outcomes could be addressed. Another issue causing concern was that the implementation of CBT would be a costly exercise, particularly in the agricultural sector. The board minutes report however that a number of board members believed “CBT may lead to a better understanding of the skills/standards required by employers to reinforce the off-the-job training” (TRITB Board Minutes, June 1990).

Following extensive discussion, the board formed a sub-committee to monitor development in CBT and how it would impact on the rural community and rural training.

The board sub-committee met in October 1990 and recommended to the TRITB board that the introduction of CBT be deferred for twelve months. This would allow an investigation into what implications this proposed change may have for rural training in Tasmania, an exploration of how CBT was to be linked into the relevant farm awards (and, if so, how?), and whether there was a need to restructure TAFE, particularly in respect to on-the-job and off-the-job assessment and the ability of Tasmanian farmers’ skills to pursue effective implementation of assessment of on-the-job training required by CBT. The TRITB board minutes reflect the issues which had been and needed to be addressed if CBT was to be introduced successfully in the Tasmanian rural community.

Whilst the board had deferred the introduction of CBT, the federal minister, using the aegis of the National Training Board (NTB) which had been formed in February 1991, suggested the development of a national policy which would allow "...workers to have their competency in a job or occupation easily assessed and recognized by employers across Australia...[and)]...where a person's ability to perform their job is recognized across State and Territory boundaries" (Minister for Employment, Education and Training, Media Release, February 1991).

The minister's NTB announcement led to the demise in interest to implement CBT only at a state level. This shift from state to national is also reflected in the TRITB minutes as subsequent references to CBT training now show a national focus. The TRITB board minutes of February 1992 show that the national body, RTCA, had taken over the development and implementation of CBT. The minutes reflect concerns raised by the RTCA in relation to CBT when they state "RTCA sees the issues to be addressed for CBT assessment will be far larger than envisaged by those proposing the competency based path" (TRITB Board Minutes, February 1992).

Whereas the board had been able to discuss with senior officers of DEIRT the implementation of CBT at a state level and endeavour to develop a policy which reflected these discussions, CBT had now become a policy development and implementation issue at a national level. The comments of the state government representatives on the TRITB board and future correspondence from DEIRT in relation to CBT reflect this change in direction in relation to the development of this new proposed vocational, education and training outcome. It reflects a belief that whilst Tasmania had previously pursued the introduction of CBT as part of the vocational training and education agenda, now that a national approach was evolving the advice to

the board from the DEIRT representative at the board meeting was “Tasmanian staff in DEIRT could be better employed in advancing and developing with industry and ITABs other relevant and important areas of vocational training” (TRITB Board Minutes, April 1992).

The ability for the board to advocate and discuss this important issue and have influence at a state level was no longer considered important and the board had to now operate in a national jurisdiction where RTCA was one of a number of bodies trying to have input into the National Training Board.

The Arrival of the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA): A New Policy Framework

As discussed in Case Study 1, in July 1992 a new body was established to supervise vocational training nationally, known as the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA). As part of its charter it subsumed the National Training Board. This meant that policy development for vocational training would now have a national outlook, and it was expected that states would respond/comment on national policy development through their national industry advisory body, which was, in the case of the rural industry, the Rural Training Council of Australia (RTCA).

It was not long after the formation of ANTA that the debate about competency standards and the recognition of competency acquisition was again being reconsidered. In August 1992, the National Framework for the Recognition of Training (NFROT) was published. In this framework it was stated that “...an individual can gain knowledge and skills from many sources” (NFROT Recognition of Prior Learning, ANTA, August 1992).

It was considered unimportant how these skills had been acquired, what was important was the acknowledgement that an individual had achieved the same outcomes or competencies and, as an interviewee stated:

...as would be expected if (they) had followed the more usual training path.

It is interesting to note that the TRITB board (TRITB Board Minutes, June 1994) recorded concern about the development of CBT at a time when the traineeship and apprenticeship implementation had been so successful. This was reflected in a discussion by the TRITB president about a proposed overseas study tour. As the board minutes record, "...the Board will be able to seek and report on the effective development and implementation of competency training" (TRITB Board Minutes, June 1994).

Whilst expressing concerns about CBT training and qualifications outcomes, the TRITB developed the new Australian "Agricultural and Veterinary Chemical" training programme which soon became known as the "Farm Chemical Training Programme" and was based on industry identified competency standards. The new chemical training programme was accredited nationally by the Tasmanian Accreditation Committee in 1994. Interestingly, the board agreed that this type of training was best delivered in CBT format in view of the identified specified industry outcomes. These outcomes were better expressed as competencies, particularly in relation to the delivery of the Farm Chemical Training Programme which comprised a theory session, a practical training session, attendance and satisfactory completion of a theory test which included two compulsory questions which had to be passed, and an on-farm practical assessment with an industry-authorised assessor. It also reflected a situation where Tasmania was at the forefront and leading Australia in the development of this important training. It

demonstrated that CBT could play an important role in vocational education and training. Industry leaders in all states and the NFF in particular recognised the TRITB's leadership in addressing this important farm chemical issue: "...NFF wrote to the board thanking them on behalf of its members- state and national commodity councils for preparing, trailing and implementing this essential programme" (TRITB Board Minutes, September 1994).

The NFF supported the TRITB undertaking this work, as local, interstate and overseas markets were beginning to impose strict regulations and legislation in respect of chemical residues in food and fibre. More broadly it was vital that Australian agriculture and horticultural producers were able to demonstrate their attendance at this training and their subsequent certification to meet the new demands from legislatures and consumers. The NFF played an important role in lobbying the relevant federal and state government departments, ensuring that they were aware of the new Farm Chemical Training Programme, how it was to be implemented and how seriously the national farm body had addressed this vital issue which may have had severe implications for Australia's agricultural exports and national earnings. The development and accreditation of this national programme in Tasmania raised some concerns at the RTCA. The RTCA board at their November meeting (RTCA Minutes, November 1994) expressed criticisms to the TRITB along the line that the TRITB board had usurped the NTB principles in that these national standards had been developed and accredited at a state level, yet these new chemical competencies had relevance to all farming enterprises in Australia. The NFF advised the RTCA that the issue of farm chemical training was so important, they were delighted that Tasmania had shown initiative to address this serious problem. The NFF advised the RTCA they

were not interested in “turf wars”, rather it was vital to tackle this important issue in the face of criticisms and concerns from overseas agricultural markets and consumer advocates. It should be noted that this training programme was arguably the most successful ever implemented in the Australian agriculture sector with over 400,000 participants and the majority certified as competent (TRITB Board Minutes, January 1995; April 1995; June 1995; January 1996; June 2004).

1996 and the Election of the Howard Government

In March 1996, the Liberal Party, led by John Howard, defeated the incumbent, Prime Minister Paul Keating, at the federal election. Part of the Liberal election manifesto recommended major changes to the current delivery of vocational education and training in Australia. The Liberal Party had received many representations from the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) and the Australian Industry Group (AIG) prior to the election, and commitments were made that, if elected, vocational education and training would move from time-serving, curriculum-based outcomes to a competency-based system which recognised acquired skills and did away with the fixed-time serving element. It also sought to acknowledge skills acquisition of the existing workforce.

The new Howard government moved rapidly on that front and by May 1996 the Department of Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA) and ANTA promulgated the outline of the “Modern Australian Apprenticeship and Traineeship System” (MAATS). This new system was developed by DEETYA, ANTA, ACCI and AIG with very minor input from other industry bodies such as the NFF and, as the board papers indicate, little interest was shown at a federal level by the minister and his staff for views that were contrary.

MAATS aimed to expand employment opportunities and increase competitiveness by enhancing workforce skills. MAATS sought to shift away from the highly detailed national curriculum to the development of training packages based on industry competency standards. These changes, it was argued, could be used to enhance the skills of the current workforce. The changes would be reflected in the development of training packages which would incorporate standards, learning strategies, assessment and links to the Australian Qualification Framework. More importantly, the new MAATS system decreed that vocational education and training should be led by industry so that training standards and delivery were directly relevant to an employer's requirements. This approach fitted with the federal government's belief that enterprises should drive the training agenda, and industry was to determine the relevant standards. Accordingly, training approval at a state/territory level was to be delegated to enterprises and industry. MAATS aimed also to remove the artificial distinction of time serving that currently existed between the traineeship (1 year) and apprenticeships (4 years). Rather, completion of competencies would lead to a qualification and recognition of skills acquired in the workplace. It was argued this would lead to a greater commitment to employment-based training.

Another key element of the MAATS announcement was the expansion of school/industry links which would allow students participating in VET-accredited arrangements to progress, with credit transfer, into traineeships and apprenticeships. This would see the development of school-industry programmes and traineeships involving part school and part work placement. This initiative would be supported by the Commonwealth/states, through ANTA, to ensure ongoing funding to sustain this

new programme. The following diagram, Figure 5.1, illustrates the differences between the “old indentured system” and the proposed MAATS system.

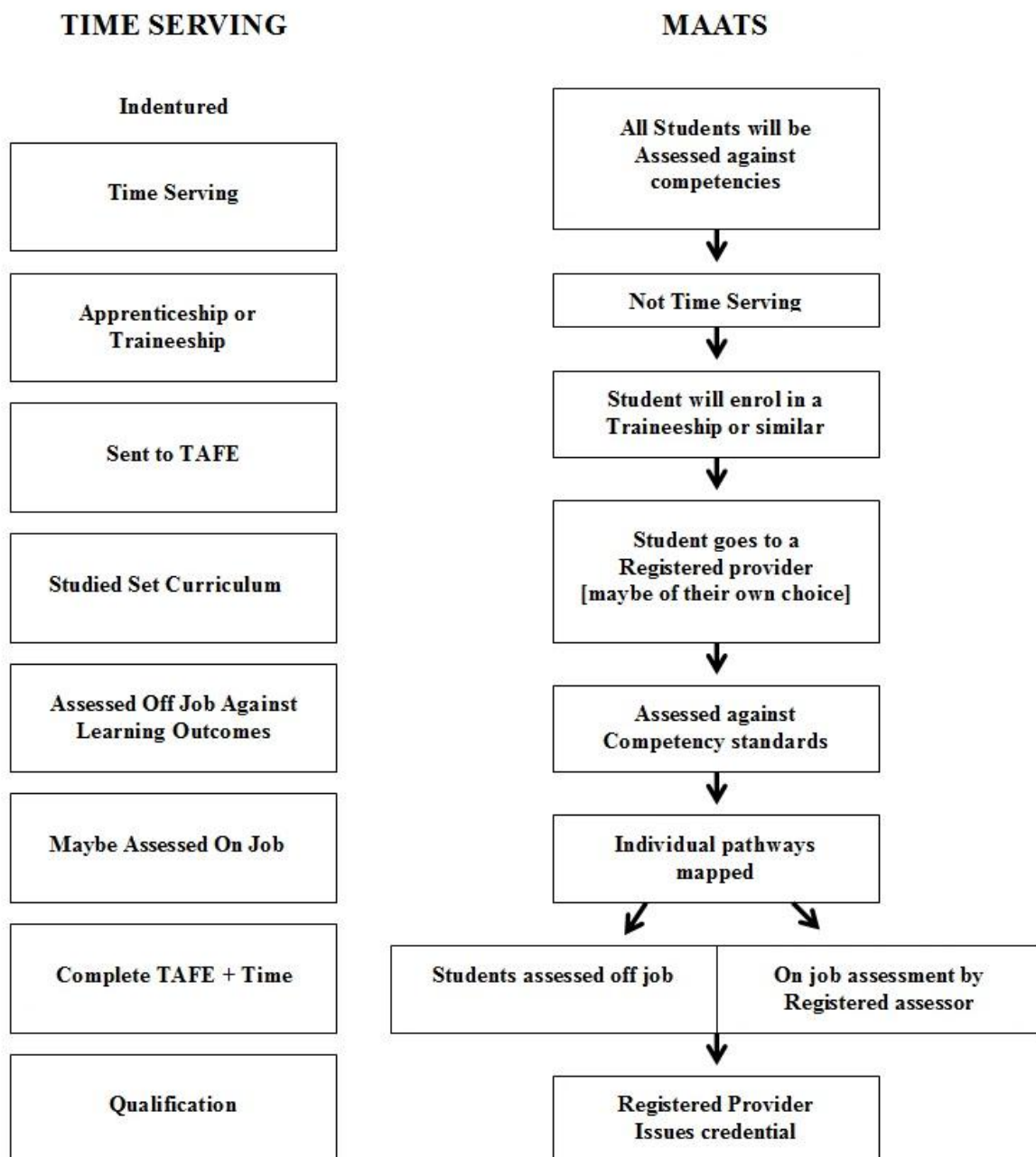


Figure 5.1: Competency Based Training Compared to the Apprenticeship/Traineeship,

Diagram source: S.R.Zichy-Woinarski, 2013

TRITB – Overseas Study Tour 1996

The new MAATS outline was issued by ANTA in May 1996. The board had approved an overseas study tour to be undertaken by the TRITB president and the executive officer. In approving the study tour, the board set down a number of tasks and requirements to be considered, especially in light of the recent change in the federal government. The relevant components for this case study are:

- procedures for accreditation, articulation, retraining, assessment and general preparation for continuing education
- approaches to assessment of courses and candidates
- the mechanisms for credit transfer and certification, and how, with competency based training
- how relative competency levels are determined and recorded
- consideration of competency based curriculum, both the process and industry's role in evaluation (TRITB Overseas Study Tour, 1996, p. 3).

The president and the executive officer left for the tour at the end of April 1996 and returned in the first week of June. The experience gained from the tour was reported to the board at its June 1996 meeting (TRITB Board Minutes, June 1996). The report led to some forthright discussions in relation to the recent MAATS promulgation by ANTA, particularly the recommendations which related to the findings on competency development in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

On the overseas study tour there were discussions with the British Education Department with regard to the British General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ). The GNVQ qualification had been introduced to schools with the aim of

raising the status of vocational education in the UK and was to sit alongside the British General Certificate of Education. It can be argued that the GNVQ was a forerunner of the Australian government's MAATS proposal. Like Australia, the GNVQ had as its main objective to provide a valued alternative to the GCE A Level. In 1995 Sir Ron Dearing had been asked to prepare a report to the UK government on qualifications for 16–19 year olds. The pertinent section in the report, and its implications for Australia, MAATS and the development of vocational education and training within the school environment, was when Dearing stated:

...GNVQ...and the qualification is not strictly speaking vocational. It does not provide for a trade or profession but rather education in the application of knowledge and understanding to a broad area of industrial or commercial life and the development of general skills valued in the workplace. (Dearing, 1996, p. 2)

This suggested to the TRITB board that the issue should be raised with ANTA and the federal minister with the recommendation:

...that the current Australian Student Traineeship Foundation (part of MAATS) programme be viewed in the light of the Dearing Report and that it should be restructured to address some of the issues identified which have so much applicability to the MAATS proposed education programme. (TRITB Overseas Study Tour, 1996, p. 6).

The other issue in the overseas study report that is relevant to this case study was one raised in the Beaumont Report (Beaumont, 1995) which looked at the United Kingdom's vocational and education competency standards. The Beaumont Report

placed particular emphasis on the quality of assessment and Beaumont recommended there needed to be improvements in the assessment process and that costs needed reduced.

Dearing (1996) also acknowledged that there was an overriding need to ensure that employers, employees and education and training establishments were involved in the development of the competency standards. Beaumont had previously reinforced Dearing's (1996) comments in respect of the competency standards when he stated "if employers want standards to reflect their needs, they must become involved" (Beaumont, 1995, p. 24).

The board forwarded copies of the overseas report to the federal and state education ministers, the secretary of the Department of Education, Training, and Youth Affairs and ANTA as they felt that the information gathered on the overseas study tour, particularly in England and Scotland, may be of assistance in the evolution of the new training system. Unfortunately the board's belief in the value of the report was not supported by the federal minister, who thanked the board for the report, and he had noted the board's comments but as MAATS was being developed by the federal government for vocational education and training in Australia he saw little benefit in considering the experiences that had been gained in relation to competency standards and qualifications during the overseas study tour. The federal minister also stated that he thought that the board's findings had little applicability in the new evolving paradigm.

The state minister thanked the board for the report but stated that he was awaiting the development of the new national system and his role at a state level would be implementation of MAATS.

The board minutes of April 1997 note the disappointment in the federal minister's response as the board considered the findings of the overseas study tour important to the future development of vocational education and training in the new competency era. Consequently the board advocated to both RTCA and NFF to have the recommendations of the report considered but, as the president reported to the board following the May RTCA meeting, NFF at that time did not regard education and training as a priority part of their mandate, being more concerned with trade, economic and other issues which they saw had a more immediate effect on Australian farmers (TRITB Board Minutes, June 1997). This meant that the issues raised by the overseas study report did not have the backing of the leading farmer group advocate and, as a result, the matters raised in the report were regarded as irrelevant by the minister and his department as they were based on experiences in overseas countries. The TRITB board found the minister's response shortsighted, especially as part of the MAATS system in relation to CBT was based on the German system of apprenticeships. Members of the board "...at the June 1997 meeting expressed their annoyance and disbelief that the federal minister did not consider the board's advice".

The Minister had been influenced by the major employer groups as to how the new MAATS system was to be implemented and the federal education minister was not prepared to consider any contrary advice.

With the benefit of hindsight, if notice had been taken of the overseas study report, many of the issues which arose in the development of national competency standards

may have been overcome or at least led to modifications in the proposed system for Australia. The disappointing aspect from the board's point of view was that, as expressed during an interview:

...the change [CBT] was imposed, the current system did not manage the change process as it was being implemented and our industry advice was not accepted by the Minister.

The evidence presented here suggests that the agricultural industry, like most other industry sectors, did not have the same political clout as the ACCI/AIG and the board's report had no impact on the evolving process.

TRITB – Dairy Traineeship 1997

During 1996 some criticism had been made about the Dairy Traineeship. This had arisen partly because of the successful implementation of the Farm Chemical Training Programme and it was felt that some of the lessons learnt from this programme could be used to reconsider how the Dairy Traineeship should be delivered. Dairy farmers reviewed the current Dairy Traineeship and recommended to the board that “the ‘off-job’ component should be reduced from 10 to 6 weeks. The balance— 4 weeks—would be taught ‘on the job’ by the particular dairy farmer (TRITB Board Minutes September 1996; January 1997).

It was also decided by the board, in consultation with the TFGA Dairy Council, that delivery of the training would be curriculum based to ensure the trainees were taught the underpinning theory but assessment in both on-the-job and off-the-job modes would be competency based. Whilst the board and the TFGA Dairy Council supported this

change in delivery, the Tasmanian Accreditation and Recognition Committee (TAReC) would not approve the proposal as it was not based on the MAATS principles and the move to competency based training. TAReC stated it would only support the modified Dairy Traineeship if the modules were written in competency based format. The board was unable to agree to this as the national agricultural competency standards were in the process of being developed. The Dairy Council member on the TRITB board expressed disappointment with this decision, particularly as a large number of Tasmanian dairy farmers had been involved in the development process and they saw this as a logical progression from the current Dairy Traineeship. The TRITB believed the proposed amended Dairy Traineeship addressed competency training issues identified in the overseas study report (TRITB Board Minutes, June 1996; September 1996; January 1997; April 1997; June 1997).

1997–2004 – Development of National Competency Standards for the Agricultural and Horticultural Industry

The federal minister had stated that National Competency Standards were to be developed by the national industry advisory bodies. This decision was surprising as the Howard government had stated it would be more co-operative with the states and delegate more to them. In this instance however, the federal minister centralised the development of the industry competency standards, arguing that this was a national development and a major change in the delivery of vocational education and training. The states and territories would be responsible for the implementation of these national changes. The federal minister agreed that it was his department which was funding the competency developments and, because of its importance to the skills development in

Australia, a centralised approach would ensure commonality of the new standards across the Australian workforce.

This edict meant that the development of the competency standards in the agricultural and horticultural industries was to be undertaken by the Rural Training Council of Australia (RTCA). The RTCA appointed a number of consultants to work with industry representatives to develop the national agricultural and horticultural competency standards. The role of the state bodies—in the case of Tasmania, the TRITB—was to have the developed competency standards validated by industry and vocational deliverers.

The first of the proposed competency standards developed by the RTCA was received in December 1997 (TRITB Board Minutes, January 1998). In March 1998, the Tasmanian State Training Authority (TASTA) issued guidelines in respect of the implementation of the new training packages. The implementation outline was based on the newly developed national competency standards and training organisations and state ITABs were advised that competency standards developed in the state would not be approved by TASTA unless supported by the relevant National ITAB (TASTA, 18 March 1998).

At the April TRITB board meeting (TRITB Board Minutes, April 1998) the new National Agricultural Training Package (NATP) was launched by TRITB's acting president. During the launch the acting president stated that the NATP was a training tool consisting of 900 units of competence which reflected the full spectrum of activity in Australian agriculture, and that these units of competence expressed definitions of skill and knowledge expectation and that it provided pathways to progress people in the

industry. The board minutes reflect the concerns of the TRITB president and issues which had been raised by a number of board members and industry representatives prior to the launch of the NATP, including the lack of opportunity that TRITB or Tasmanian farmers had been given to undertake a state validation process of the NATP. In brief, TRITB board members and industry representatives felt the NATP had been imposed on Tasmania (TRITB Board Minutes, April 1998).

By the September board meeting (TRITB Board Minutes, September 1998) the outline in respect of the implementation of the NATP in Tasmania had been agreed by industry, the union and the Registered Training Organisation (RTO)—i.e. TAFE Tasmania. Implementation of the NATP was to commence on 1 January 1999, and the existing Rural Traineeship and Farm Apprenticeship would be taught out over the remaining indentured period. All existing contracts of training would be completed by 31 December 2000 (TRITB Board Minutes, September 1998).

The board raised concerns with the RTCA as to how the NATP was to be implemented and, in response, the RTCA provided the TRITB with funds to undertake 25 community meetings around Tasmania in February/March 1999 (TRITB Board Minutes, September 1998). This initiative was to be supported by a newspaper advertising campaign and the rural section of the ABC. During February/March 1999, 26 statewide meetings were held, including Flinders Island and King Island, attended by only 110 persons. In the report to the board (TRITB Board Minutes, April 1999) concern was expressed about the low attendance to the well-advertised meetings. Board members advised that the feedback they had received from farmers indicated that they had difficulty in understanding why the changes had been made to vocational training and the impositions of these changes from Canberra. As one board member expressed,

“farmers are not confident with this new system, they have not had any input and feel they have no ownership. Why are we changing our present successful system?”

(TRITB Board Minutes, April 1999).

These comments summed up many of the comments made at the statewide meetings or those that emerged during conversations with Tasmanian farmers. It was recognised nationally that the current Tasmanian agricultural training system provided well-trained employees and Tasmanian farmers could not see how the new system would improve on the current outcomes.

Review of the National Agricultural Training Package (NATP)

Even though the board had implemented the NATP at the beginning of January 1999, by July 1999 ANTA had decided that all national ITABs should undertake a review of their current training packages. This decision was made because many industries queried the effectiveness of the developed packages, the suitability of the developed training materials and the level of acceptance of the current NATP and other training packages.

The board also supported the proposed ANTA review as there had been many weaknesses identified in the current NATP. For example, the TRITB board minutes (September 1999) noted that there were insufficient funds to deliver quality training to meet the NATP. Many board members had previously, at the June 1999 board meeting, expressed a view that “the proposed review by ANTA of the NATP reflected the lack of consultation at a State level and the failure to include practising farmers in the process” (TRITB Board Minutes, June 1999).

Subsequently the RTCA appointed consultants to undertake a review of the current NATP. One of the areas which had received criticism from industry and RTOs was with respect to the competency standards. The consultants found that many involved in the industry believed the current competency standards tended to reflect a task in a “holistic” manner in that the competency standards had broken down a task into its many constituent parts and did not reflect how each of these competencies were part of the framework which reflected the whole task (often referred to the debate between lumpers and splitters). RTOs also expressed concern regarding the apparent lack of theory and underpinning knowledge within a competence. The consultants spent most of the year 2000 reviewing and rewriting the NATP (TRITB Board Minutes, January 2000; April 2000; June 2000; September 2000).

In early 2001, the board was informed that the newly revamped NATP was ready to be reviewed. Tasmania was expected to convene and facilitate statewide workshops to allow industries and organisations an opportunity to participate in a comprehensive consultation of the reviewed/rewritten NATP. Initially 10 industry meetings were arranged across the state, in the end a total of 16 meetings were held, attended by 121 persons. This result was disappointing as the board had posted out 1,104 letters to farmers, RTOs, group training companies, TFGA Commodity Councils and New Apprenticeship Centres. In his report to the board, the executive officer noted:

Tasmanian farmers have voted with their feet, their lack of attendance at these important meetings would indicate a failure by the authorities to emphasis the new approach to VET, in my opinion it indicates the success of the current system here in Tasmania. (TRITB Board Minutes, February 2002)

As one of the interviewees reflected:

...a new training system was being imposed on the state and which had no relevance as it did not reflect Tasmania's unique agriculture training.

Constant comparison was made about the different consultation processes with respect to the first Rural Traineeships in 1989 and the new MAATS system. More broadly, many of those who attended were not convinced that MAATS was an improvement on the old indentured system (TRITB Board Minutes, February 2002).

As an interviewee pointed out:

...CBT as an education and vocation training policy was doomed, it failed to realise it was dealing with disperse/rural population who had particular needs, especially in relation to the farm sector.

And another:

...the change was imposed by organisations and the federal government on a system of vocational education and training which did not take into account or understand the needs of rural Australia.

The board minutes reflect disappointment in relation to the thorough examination of the new competencies and indicate over 500 suggested amendments. The board input was ignored at a national level with a trite comment "Tasmanian nit picking" (RTCA correspondence to TRITB, March 2002).

Conclusion

The development of Competency Based Training (CBT) was a difficult task. CBT imposed a new system of vocational training and unlike the traineeship system it was a long and costly exercise. Following its implementation, there are still arguments about the CBT system and the NATP. There are others in Tasmania who still consider the approach taken in the proposed dairy traineeship would have overcome many of the issues which have haunted CBT implementation. As one of the interviewees reflected:

Tasmania with Queensland understood the importance of the traineeship process, the Farm Chemical training programme showed how curriculum could be married with competencies, the proposed Dairy Traineeship advanced that idea.

A number of relevant policy and practical issues arise from this case study which will be drawn together in the discussion of the case studies. The major and important issues which will be expanded later in the thesis relate to:

Advocacy

CBT was imposed “top down” and organisations at state level were given little chance to have input into the proposal. Also the national advocate in the agricultural sector did not place education as a high priority on its agenda. Advocacy was attempted by Tasmanian organisations but unfortunately with little success.

Boundary Crossers

the new system did not have persons in place who could liaise effectively and be seen as credible, particularly those associated with the national industry organisations and those who worked within the federal government or the federal

education and training department. Apart from the development of the Farm Chemical Training Programme, there was little evidence of boundary crossing.

Leadership

RTCA/NFF provided little leadership in the implementation of CBT. Rather they followed the instructions they received from the federal government and ANTA and used this as the basis of communication with the state. Yet Tasmania was able to develop and implement the Farm Chemical Training Programme to meet an important industry need.

Social Capital

there was little relevant bonding or bridging social capital available to be used as the Tasmanian advocates opposing the system did not have credibility, except in the case of the Farm Chemical Training Programme.

Adult Learning

this new system had the opportunity to embrace new adult teaching techniques. Instead, a considerable amount of time and effort was spent on competency development.

Chapter 6: Discussion

The introductory sections in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 of this thesis provide a background to the continuing evolution of rural communities, their supporting rural industries and rural Australia. This ongoing evolution continued during the Hawke, Keating and Howard governments' era—1983–2007—when they embarked, as McLean (2013) indicates, on a comprehensive national programme to improve prosperity and undertake significant economic reforms. Part of these policy reforms sought to address Australia's rising unemployment, particularly among those in the 16–25 years old bracket, through exposing the closed Australian market to international competition, and raising productivity as a result of improved education and skills acquisition across the whole farming sector. These federal government policy initiatives have a major bearing on the three case studies.

As has been indicated previously in Chapter 1, one of the main reasons for the board's formation was the need to address the issue of skills formation in the rural sector of Tasmania, both for employers and employees. Both the employer body TFGA and the employee body AWU recognised the need to ensure Tasmanian farmers and their employees embraced and understood the advancements in agriculture and horticulture skills needs and changing technology which were occurring in the Australian primary industry sector. New and improved skills acquisition was seen by Australian farmers and their farmer organisations and the special commodity interest groups across the nation as vital to improving productivity, containing increased input costs whilst competing on world commodity markets to sell their output (RTCA, 1988; McLean, 2013). Skills acquisition was regarded as important for the continuing health of

Australian rural communities. In addressing skills formation, education practitioners needed to address this issue within the context of then current Australian farming practice.

For this reason the first section of Chapter 3, the literature review, discusses the topic of adult learning and effective delivery. The rural audience for skills formation ranges from new employees to many older farmers. Skills formation and training programmes also need to reflect the accepted industry based competency standards (Preez, 1984; Zichy-Woinarski, 2001).

In addressing how skills formation for rural communities could be undertaken, the literature review delineates various approaches such as the traditional classroom approach; part-theory-part-practice; use of training coordinators; consideration and use of training brokers, and finally the need to consider new technologies such as e-learning, self-paced learning, and internet resources such as YouTube videos. All of these alternatives and potential delivery methods need to be weighed against their costs so that rural skills formation provides the best use of scarce training dollars and the training programme—whether it be public or private provision and targeted at employee or employer—leads to positive benefits for the individuals and businesses and ideally also an increase in the community social capital (Putnam, 2000).

The three case studies were chosen from a number of possible case studies, revealed through analysis of the board minutes, which illustrated how the board attempted to improve rural skills in the period 1984–2004 under governments of different political persuasions. The cases also illustrate the ideas, methods and considerations undertaken by the board in an endeavour to improve rural skills and deliver them to the widest

possible applicable audience. The case studies also indicate both successes and barriers of which policy makers, those representing the interests of rural communities and practitioners need to be cognisant.

This discussion chapter reflects on the overarching and subordinate research questions in the context of linking the study's findings to the extant literature. The principal aim of the research was to undertake a critical analysis of vocational education and training policy as it applied to rural industries in the period 1984–2004. To address the research questions, there was a need also to consider how rural and related industries have influenced VET, how the VET provision that resulted from this influence met the needs of rural industries and how this analysis can inform future policy settings.

The use of elements of a grounded theory approach, did not contribute any substantial themes, rather this focused the attention on the multi-faceted operation of boundary crossers which is discussed in depth in a later section of this chapter. The chapter is therefore divided into a number of sections, all of which represent the themes which emerged during the literature review. The first section relates to adult learning and effective delivery which is an essential starting point in the consideration of skills formation particularly in a diverse and geographically spread client group that represents rural communities and Australian rural enterprises. The importance of this starting point is reflected in the lengthy discussion in this section. The second section considers the importance of social capital and how skills formation, education and training may improve the social capital of a rural community. The third section presents a discussion on the issue of leadership and reflects on the role the board and its members played in advancing rural education, training and skills formation. The fourth

section considers the role of advocacy or lobbying in advancing issues in rural Australia and the difficulties faced by rural communities in competing with highly paid industry advocates who seek to influence the current state or federal government toward their stated policy goals. The data analysis approach drawing on aspects of grounded theory, assisted in revealing the most significant finding in this thesis: that is; the role of boundary crossing organisations in influencing policy. It is argued that if boundary crossers are able to understand and then meld differing views into a direction that is accepted by all relevant parties, they have an important role—whether they be individuals or organisations—in advancing the cause for rural communities and their related industries. The discussion around boundary crossers would suggest that the role of organisations such as the board have been under-acknowledged in the literature. The case studies indicate how coordinating and representative organisations, those with accepted credibility, can act as the interface between a number of other bodies in order to achieve desired outcomes of their constituency. The sections of this chapter consider the case studies in relation to the literature and the lessons or issues they expose that are so relevant for the positive outcome of skills formation, particularly in rural Australia.

Adult Learning and Effective Delivery

In addition to the central role of boundary crossers, which is discussed at the end of this chapter, is the need for successful projects such as those presented in the first two case studies to draw on adult learning and effective delivery principles to address skills formation and knowledge transfer for a wide, diverse audience in rural and regional Australia. In this context the case studies confirm the evidence presented in the literature review about adult learning and effective delivery. Each of the case studies

demonstrates practical application of the ideas enunciated in the literature review, and this section will discuss the effectiveness of adult learning and delivery methods adopted/proposed in the three case studies.

Chapters 1 and 2 outlined the evolution and development of vocational training in Australia and in particular the context in which industry training boards emerged.

Chapters 1 and 2 also described the board's origins and genesis, particularly as a body to oversee and promote training relevant to, and needed for, rural industry training in Tasmania. The board, as previously stated, was created with two guiding objectives:

1. Improvement of professional, managerial, technical and general knowledge and skills of all persons employed in the agriculture and rural industry in Tasmania, and
2. To conduct, contribute to, or co-operate in conducting classes, courses, seminars and workshops.

These objectives were relevant in considering how training and education was delivered in each of the case studies. Each of the case studies is predicated on a different learning and delivery model that matched the target audience of the training. The programme in Case Study 1, the National Rural Traineeship (CS1 – NRT) was developed based on the sentiments behind Keating's "Working Nation" speech when he sought to provide assistance to persons who were unemployed, and aged between 16–25 years. Case Study 2's programme, A New Taxation System – GST (CS2 – ANTS – GST) addressed a different type of audience, namely practising farmers who needed to understand the new taxation system, how it would affect their business and in particular the new accounting method required in their farm books. On the other hand,

the Competency Based Training programme in Case Study 3 (CS3 – CBT) required a comprehensive approach to ascertaining what knowledge and skills the student (for this discussion students were aged between 16–75 years) had gained through lifelong learning and, as the result of an assessment process, identifying the skills and knowledge gaps which needed to be addressed. The case studies of the three policy initiatives will be discussed in turn.

CS1 – NRT provided vocational skills and training to unemployed youth aged between 16 and 25 years. The Tasmanian and Queensland development of traineeships in the agricultural sector from 1986 onwards had identified the importance of combining “on and off” job education and training and this approach was supported by the TAFE colleges, as well as each state’s vocational training sector—in Tasmania this was overseen by DEIRT. The “on and off” job training contexts and the centrality of the combination to the traineeship delivery have previously been discussed in Case Study 1 and the combination’s importance to the traineeship delivery highlighted. Whether the students were involved in the intensive or extensive agricultural traineeship, students learnt identified skills at a vocational college reinforced by practical training sessions as part of their off-the-job education. The students would then return to their rural employer and put those acquired skills and knowledge into practice in an on-farm work situation, as found to be effective in previous research (Tynjala, 2008; Jacob, 2003; Dymock & Gerber, 2002).

The experience of successfully developing, designing and implementing a traineeship in Tasmania is supported in the case study by reference to the extensive evaluations undertaken that provided evidence of positive outcomes for employers, trainees and

training staff as well as making suggestions to improve the overall delivery. The most important of these suggestions was the employment of a rural training consultant who—as the case study notes—provided liaison between farmer, trainee and the “off-the-job” deliverer and ensured all parties to the traineeship understood their roles and responsibilities.

An opportunity arose for the board to discuss the development of a National Rural Traineeship (NRT) with the federal minister for employment, education and training. It was as a result of that meeting that the minister agreed that the NRT would include both “on and off”-the-job education and training components.

CS1 – NRT addressed the context of learning as shown schematically in the “Purpose of Learning Diagram” (Falk, Kilpatrick & Morgan, 1997) in the design of the training, as it sought to implement a training programme to address issues raised in Keating’s “One Nation” speech (1994).

The federal minister, following the board’s representation, allowed the NRT to extend outside the Keating age guidelines. The proposed NRT would be delivered to unemployed persons between 16–25 years (TRITB Executive Minutes, August 1994). It was agreed to use the current Tasmania Traineeship syllabus as the base, but it was acknowledged that additional skills may need to be added to ensure a national traineeship curriculum (TRITB Board Minutes, September 1994). Nationwide consultation was undertaken with the state ITABs, state farming organisations, NFF and state training departments and additional modules were added in the process (TRITB Board Minutes, September 1994). Further modules were added as required in the period 1995–2000.

This menu of skills provided potential employers the opportunity to tailor the other skills to their farm enterprises. It also forced vocational deliverers to provide “off-the-job” training at times which suited the employers’ farm cycle. The NRT aligned with Kelly’s (1994) observation that the delivery of both “off-the-job” and “on-the-job” training must be tailored to meet farm enterprise operational needs. Kelly’s comments were considered of utmost importance by the board and the syllabus developers, as it was acknowledged that the diversity of agricultural enterprises across the Australian nation meant that no hard-and-fast rules could be laid down as to how the traineeship was to be delivered, designed or implemented in each state (Rothwell, 1987; Tovey, 1997; Rural Health Education Foundation, 2007). In this sense the developers provided flexibility for training deliverers and employees so that the “on and off job” components met the enterprises’ busy and non-busy periods (Jacobs, 2002; Dymock & Gruber, 2002; Tynjala, 2008).

Fundamental to the development of the NRT was the understanding that the training approach required delivery “off-the-job” and this was reinforced by vocational institutes providing the underpinning theory and skills practice in a controlled environment prior to the students returning to their employer. This was required as the NRT was developed to ensure younger persons acquired some life skills, understood the work ethic and became work-ready (Jacob, 2003). This approach was based on the lessons learned in delivering, designing and implementing the rural traineeship in Tasmania which has been previously discussed in the case study.

Whilst the NRT was based on assisting youth, it was vitally important to provide the employers with some idea of their role and responsibilities. The NRT was flexible in

that it allowed for training to be contextualised for the variety of agricultural contexts in Australia. Each state approached this in a different manner, which in turn reflects the diversity of agriculture in this vast country. Most states developed their own learning material to assist employers, based around the Tasmanian and Queensland experience in designing and implementing their learning materials in the years between 1986 and 1994. As Tennant and Pogson (1996) point out, it was important for employers to understand the distinction between the “on-the-job” and “off-the-job” training and reinforcement in practical situations.

The other point essential to the success of CS1 – NRT was the board’s oversight in ensuring that the learning materials met the needs of the student but could also be understood and adopted by the employer. As Preez (1984) indicates, the learning experience, whether “on-the-job” or “off-the-job”, needs to relate to acquisition of new skills and technologies which are relevant to the particular rural enterprise. In essence, CS1 – NRT was based around an agreed delivery between the trainee, employer and the vocational institute, with the training and educational learning materials reflecting this approach.

In summary, the NRT’s success was due to the board’s demonstrated understanding of effective training delivery approaches in the context of rural industries. The board’s expertise was acquired from the development of the rural traineeship in Tasmania and the fine tuning which resulted from the continuous evaluation the board undertook to ensure the traineeship was delivering for both Tasmanian farmers and the trainees employed across the state. Of particular importance was the advice provided by the rural training consultant, who was in constant touch with the employers, trainees and

the “off-the-job” training provider. The consultant could quickly alert the board of particular issues and problems which needed to be addressed. The board’s expertise was recognised at both state and federal level, particularly by DEIRT, DEET and RTCA, and also acknowledged by the other states’ farming organisations. The lessons learned, particularly through the continuous evaluations of the traineeship in Tasmania, provided the building blocks to address the implementation of the NRT.

Unlike CS1 – NRT, the audience for CS2 – ANTS – GST was farmers and their rural enterprises. Because they had more experience of farming and farm business management than the young trainees who were the NRT learners, in CS2 a different approach was needed in developing and preparing the learning programme and educational materials. Also, as reported in the case study, one of the objectives in developing this programme was to consider the diversity of learning experiences found in Australian rural enterprises and the educational qualifications of the management team.

The ANTS – GST training programme provided an opportunity to test some ideas which Griffin and Zichy-Woinarski (1996) had brought back from the TRITB overseas study tour. The training design and delivery ideas they observed in operation were consistent with the recommendations of Tennant and Pogson (1996) for good practice. They saw the importance of establishing relationships between the learner and the facilitator. Foley (1995) also stressed the importance of trainers understanding the clientele with whom they are working.

How establishing relationships between the learner and the facilitator was addressed was vitally important in CS2 – ANTS – GST, as farmers needed new skills to handle

the changes proposed by the federal government. These changes were considered to be the most radical taxation changes since the High Court had, in 1943, established the right of the Commonwealth to have priority over the states in respect of income tax.

Prattley (2008) states that people working in the agricultural sector have a lower level of formal tertiary qualifications which is affirmed in Table 1.3 of the introductory Chapter 1, and that in 2004 only around 7% had a degree compared to 22% for the whole population, despite a relative increase in the period of interest to this thesis, 1984–2004. There had been an improvement in post-secondary education attainment in the same period but it was estimated that 60% of the agricultural workforce at that time remained untrained and had low educational experience. The board recognised that this was an important consideration in the development of any training programme. In developing the training programme it was necessary for a strong relationship to be established between the learner and facilitator, whilst ensuring that the developers were aware of the range of educational experiences and differences between the participants. Developers needed to respond to this complexity (Foley, 1995; Tennant & Pogson, 1996). The developers also understood the importance of the recommendations made by Kilpatrick (1997) who indicated that farmers learnt best when programmes were delivered locally and by credible facilitators, with a preference for short flexible courses based on action learning. As noted in CS2, the development of the proposed training programme provided an opportunity to use local training coordinators as it was considered this would improve the uptake of the ANTS – GST programme (Griffin & Zichy-Woinarski, 1996). The importance placed on the use of local trainers was evidenced by the ANTS – GST Tasmanian steering committee appointing 29 local area coordinators who organised the local delivery of the programme which, as the evaluator

pointed out, "...gave a local focus to the activity and ownership" (TRITB Board Minutes, July 2000).

Based on consideration of the research mentioned above, the ANTS – GST training had to ensure that the GST programme was delivered in a way that encouraged farmers to participate in the programme. The developers were aware that delivery needed to be problem-based and practical. They were able to make the essential connection between the training activities and the on-farm context so that training sessions were effective and provided a foundation for rural enterprises to understand the complexity of the issues to be addressed and the implications for the bookkeeping/accounting aspects of their particular operation.

In essence, the programme in CS2 – ANTS – GST, which conveyed a major government-imposed change, was delivered through interactive training across Australia. It sought to apply best practices as Griffin and Zichy-Woinarski (1996) had observed particularly in the United Kingdom and Canada. This approach—short, sharp and focused practical training sessions—was successful and, as the TRITB board minutes of June 2000 report, "...participants generally left the workshops with greater confidence in their ability to meet the requirement of the new legislation".

Essentially, success was due to the board ensuring there was planned and deliberate attention to good practice in designing the training to meet the needs of adult learners.

CS3 – CBT reflects a major change in the delivery of vocational training in Australia. Competency based training has had fundamental implications for the delivery of vocational education and training. As a concept, CBT fits broadly with Knowles et al.'s (1998) view of adult learning as associated with practical intelligence and practical

thinking and suggests that adults are able to learn for themselves as a result of their own personal cognitive abilities.

CBT sought to shift away from a highly detailed national curriculum and proposed the development of training packages based on industry competency standards. The training packages would incorporate standards, learning strategies, assessment and links to the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF). More importantly these new packages and standards were to be driven by industry.

CS3 – CBT embraces a new approach to vocational training. For the first time in Australia, training and education was to be delivered around industry-based competency standards which formally designated the industry skills relating to a particular task (Zichy-Woinarski, 2000). This was an entirely different concept to the previous curriculum based delivery which had been the norm since vocational institutions had been created following the Kangan Report (1974). CBT required both employers and the training body to take into account the individuals' learning style and how this might be enhanced by the delivery mechanism. Resulting from the federal minister's desire to proceed in this direction, the case study analysed the ramifications of this new vocational approach and how it was implemented and considered by the board and Tasmanian farmers. As has been previously noted by Knowles et al. (1998), training must incorporate an understanding of the cognitive process and how to enhance the learning process when dealing with real-life problems or tasks. As a result there was a requirement to consider the delivery methodology, the need for training to be based on the relevant industry competency standards, and to consider how assessment would be undertaken (Zichy-Woinarski, 2000).

In addition to the above, another finding which had a major impact on those developing the CBT was to regard lifelong learning experiences as equal to, or even more important than, designing the training to assist new entrants to industry. Also, as the TRITB board minutes of 2001, 2002 and 2003 pointed out, while the underpinning skills and theory were important to new entrants, they were not considered to be important by employers. Rather the employers preferred to identify the skills an employee needed in order to become competent in their current job. The implementation of CBT saw vocational delivery and assessment that was tailored only to meet the individuals' immediate needs in order to perform particular tasks and in many instances the underpinning theory or understanding was not comprehended by learners (Zichy-Woinarski, 2000).

Appropriate design of learning and delivery materials became a difficult issue for rural industries to address in this case study. On the one hand, skill shortages were identified and taken into account in the workplace, yet at the same time vocational education deliverers were having difficulty providing an appropriate single comprehensive overview of the material because of the diversity of competencies which needed to be taken into consideration for individual trainees in the workplace. As the TRITB board minutes (June 2002) state succinctly, "...a considerable amount of time and effort was spent on competency development and very little on support and delivery material".

Comparing and Contrasting Adult Learning and Delivery as they relate to the Case Studies

The provision of adult learning opportunities and effective delivery requires an understanding of the audience for the learning (Knowles et al., 1998: Hansman, 2008).

From its gestation in 1984, one of the board's key strengths was its insistence on spending a great deal of time in addressing how training and education would be undertaken and what delivery mechanism would be used in delivering the proposed training (TRITB Board Minutes, August 1984; February 1985). In CS2 – ANTS – GST the two-stage programme was trialed before delivery to the wider audience and in the presence of an evaluator whose input led to some extensive changes. The more formal CS1 – NRT was based around previous traineeships in Queensland and Tasmania, but both states had regularly evaluated them to ensure their relevance to the “on-the-job” and “off-the-job” delivery and that both employers and trainees were aware of their roles. The move to CBT in CS3 – CBT was imposed “top down” by the Commonwealth and issues that were so relevant to adult learning and delivery materials became secondary to the preparation of industry competency standards. This had important implications for how effectively and flexibly the training was to be delivered, and the preparation of relevant learning materials, because the training provider was not resourced or prepared to deal with a vast range of learner experiences which could be encountered.

As the review of literature in the adult learning section of Chapter 3 highlighted, for successful delivery to occur, those designing and delivering the training must be aware of a number of factors pertinent to delivery. Training developers must understand the diversity, range and location of the potential training audience (Kato et al., 1997). Importantly, CS2 provides a model which highlights recommendations for the future delivery of vocational education and training. The success of CS2 arose because the board and developers spent a considerable time in assessing the potential audience. Training developers must have an understanding of how adults learn (Knowles et al.,

1998) and need to ensure the learning strategies which are invoked lead to effective adult learning. In CS1 there was a hands-on approach to training which linked theory to its practical application. In CS2 the training paid attention to ensuring that what was covered in the training sessions easily translated into the bookkeeping practices of the rural enterprises which took part in the training. In both CS1 and CS2 there was the opportunity to trial and refine the training programme which contributed to the successful outcomes for learners.

The success of the local workshops of CS2, compared to the imposed training design of CS3, confirms it is necessary for training providers to consider potential delivery mechanisms and the development of the learning resources early in the design of a training programme. They need to take note of the range of potential approaches to assist in the learning process, as shown in Table 3.1 in the literature review. As Kelly (1994) noted, it is also necessary to take account of the farm cycle with regard to timing of training and education delivery in rural communities and rural industries. This was done in CS1 and CS2. Another key finding which emerged particularly from CS2 relates to the use of trained facilitators and local coordinators (Griffin & Zichy-Woinarski, 1996). As has been noted in this case study, using local people as coordinators or facilitators where possible encourages participation in training in rural Australia. This supports the comments of Grannau (1995) who saw the use of local coordinators as enhancing local delivery linked to a national agenda. Finally, the less than successful outcomes of CS3 show it is essential for rural communities and those involved with rural industries to communicate and consult with the appropriate authorities so that they are cognisant with the needs and requirements of the target

audience and thus ensure that training and education is delivered in a manner which can embrace the widest audience.

In summary, the above analysis suggests an understanding of, and commitment to, factors that make for effective adult learning were fundamental to the success of the first two case studies, and were overlooked in the third, less successful case study. The board was active in ensuring that best practice in adult learning theory was applied in the first two case studies, but it was unsuccessful in its efforts to influence policy makers toward the principles of effective delivery in the third case study.

Social Capital

As stated in the literature review, this thesis utilised Bourdieu's (1980) definition of social capital, in which he reflects on the benefits accruing to individuals and the purposes of creating the social capital resource. Accepting this definition leads to an understanding of the working of community and social networks and the productive benefits which may be achieved through purposeful use of these networks.

Chapter 3 noted that the concept of capital includes cultural, human, political and social capital (Bourdieu, 1980). The following discussion reflects on how social capital played a role in advancing benefits to the community in the case studies. Figure 3.4 in the literature review provides a summary of core inputs into and measures of social capital. This section analyses how these inputs assist in the evolvment and improvement in the social fabric of, and resources available to, the community.

In CS1 – NRT, Tasmanian and Australian farmers accepted the opportunity created by the new traineeships, which allowed them to facilitate vocational education and training

for younger persons so these young people could gain skills and become part of the farm/rural industry and community. This opportunity aligns with Stone and Hughes's (2002) point that community social capital can be built through connecting a group of people with a diverse set of views and ideals. As a result of their skills acquisition described in CS1, the new employees added to the fabric of the community and, with the group of farmers who employed them, to its social capital, as well as becoming productive units assisting in the farm economy.

By way of contrast, CS2 – ANTS – GST reflects another approach which led to an improvement in community welfare and social capital. The introduction of the ANTS – GST in 1999 and the subsequent programme developed by the board in 1999–2000 for rural enterprises to address their farm financial and accounting records, the funding of the programme through DAFF, the use of local coordinators in Tasmania and local delivery to a variety of towns across the state, it can be argued provided the resources which assisted in sustained ongoing rural enterprise development, and so rural community development. The implementation of the programme led, as shown in the comments in CS2, to a significant and immediate improvement in farm financial records, and so farmers were better able to manage their farm businesses for profitability. The training provided rural enterprises and rural communities not only with the opportunity to take up new skills and review their approach to their farm records and finances but also, and importantly at a community level, for cooperation and dialogue which can build social capital (Woolcock, 2001).

In contrast, CS3 – CBT provides a salutary lesson on what can transpire if dialogue and cooperation are not considered when designing programmes. CS3 – CBT was imposed

on rural organisations, vocational deliverers, employers and employees. Little opportunity was given to bodies, such as the board, to be involved in the process and provide the community with an understanding in the movement from “time serving” to acknowledgement of “lifelong learning” and competency based training. As a result the community did not have access to policy makers—CBT was implemented at a federal level and the process of policy development and implementation did not allow states to embrace the concept. Arising from this approach was a failure in cooperation and dialogue at both a local and state level.

In undertaking any programmes which could lead to an improvement in the social capital of a community, it is vital to ensure that leaders and advocates are able to drive, develop and implement an agenda which will not only raise the community social capital but also provide long lasting community benefits (Coleman, 1988; Stone & Hughes, 2002). Whilst leaders and advocates are important and are further considered later in this discussion chapter, the issue of trust within and without the community is crucial if programmes such as the vocational training that is the subject of this thesis are to be embraced (Coleman, 1988; Stone & Hughes, 2002). In contrast to CS3, the standing of the board and its wide-ranging membership—farmers, unions, federal and state governments and the post-secondary education sector— engendered trust in Tasmania in relation to CS1 – NRT and CS2 – ANTS – GST. The board undertook advocacy and leadership, and ensured a shared understanding at a state and national level through the networks it had established with national farmer organisations and policy makers. The personal representations to DAFF from the president of the NFF and senior NFF staff, particularly on matters relating to tax and the farming community, drew on existing social capital networks. Thus the community was able to

use their within-community “bonding” networks to inject skills and knowledge of what would work locally into national policy making through the bridging and linking networks provided by the board (Woolcock, 2001; Kilpatrick, Field & Falk, 2003). As Kilpatrick and colleagues point out can occur, this enabled the development of trust between individuals and organisations within and without the community. The success of the training further built the social capital that existed between rural communities and the board (Falk & Kilpatrick, 2000). Community access to policy makers is discussed later in this chapter, when considering the role of boundary crossers.

Comparing and Contrasting Social Capital in the Cases

In summary, in CS1 and CS2, the board was able to draw on the social capital it had built with Tasmanian rural communities not only to ensure appropriate delivery, but also, because the board was trusted, to ensure training uptake. The board drew on the social capital it had previously built with the NFF, RTCA, state rural ITABs, state farming bodies and state and federal training and education departments to shape policy and the training delivered so that it met rural community needs. These two case studies illustrate the effectiveness of the board’s mix on bonding and bridging social capital networks for the purpose of providing VET for rural communities as described in these cases (Falk & Kilpatrick, 2000). The board’s social capital networks, specifically its linking networks, were not adequate for the purpose of influencing the policy makers driving the implementation of CBT, as described in CS3.

Leadership

The case studies provide interesting contrasts in respect of leadership. In two of the case studies, CS1 – NRT and CS2 – ANTS – GST, leadership from the TRITB and state and national farming bodies provided the drive for successful outcomes to be achieved. In the remaining case study, CS3 – CBT, the imposition, direction and instruction from the federal government and the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) was the basis of communication on matters relating to the implementation of CBT. As a result of this lack of consultation, industry leaders showed little interest in embracing the new system. This was reinforced by the efforts of the RTCA who endeavoured to develop a dialogue with DEET and the federal minister about issues relating to CBT and their implementation within the rural sector. This was totally different to industry leaders' approach in the NRT and GST case studies where they were able to have a major impact on the development, implementation and outcomes of training which they saw as benefitting rural Australia.

As has been stated previously, the programme in CS1 – NRT built on the successful traineeship which had been implemented in Tasmania and Queensland. In Tasmania, the TRITB members and the state farming organisation had shown leadership in implementing the Kirby proposals (Kirby, 1984). The leadership process was aligned with good practice as described by Johns (2003). Similarly in the CS2 – ANTS – GST, the industry quickly realised the importance of the proposed taxation changes and the effect they were going to have on farmers. State farming organisations and the national farm organisations were proactive in providing industry leadership and reassuring their constituents that they had a response to these major legislative matters in hand.

It is instructive to consider the leadership provided by industry in implementing these two major changes. Rural constituents—because of their diversity in agricultural pursuits over the vast Australian continent—seek leaders who will involve them in the change process. To be successful, industry leaders need to embrace relational leadership which, as Rost (1993) succinctly described, is defined as the interactions and processes of influence between leaders and constituents to accomplish intended changes. CS1 and CS2 reflect such collaborative processes activated in order to achieve specific community objectives. This was evident when the industry leaders involved in the development of CS2 – ANTS – GST were negotiating with senior federal public servants and federal ministers. Farm leaders were clear about what needed to be achieved for the benefit of their constituents and were committed to achieving it.

A similar argument can be advanced for the leadership role of the TRITB in CS1 – NRT. The NRT initially had only Tasmanian support, and it was not until the suggestion of a national traineeship was supported by the federal minister that other state rural organisations were consulted. In many ways this reflects Falk and Smith's (2003) point about the importance of credibility and trust of the individuals who play a part in the leadership role. The TRITB had developed a credible state-based rural traineeship and the federal minister's support enabled the TRITB to consult and build networks at a state and national level to develop and implement the NRT. Both case studies—CS1 – NRT and CS2 – ANTS – GST—reinforce the issue of trust raised by Falk and Smith (2003). Trust not only built social capital as described above, trust provided the opportunity to facilitate the development of a leadership model built on community networks (Falk & Mulford, 2001). This community trust provided an opportunity for the leaders to have input into policy settings. Leaders' engagement with the

community, through the board, allowed the community to see and appreciate outcomes which flowed from the planned and implemented training. The leadership demonstrated by the board has elements of enabling leadership advanced by Falk and Mulford (2001). Enabling leadership requires an interaction between the leaders and their constituents/communities. The board's leadership was unlike the traditional leadership position which is based on the concept of delegated power and authority (Slim, 1956), community leadership is not based on any such formal authority but may be attributed from the recognised position leaders may hold as a result of their personal standing in the community.

In both CS1 – NRT and CS2 – ANTS – GST the leaders involved derived their power from being elected members of the TRITB which, as has been previously indicated, involved representatives from all relevant sectors with input into Tasmanian rural training and was complemented by the state/national farming organisations. As a result they represented their communities who had charged them to advance and address issues which affected their constituents. The leaders who were responsible for the NRT and GST – ANTS were regarded by their constituents as credible and having the interests of their community “front and centre”. The board leaders’ credibility also extended to the state and federal public servants and politicians with whom negotiations were undertaken during the development and implementation stage.

The discussion of leadership above reinforces the findings of Pigg (1999), who pointed out that community leaders—in our case rural leaders in a farming organisation—rely on networks and relationships developed with their constituents and the interactions that come from those relationships. Essentially these rural leaders and their leadership

in both CS1 – NRT and CS2 – ANTS – GST were seeking to produce identifiable changes within the rural community through employing younger, better-trained employees on their properties, or improving the understanding of the new taxation reforms and how they may assist farms in meeting the new legislative conditions. As a policy development with subsequent national implementation, this approach again supports the concept of community leadership advanced by Falk and Mulford (2001). As mentioned, in both case studies there was a trusting relationship between the leaders and the farming community. This was based on the concept that leaders had the authority to address the issues, and that they were responsible for making these ideas possible, including how they were to be implemented to ensure maximum impact. In these two case studies, the leadership model used was that advanced by Falk and Mulford (2001). It was successful, not only because of the social capital discussed above, but also because of the skills of the individuals who played a part as leaders, particularly their organisational skills, which sought to address identified issues that had an impact on how the rural community responded and the potential longer-term influence these trusting relationships had on improving the local social fabric for the ongoing benefit of the community. In both CS1 – NRT and CS2 – ANTS – GST, the federal government was seeking positive outcomes from major changes. The farm leaders across Australia were proactive in taking up these issues as they saw their importance and how the programme had a positive effect for Australian rural communities. It was the insightful and proactive leadership of the TRITB that was responsible for both successful training programs.

On the other hand, the leadership observed in CS3 – CBT can be considered more traditional, what some may refer to as the “services” approach (Slim, 1956). Leadership

demonstrated in this case study can be seen as a relationship which rested on formal positions, authority, skill sets and the leader's behaviour (Rost, 1991; Barker, 1997). The development of CBT was coordinated by the federal minister for employment, education and training in 1996 with the assistance of the two major employer organisations—Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) and Australian Industry Group (AIG). The aim was to overturn time-served apprenticeships and move to skills acquisition based on lifelong learning and identified skill shortages which needed to be addressed. The implementation of CBT by the minister and ANTA rested on their formal positions and authority. Neither party was prepared to include other parties or organisations in the development of CBT in Australia. Rather than seeing leaders in other industry sectors as important allies in advancing the new vocational policy, there was no attempt to involve the end users and communities about the nature of these changes. This was particularly pertinent when Griffin and Zichy-Woinarski (TRITB Overseas Report, 1996) had reviewed the introduction of CBT in the United Kingdom and had forwarded a copy of that report with observations and recommendations on its suitability and applicability to the federal minister, to little avail as described in the case study. The lack of enthusiasm to include farming organisations to advance this centrally driven policy was reflected in the rural community's unwillingness to embrace these new changes. This is in contrast to the previous case studies in which industry leadership was closely involved, and able to convey the need to change to the farming community, alongside introducing acceptable training to manage the change. In the CBT case study however, leadership was imposed from above and it was a formal imposition that tolerated no interference from industry leaders.

Concerning Leadership in Rural Industries and Rural Communities

In summary, a number of key concepts emerge from considering the issue of leadership in the three case studies, particularly with reference to training policy development and implementation for Australia's rural communities and rural industry. The most important of these relates to the ability of leaders to engage with their constituents when considering major policy changes which may arise as the result of state or federal initiatives, or as the result of community needs. A more formal style of leadership is not conducive to successful implementation of changes to training for multi-constituents in diverse regional Australia. This is because formal leadership is a "top down" approach which may reflect the leader's perception of the issue, but which may be at odds with community needs, as CS3 illustrates. On the other hand, as these case studies indicate, leaders need to understand and anticipate what needs to be achieved and the benefits which will flow to their communities. In order to achieve those benefits it is vital that leaders build networks and trust, or social capital among their constituents and with those in responsible positions in government and other external institutions which may influence implementation or potential outcomes, as occurred with successful outcomes in the first two case studies. In building these networks both internally and externally, leaders need to be credible, particularly when undertaking negotiations.

Advocacy

The issue of advocacy or lobbying as shown in these three case studies raises some issues relevant for Australian rural communities wanting to influence policy. At the outset any rural-based community organisation is competing against many city-centric groups and large industry-based associations seeking the "ear" of the policy makers.

Lanham (1999), Fitzgerald (2006), Warhurst (1996; 2006) and Marsh (1997) all indicate advocacy has become an established part of the Australian landscape. City-centric and large industry-based advocating groups and associations compete and seek to make some form of representation on specific issues to local councils, state and federal governments. Warhurst (1996) and Fitzgerald (2006) suggest there is enough evidence to show that the political system responds to pressures from big interests rather than ordinary citizens. The first two case studies demonstrate how organisations such as the board and state and national farmer organisations can be successful advocates for their constituents.

The two issues relevant to advocacy considered in this thesis are the development of agricultural training and the way in which the board was able to lobby and liaise with federal and state governments as well as education and training organisations. As stated earlier, one of the reasons for the formation of the TRITB board was to ensure that the Commonwealth—through DEET—the state government departments of agriculture and education and the state major education bodies—the University of Tasmania and TAFE—all had representatives on the board, as well as the major union body. The board, with its rural representatives and the various federal and state government, educational and union members were, as Trueman (1968) suggests, a group of individuals who had a collective authority to act and provide the opportunity to act on behalf of the board's Tasmanian farming constituents. Trueman's (1968) distinction between authority and opportunity is important because one of the major issues faced by rural communities is the vast diversity of views within communities which makes it difficult for communities to present a united voice or gain the ear of decision makers. The board, with its specialist knowledge, was able to understand and consider how to

advocate to ensure positive policy decisions would arise (Ward, 2009), for example the discussion with the federal minister in regard to the implementation of NRT rather than following the Nettforce model or the suggestions with DAFF and Treasury to address difficulties identified in the ANTS – GST implementation. The issue relating to the age of trainees when developing the traineeship in Tasmania, as discussed in CS1 – NRT, illustrates the application of a very early concept advanced by Bentley (1949) in that the board was competing with other interest groups in providing input into government policy, particularly in the area of vocational training. The board, compared to small local community groups who have difficulty in undertaking advocacy (Ward, 2007), was able to negotiate with the relevant authorities or their community constituents because they represented a particular interest group, in this case Tasmanian farmers, and were able to advocate in CS1 – NRT citing concerns relating to the employment of young people on agricultural enterprises under a traineeship. Clark, James and Wilson (1961) consider the ability to make representations, such as these on behalf of Tasmanian farmers, needs to be understood in the advocacy process. Yet it must be realised that whilst the board was in a better position than local community organisations it was, as Ward (2009) notes is usually the case, competing and vying with other more powerful advocating organisations such as the ACTU, ACCI or AIG who have considerable power and political influence and input because of their large constituencies, economic muscle, international standing and expertise. The board's success in advocating for vocational education and training for Tasmanian farmers and their employees in CS1 was in no small measure due to its ability to make representations to the appropriate authorities at both state and federal level. Part of this success was due to the representatives and composition of the board. As well, the

members were highly regarded and seen as credible within Tasmania's and Australia's agriculture fraternity. As a result, lines of communications evolved between the board and those in authority with regard to vocational education and training. The board was highly visible and seen as an organisation prepared to advocate causes which would advance agricultural education and training and at the same time raise the skills base. As stated in the case study, the board was always well prepared when undertaking advocacy, with a briefing paper outlining the issues to be discussed and ensuring formal meetings were arranged to advance the issue. This approach was highly appreciated by policy makers when the board was undertaking negotiations, particularly with policy makers in the state and federal vocational training area. Providing briefing papers assisted discussions and played an important role in both the NRT and GST development and implementation. As the case studies describe, the board through its members maintained informal contact with the appropriate department senior personnel.

The approach that was adopted by the board had a major bearing on how successfully the board advocated its ideas and suggestions as summarised in the three case studies. In CS1 – NRT the federal minister had announced a policy to support the implementation of Keating's "Working Nation" speech (1994). The board, as a result of the experience of overseeing nearly 10 years of traineeships in Tasmania and the evaluations of the traineeship programme, was quickly aware of the flaws in the proposed "Working Nation" traineeships. Through its union representative, the board was able to discuss these concerns with a member of the House of Representatives who then conveyed those concerns to the federal minister. The federal minister met with the board's chairperson, union representative and executive officer where the issues were

canvassed and the development of the National Rural Traineeship (CS1 – NRT) emerged. This led the board, through its state government representative and vocational training representatives, to meet with the Tasmanian government and seek its support to ensure the proposed programme met the national qualification framework requirements. At the same time, TFGA advocated for its farmer organisations at state and national level, seeking their support for the new national programme. Essentially the advocacy undertaken by the TRITB board in this case study had a role in providing input into a particular government decision and a policy was negotiated which benefitted their constituents (Bentley, 1949; Clark et al., 1961). The success of the advocacy resulted from the board's "track record" in developing, modifying and evaluating a state rural traineeship over a 10-year period which had been acknowledged as a success at both state and federal level.

CS2 – ANTS – GST also demonstrates advocacy taken up by NFF at the request of its constituent farming organisations. Farming organisations saw the GST legislative change as having an enormous impact on rural enterprises, particularly in relation to the number of financial records which would need to be maintained to meet the new proposed reporting requirements, especially the quarterly Business Activity Statement, on which tax payable or refundable was calculated. Pressure was placed on the federal government to heed the needs of Australian farmers. NFF, representing all Australian farmers, sought ways in which they were able to gain access to those responsible for the legislation so that they could influence the implementation process and point out the issues facing Australian farmers, in this they followed the tradition of well established and older industry associations in advocating for their members (Garceau & Silverman, 1954; Ward, 2007). The advocacy process was supported by the formal and informal

discussions with senior bureaucrats in DAFF. The success of the advocacy was demonstrated by Treasury's assistance in the successful implementation of a nationwide training programme to assist farmers implement the new taxation system. As the case study states, the assistance of Treasury and work done in Tasmania by Launceston accountants, TFGA and TRITB led to a successful outcome. As Milbraith (1964) indicates is best practice, this work was credible, researched and well organised because the three organisations—TFGA, NFF and the board—had reputations for trustworthiness and integrity.

The third case study, CS3 – CBT provides an interesting contrast to the other case studies in relation to advocacy, as it did in relation to application of adult learning theory, social capital and leadership. The introduction of CBT represented the success of two powerful Canberra-based organisations—ACCI and AIG—who had advocated the move to CBT over a number of years, and had made this part of their representations to the federal opposition prior to the 1996 federal election (Australian Liberal Party, Election Policy, 1996). These bodies had considerable influence and input because they were able to express the views of their large constituency and represented the majority of Australia's largest businesses and enterprises. They had economic muscle, institutional standing, expertise and a large national membership base (Ward, 2009). To these bodies, the development and implementation of CBT based on Carmichael's 1995 report was of utmost importance because it suited the needs of the industries they represented. Conversely, as one of the interviewees stated, the majority of states and the national farming organisations:

...did not see the introduction of CBT as high on their priority agenda, the NRT was successfully addressing training in the rural and horticulture industries and could not understand why we needed to change what was currently in place.

It is important to stress that in most cases advocacy was undertaken in both formal and informal settings. This has some quite serious implications for rural communities located at a distance from capital cities if they do not have the resources to be supported by an advocacy group that has the “ear” of local, state or federal governments.

Comparing and Contrasting Advocacy in the Cases

In summary, the indicators of successful advocacy which evolve from this discussion on advocacy for training on behalf of Australia’s rural enterprises, as illustrated by the case studies, include the need to address issues at a federal, state and/or community level as appropriate. The board’s success in its advocacy role was due to its credibility at each of these levels and its power and authority to make representations. There is a requirement to be aware of the power and influence of large national-based organisations whose members fund them to represent their interests. To be successful, communities or organisations need a cause which resonates and develops support at local, state and national levels.

Boundary Crossers

Morse (2009) argued that boundary crossers can be individuals, or an organisation or institution. He regarded boundary crossers as organisations or individuals who enable linkages to be formed across traditional boundaries and who develop collaboration and

partnerships for their community. Whilst Morse (2009) argues the boundary crosser can be an individual or an organisation, community interaction theory (Law 1981) raises another consideration in respect of the board's role as a boundary crosser. As has been discussed earlier, the board was comprised of a number of elected individuals who collectively reflected those institutions and constituencies who had an input into the education and training of Tasmanian farming.

As McMillan and Chavis (1986) suggest can occur in such representative situations, the board members had a dual role in acting on the one hand in presenting an overall board perspective on an issue, whilst on the other they had the ability to bring to the board concerns of their membership and go back and influence their constituents as a result of actions taken by the board. In doing the latter their "community" could be an organisation which had elected them to the board. Collectively the board was able to address the needs and interests of rural and regional communities as the result of diversity of inputs from its members (Flint, Liloff & Theodore, 2010).

As the case studies indicate, the TRITB acted as a boundary crossing organisation in the two ways Morse suggested. CS1 – NRT saw the board acting as a boundary crosser in facilitating collaboration between the vocational deliverers, state and federal education departments and the farming organisations across the nation. As noted by an interviewee in CS1, this facilitation arose because over a number of years the board had successfully advanced training for rural interests in Tasmania and had provided the bridge between the various players to ensure successful outcomes. As described, CS2 – ANTS – GST saw the board forming partnerships with and acting as the liaison between the programme developers, the federal department and the national farming

body. This is consistent with boundary crossing activity to develop shared expectations (Kilpatrick et al., 2009). The importance of this partnership approach was the acknowledgment by both NFF and DAFF of the board's ability to provide leadership across a diversity of interested parties.

One theme which emerges from consideration of the case studies is the significant contribution TRITB board members made in meeting challenges related to changes in policy, whether the challenges were from community members or from other authorities at a state and federal level. The diversity of membership represented on the TRITB provided the opportunity for the board to gain credibility on a range of vocational and education training issues which impacted on the Tasmanian rural community and its related industries. The board also provided a forum where issues, ideas and approaches could be canvassed and developed. Significantly, the close links which the board developed between outside organisations and its constituent community both developed and reflected the board's credibility. This allowed information to flow across boundaries and to facilitate discussion and exchange of ideas whilst at the same time allowing the board to maintain its authority (Cash, 2002; 2003). The board's ability can be exemplified in the following example of the negotiations the board president undertook on behalf of the Tasmanian farmers to obtain a training farm. As CS1 – NRT pointed out, the president discussed with the state premier the need for such a facility and was providing the bridge between TAFE, DEIRT and Tasmanian farmers. As the case study indicates, the negotiations were successful.

The board minutes provide many other examples where it acted as a boundary crosser to achieve positive outcomes. All of these are consistent with the findings of Arias and

Fisher (2007) regarding effective boundary crossing processes. These other examples were given serious consideration when deciding on the case studies, but time and resources limited the number of cases that could be considered.

One of the other ways the board was able to address differences between the desired outcome for its members and the outcome likely to follow from initially proposed policy was the ability of the board and its members to connect people across boundaries as in CS1 – NRT, particularly notable for the way in which the board discussed the traineeship guidelines with DEET and achieved a result which provided Tasmanian farmers with the opportunity to employ young people in their enterprises. As a result, people and organisations who in the past may have caused difficulties or hindrances with regard to achieving desired outcomes for rural industries were open to negotiation. Board members were able to reach out from their usual territory and become community leaders. As a result of the board's membership it had the ability to span the various sectors so that the board became a forum for thinking and action. Thus the board was able to establish communications and bridge differences, while it also developed and maintained a common vision and goals and connected its constituents to potential resources and opportunities, as the case studies and examples above illustrate.

The examples and discussion above highlighted boundary crossing by board members as individuals and also boundary crossing by the board as an organisation or institution. Credibility of the individual members and of the board as an organisation was a key feature in the success of boundary crossing activity. Analysis of the case studies suggest that this interplay of individual and organisation boundary crossing contributed

to the ability to influence policy makers and achieve outcomes that were acceptable to policy makers and, crucially, delivered positive results for rural industries.

The literature review undertaken for this research suggested two important initial dimensions when analysing how boundary crossing occurs, the first of these is “how activities arise” and the second is “strategies are developed for mustering resources” (Farmer & Kilpatrick, 2009). As the diagram reproduced as Figure 3.5 in Chapter 3 shows, these two dimensions reinforce the notion that drivers for action within a community can be based on perceived needs which may be influenced by external forces. These drivers can arise from the three tiers of government—federal, state and local councils—via legislation or other factors. In two of the case studies the issue of potential solutions had been considered by the board. These were based around challenges facing the rural community—in one case the need for more trained younger employees, in the other case a raft of legislative changes which would have a major effect on rural enterprises’ accounting and financial practices.

In both of these cases the board acted as the catalyst for change to occur. This arose in CS1 – NRT because whilst Tasmania and Queensland had rural traineeships, the development in other states had been thwarted by vocational providers, legislative inhibitions, union/ employer workplace arrangements and funding.

The support of the federal minister allowed the board to negotiate with senior officers in both DEET and Tasmania’s DVET to develop and prepare a curriculum for consideration by all states. Importantly the board had credibility and the support and trust of the other states, especially as traineeships had operated successfully in Tasmania since 1998. The board had developed industry and community networks to

assist Tasmanian farmers and these ideas were discussed with the states and NFF in the NRT implementation. The board through this mechanism was able to develop sustainable partnerships with the appropriate state and federal authorities. More importantly, the board and its members overcame any difficulties or barriers put up by the states, as reported in other research (Morse, 2009; Kilpatrick, 2007). By using its credibility with high-level federal policy makers and state education and training bureaucracies, the board was able to embrace both technical details of training and political activities. This is reflected in the development of the National Rural Traineeship (NRT) curriculum and the validation process which was undertaken in each state. The ability of the board to advance the concept of an NRT was supported at a national level by DEET and the influential discussions undertaken by DVET's general manager (Tasmania) with the other states' vocational general managers. As noted in the case study, during the course of discussions he reported to the board that he had spent a "...number of hours on the telephone convincing his counterparts of the importance of this initiative to rural Australia and the uptake of young employees in the rural industry" (TRITB Board Minutes, September 1994).

Effectively, the state rural ITABs, state and federal training departments and TAFEs were developing strategies to muster the necessary resources across the diverse rural sector. The most significant aspect of the boundary crossing by the board was the ability to undertake advocacy and leadership to ensure the NRT was implemented not only in Tasmania, but nationally. The process adopted was to take the proposed NRT outline to each state and have them sign off and approve the suggested curriculum. This work included ensuring that all parties, farming organisations, farmers, state training authorities, state vocational deliverers and unions involved in each state had an

opportunity to express their views. It also ensured that the board, drawing on its credibility, was able embrace issues raised and address them prior to submitting the final documentation. An example of this credibility in operation was a matter raised in validation and discussion in Western Australia, where the board noted criticism from Western Australia in respect of failing to provide a module covering “survival in the outback”. In many ways this reflects Kon Kola’s (2001) statement that the process of developing curriculum provides deliverers with the opportunity to meet needs and provides flexibility which, in the case of CS1 may not have previously existed in vocational delivery. In addition, CS1 – NRT highlighted one of the important abilities of the board, which was the ability to interact with different communities and organisations (Bowker & Starr, 1999), in this case the interaction was with authorities in each state in order to deliver a national offering. Another major feature of this case study was the matter of trust. At a state and national level, the board had been acknowledged as an important innovator which had delivered positive outcomes for all involved. For example it had delivered traineeships in Tasmania, and had reviewed, modified and added to the initial offering. The board’s composition was again important in brokering the NRT across community boundaries. Whilst it was important to get the proposed curriculum and outcomes validated, it was also essential to address the industrial relations issues in getting the NRT recognised as part of the state and national awards relating to rural employment. As both unions and employers were represented on the TRITB board, they were able to take up this issue in respect of meeting the workplace requirements and having the relevant awards—both state and federal—amended to include the NRT. The board was a place where a shared direction for rural industries could be developed, consistent with findings regarding boundary

crossers developing shared direction (Kilpatrick et al., 2002; Wegner, 1998; Beach, 2009). This demonstrated again how the union and employer representatives worked together to ensure a change recognised by rural Australia could be implemented by ensuring the industrial parties had involved the community and relevant parties in the discussions. This outcome reflects Boissin's (2009) assertion of the importance of encouraging an interaction between the various parties/players in order to assist in the decision making process. CS1 – NRT saw the board having the ability—due to its credibility—to connect people across boundary lines that previously had prevented the delivery of a national traineeship. The board was able to extend its usual “modus operandi” and became a nation builder to the advantage of Australian rural enterprises. Arias and Fisher (2007) noted that in their view boundary crossers, like the board as indicated above, have an ability to outreach their usual territory and become community builders. Moreover, trust in the board was reflected by the quality of work undertaken and its interaction with people at a state and federal level. The delivery and implementation of the NRT would not have occurred without trust, and trust is vital to the community and its expectations in relation to cooperative behaviour (Falk & Kilpatrick, 1998).

The second case study, CS2 – ANTS – GST, also describes a positive outcome from boundary crossing activity. The initial approach considered by the board was to develop a national delivery for the new ANTS – GST, as it was obvious a different approach from that of the NRT was necessary. However, there was also the issue of how the new system was to be implemented and this led subsequently to discussions between the state and national farming organisations and the federal government. As described in the case study, the federal government nominated DAFF as the federal

department to work with the farming organisations on matters relating to the implementation of ANTS – GST in rural Australia. Whilst that decision addressed implementation, the TRITB was concerned with how the programme was to be brokered and delivered to rural communities throughout Tasmania. This concern reflected the issues previously discussed, that there was firstly a need to develop institutional knowledge to facilitate the legislation and secondly the need to act as a broker and boundary crosser (Siemens, 2005; Wegner, 1998; Beach, 2009) to facilitate the delivery of training to Tasmanian rural communities, which in many instances were perplexed by the imminent changes and how they would affect their enterprise accounting and financial records. By the time the legislation was finally promulgated, the board had prepared a proposal outlining to DAFF and the federal government an implementation process for Tasmania. As noted in the case study, rather than imposing a “top down” approach, DAFF staff realised it was important that the state farming organisations undertake the delivery because of their relationship with their constituents. How delivery was to be approached was a matter for each state. Consistent with the “Strategies for Mustering Resources” section of Figure 3.5 in Chapter 3 of this thesis, the state farming organisations were all acting as boundary crossers by broking the new taxation training to their rural constituents. This approach fits with recent research by Morse (2004), Kilpatrick (2007) and Farmer and Kilpatrick (2009) in that the state farming organisations, in acting at the interface of communities and policy makers, had freedom to operate in innovative ways to provide positive outcomes and solutions.

This approach was adopted in Tasmania, where the board decided to apply the boundary crosser mechanism at the level of small communities. One of the issues

which caused considerable discussion at the board table, as noted in the case study, was how delivery was to be implemented in the state. The argument concerning the proposed delivery mode was based on a commitment after discussion and deliberation by the board to undertake the training in local areas, organised by local coordinators known to the district farm families. It also reflected Figure 3.5 in Chapter 3—the boundary crosser diagram of Farmer & Kilpatrick (2009)—and the board’s approach which involved community participation and included the community knowledge and the ability to access communal resources as recommended by Griffin and Zichy-Woinarski in their overseas study report (1996). The resources were provided by the board, the presenters (because of their standing in the community) had credibility (Evaluator’s Report to TRITB Board, Board Minutes, January 2000; June 2000) and were able to drive the transfer of knowledge on the ANTS – GST to local rural enterprises. The positive evaluation of the training programme showed the approach adopted by the board was successful. In using local coordinators and presenters there was an adaptation to ensure a common identity and goal (Starr, 1989). Fundamentally, underpinning this case study (CS2 – ANTS – GST) was the board’s credibility and its faith in undertaking a local communal approach once the issues of content, delivery and implementation had been considered and negotiated. Again the success of the GST training programme reflected the local community and its expectations and the implied trust and credibility of the board that it would be able to broker a satisfactory response to significant change (Falk & Kilpatrick, 1998; Wegner, 1998). It appears that broking and boundary crossing activity may be intertwined.

The third case study, CS3 – CBT, provides a contrast to the other two cases. Despite the drive and endeavours of the board, this case study is one in which boundary

crossers in driving a major change in vocational education was unsuccessful. As noted previously, the board had indicated a willingness to consider the implementation of CBT, particularly in respect to the farm apprenticeship with DEIRT (TRITB Board Minutes, January 1990). The board saw this as a way forward which would have involved all members of the board and their ability to undertake discussions with the relevant parties across the spectrum of its constituency. The board would have acted as a boundary crosser to undertake and implement this proposition. Following ministerial pronouncements, particularly those in 1991—the Mayer and Finn Reports—which were followed by the Carmichael Report in 1992, CBT became a national issue and the states were excluded from the process. ANTA was given the carriage of the future development and implementation of CBT and the process was undertaken at a national level. This national approach was reinforced by a series of articles by the CEOs of the two major business organisations—ACCI and AIG—advocating the change to CBT. The general public did not appreciate the major change the move to CBT was going to have on VET (Griffin & Zichy-Woinarski, 1996). Apart from the major business organisations, the national farming body, NFF, was ambivalent towards the proposed change (RTCA Minutes, April 1997) and did not provide leadership or advocacy to support the change. Whilst the federal government was imposing a new VET system through legislative changes, it did not engage NFF to discuss how these changes may assist skills training in the rural sector. This lack of communication made it extremely hard for the TRITB board, when the new competency standards had been developed, to go into the local Tasmanian farming community and verify the proposed industry competencies (TRITB Board Minutes, September 1997; June 1998; September 1998). It also meant that the board members could not become enthused about the new

proposed system when they had previously developed the NRT with such successful outcomes (TRITB Board Minutes, February 1999). In this context, community meetings were arranged across Tasmania to discuss these new proposed industry standards and they were poorly attended (ibid). The main criticism raised by the farming community and voiced at many meetings and reported by the Executive Officer to the board was, "...why change our successful VET system in the state?" (TRITB Board Minutes, February 1999).

This attitude was again repeated when the second iteration of the competency standards needed to be verified in 2002 and the board minutes reflect the same issues and report on the statewide industry meetings (TRITB Board Minutes, June 2002; September 2002).

Summation of Boundary Crossers Issues in Relation to the Case Studies

There are important issues which arise from this case study in relation to boundary crossers. The first issue is the imposition by the federal government of a "top down" approach and their failure to discuss with the rural community the reasons for the changes being proposed to the VET system. In other words, the federal government did not allow negotiation, which meant that state bodies such as the TRITB were not given the opportunity to reflect on how this new VET system could be implemented in Tasmania by using its existing networks, particularly through the farming and union members and their organisations, and then pass on the key messages from this reflection. The feeling that was expressed by board members was that, despite the board's acknowledged credibility, the people driving the change appeared unwilling to seek the board's assistance to drive these changes in Tasmania (TRITB Board Minutes, September

1997). Nor did the federal government define the issue and sell the outcomes the proposed changes would make to improve the delivery of VET. As a result the TRITB board, like NFF, whilst aware of the issue was unable to define the proposed changes into terms that their constituent community could understand and appreciate. In short, the board was unable to play a boundary crossing role in developing collaboration and suggesting benefits for the community (Morse, 2009; Millar, 2008; Farmer & Kilpatrick, 2009). Nor was it able, as in CS1 and CS2, to provide information to flow across the boundaries between VET and the rural constituents and, in turn, facilitate collaboration and interaction (Morse, 2009). The potential clientele could not see what benefits the new system would provide, especially when considering the successful NRT, and could not relate the proposed changes to their own occupation in ways suggested by other research (Farmer & Kilpatrick, 2009). One of the arguments noted in the case study was the failure of CBT, compared to the NRT, to allow the trainee acquisition of knowledge in a vocational setting and to use these acquired skills and implement them in the workplace, as recommended (Beacon, 2009). Another impediment in the CBT issue was the frustration felt by the board particularly in the light of the material gathered in the 1996 Overseas Study Tour (Griffin & Zichy-Woinarski, 1996) which was provided to national political decision makers and apparently ignored. Trust is vital to the community and managing its expectations (Falk & Kilpatrick, 1998).

Lessons Learned Relating to Boundary Crossers and the Case Studies

In summary, the development of CBT could have been better managed if those developing the new VET system had engaged the credible state organisations. This

engagement would have assisted them to work with the respective industry communities to explain what the new system involved and how it could improve the delivery of VET. This highlights the fact that in complex issues, boundary crossers, particularly organisations and individuals, can play an important role in such activities as aligning expectations and negotiating details in order to facilitate change.

The contrast between CS3 – CBT and the other two case studies (CS1 – NRT and CS2 – ANTS – GST) is stark. The three case studies show that major changes within communities require good leadership, advocacy and the credibility of boundary crossers whether they be individuals or organisations similar to the board, who have access to both the community and the external forces which may be driving change. It is essential that external parties, particularly policy makers, ensure crucial and distinctive community characteristics are taken into account when proposing or imposing change. Likewise, communities may need to seek constituencies of similar individuals, organisations and institutions to drive consultation and negotiation in relation to the issues to make sure community needs are being met. The role of boundary crossers requires them to undertake significant work to make the appropriate community connections; it also puts great stress on having the tools that boundary crossers can use to institute the process of change.

The final chapter will consider the research questions and recommendations and implications which have arisen from this research. It will also suggest future research particularly with regard to the role of boundary crossers and how they may join, whether as individuals or as part of a group such as the board, in implementing changes for the benefit and the future of communities.

Chapter 7: Implications and Recommendations

As stated previously the motivation of this thesis was to undertake a critical analysis of vocational education and training policy as it applied to rural industries in the years 1984–2004. Contingent to this was a need to understand how rural communities and their industries may have influenced VET policy settings in order to understand how, in the future, they may be able to affect policy and its implementation. Underlying the analysis was a need to reflect on the reasons why the TRITB was so highly regarded and to consider the reasons for its success, especially in terms of the education and training it provided or facilitated for the regional and rural communities in Tasmania and, later, on policy development and implementation at a national level. The major research question and subordinate questions—previously outlined—sought answers to these issues.

On reflection and following from the research presented in the earlier chapters, the answer to the subordinate questions may be seen as intertwined. Overarching their resolution is the major finding of this work which is the importance of the presence and actions of “boundary crossers”.

Implications Arising from the Research Questions

In relation to research question 1 ‘How did rural communities and their rural and related industries influence VET policy settings and their implementation from 1984 to 2004?’, “boundary crossers” provide the credible interface that works between what is

desired by each of the groups who are stakeholders in VET for rural industries and communities, and how these often conflicting desires may be resolved and a mutually acceptable outcome achieved within the relevant contexts and parameters. Shared, representative leadership and advocacy were the key to influencing policy and implementation through boundary crossing activity.

In relation to research question 2 ‘What were the key criteria which will enable policy, processes and implementation that occurred in Australian rural communities and their rural and related industries in order to meet identified community needs?’, credibility, shared and representative leadership, appropriate human resources and advocacy are key enablers. Boundary crossers, whether they be an individual or an organisation, need to have credibility. The thesis suggests that credible organisations can play an important interface role. The TRITB board was initially seen by Tasmanian farmers as acting as a boundary crosser between their vocational and education needs and VET provision by either state or federal departments responsible for vocational education and training. In its role as a boundary crosser, one of the ingredients of success was the composition of the board. The proponents in creating the board ensured its representation reflected the diversity of agricultural interests needed to raise and improve skills acquisition in rural Tasmania. The diversity was reflected by members from the farming community, the unions, state and federal departments responsible for vocational education and training, rural youth, women in agriculture and the University of Tasmania. These representatives were able to liaise with their constituents and also bring a diversity of ideas and issues to the board table where a common direction was worked out. In fact it can be argued these representatives were also acting as an individual boundary crosser in their liaison role. Another important component was the resource—administrative

and strategic—provided by the executive officer whose role was to implement board decisions and provide recommendations to the board on future directions, especially following government policy pronouncements.

The thesis indicates that boundary crossers can operate at a number of scales.

Organisations should consider the use of local boundary crossers within local communities, among communities and at state and national levels. Again success will depend on the credibility of the organisation, institution or individual. In this way boundary crossers have the capacity to assist communities to link knowledge to action.

In relation to research question 3, ‘How did the evolution of these policies, processes and their implementation meet the needs of Australian rural communities and their rural and related industries to build and improve community social capital?’, the research suggests that leadership and advocacy again are important, in addition to the vital role of boundary crossers. One of the board’s strengths was the shared leadership shown by its members. The board utilised the skills and ability of all of the representatives who sat around the board table. It allowed the board to provide leadership on issues affecting the vocational education and training needs of Tasmanian farmers, and also significantly for national VET policy, subsequently, and as the result of achievements in Tasmania, leadership at a national level. At an organisational level credibility and demonstrated leadership is vital. In turn the board’s credibility and leadership came about because it identified the industry needs, prioritised its workload and used the skills of the board members to achieve those outcomes. Community and industry social capital were created and further built in the process of influencing policy and implementing vocational education and training.

This research has found that another important ingredient is advocacy. Thus organisations like the TRITB, and rural communities who have no ready access to political power brokers, need to be able to advance their case and be confident that the political powers at all levels will listen to their concerns. Rural industries and communities in reality do not often have the “ear” of policy makers. To be successful in the advocacy process, there is a need to have credible representatives and a clear idea of how to address the issue at hand. There is a need for a logical, well developed position paper and the ability to reach compromise which may be necessary due to the restrictions which may be imposed due to internal/external policy settings. The board exhibited those characteristics in its presentations at all policy levels, realising that without being well prepared they would be swamped by other industry funded professional advocates and organisations who have much power and influence at all political levels.

In relation to research question 4, ‘What policy settings will be needed in the future to ensure that Australian rural communities and their rural and related industries have a valued and effective input into VET policies, processes, development and implementation?’, the thesis highlights matters relating to the delivery of vocational education and training. The ideas explored in the case studies have implications for delivery particularly for isolated communities scattered across this vast country. Vocational education and training delivery needs to take account of the audience, their needs and how training will be promoted. Two of the case studies report and reflect on the role the board took in ensuring that delivery meet the needs of the client group. In the other case study a political imposition from Canberra led to ineffective delivery because, as the research reveals, the intended clientele was not included in discussion as

the policy was being developed and the reason for the change was not communicated.

In the absence of involvement in either shaping or implementing the policy, the data are clear: it will not be a success.

This research has found that providers need to be aware of the diversity of educational experience and standards of potential participants in preparing their material and choosing the delivery method. Training brokers can play an important role in assisting training deliverers to match both industry needs and those of potential participants.

With all the new forms of delivery now available providers will need to consider how delivery will be undertaken to the participants.

Three recommendations for communities or industries seeking to influence policy and for policy makers arise from this research.

Recommendations for Further Research:

Recommendation 1: as the study was undertaken in a rural context, there needs to be further research undertaken on the effect of the boundary crosser, particularly in other industry sectors, to see whether or not, in other areas, boundary crossers can play a similar role in advancing industry and community interest.

Recommendation 2: The thesis also suggests further research into the relationship between boundary crossers and brokers and how their roles interface, and whether or not brokers and boundary crossers should have a combined role in order to best facilitate industry or community needs.

Recommendation 3: further research into how isolated communities can raise their leadership and advocacy skills to improve the community social capital and in turn improve their access to the political powers in order to advance community issues.

To be effective, it is necessary for any organisation to be able to develop policy around the parameters provided by the three tiers of government in Australia—federal, state and local. To achieve effectiveness will require credible consultation. It will need to be in depth and undertaken with all possible parties/players who may be involved in order to ensure a collegiate of interest and understanding. Without adopting this approach it will be difficult to influence policy makers. By using boundary crossers these ideas can be collected, developed and presented to policy makers. In this way rural industries and communities may be able influence policy development particularly in vocational education and training.

Limitations to this Research

This research is based on historical data for the period 1984 to 2004. It is also acknowledged that there are other limitations to this work, particularly as only three case studies were undertaken. These case studies were chosen as they were most representative of the thesis topic “Whither Rural Industries: Their Influence on the Education Debate”. They reflect, as examples, on ways in which rural communities and rural industries can provide input into the delivery of relevant vocational education training. Similarly they indicate difficulties which may be faced by rural industries and rural communities when vocational education is dictated without encompassing and including industry and the community and the potential difficulties which may arise as

a result of this policy. Another limitation of this research is one that is that associated with all qualitative research: the findings are not necessarily generalisable to other contexts.

Concluding Statement

This research suggests that, to be effective, it is necessary for any organisation that wishes to influence policy around the parameters provided by the three tiers of government in Australia—federal, state and local—to be involved in credible consultation. Ideally, consultation will be in depth and undertaken with all possible parties/players who may be involved in order to ensure a collegiate of interest and some shared understanding of what an acceptable solution may comprise. The findings suggest that effective consultation must be with policy makers and those whose interests the organisation represents. The findings from this research further suggest that organisations which do not adopt this approach will find it difficult to influence policy makers. By using boundary crossers these ideas can be collected from those the organisation represents, collated, developed and presented to policy makers. An iterative series of consultations with policy makers and those the organisation represents may be needed to reach a policy solution that is acceptable to all. In this way rural industries and communities were able influence policy development in vocational education and training over the period 1984–2004. The research findings suggest that this approach is likely to be effective in the future, and also perhaps in other contexts.

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APPENDIX 1

Ethics Approval from University of Tasmania and Deakin University

COPY

Private Bag 01 Hobart
Tasmania 7001 Australia
Telephone (03) 6226 2764
Facsimile (03) 6226 7148
Marilyn.Knott@utas.edu.au
<http://www.research.utas.edu.au/index.htm>



MEMORANDUM

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (TASMANIA) NETWORK

MINIMAL RISK APPLICATION APPROVAL

28 May 2007

AssocProf Sue Kilpatrick
Rural Health
Private Bag 1372
Launceston

Ethics reference: H9448**'Wither Rural Industries? Their influence on the Education debate'.****Student: Zich Woinarski (PhD)**

Dear AssocProf Kilpatrick

Acting on a mandate from the Tasmania Social Sciences HREC, the Chair of the committee considered and approved the above project on 28 May 2007.

All committees operating under the Human Research Ethics Committee (Tasmania) Network are registered and required to comply with the *National Statement on the Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans 1999* (NHMRC guidelines).

Therefore, the Chief Investigator's responsibility is to ensure that:

- 1) All researchers listed on the application comply with HREC approved application.
- 2) Modifications to the application do not proceed until approval is obtained in writing from the HREC.
- 3) The confidentiality and anonymity of all research subjects is maintained at all times, except as required by law.
- 4) Clause 2.37 of the National Statement states:
An HREC shall, as a condition of approval of each protocol, require that researchers immediately report anything which might warrant review of ethical approval of the protocol, including:
 - a) *Serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants;*
 - b) *Proposed changes in the application; and*
 - c) *Unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.*

The report must be lodged within 24 hours of the event to the Ethics Executive Officer who will report to the Chairs.

A PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

- 5) All participants must be provided with the current Information Sheet and Consent form as approved by the Ethics Committee.
- 6) The Committee is notified if any investigators are added to, or cease involvement with, the project.
- 7) This study has approval for four years contingent upon annual review. An *Annual Report* is to be provided on the anniversary date of your approval. Your first report is due [12 months from 'Ethics Committee Approval' date]. You will be sent a courtesy reminder by email closer to this due date.
Clause 2.35 of the National Statement states:
As a minimum an HREC must require at regular periods, at least annually, reports from principal researchers on matters including:
 - a) *Progress to date or outcome in case of completed research;*
 - b) *Maintenance and security of records;*
 - c) *Compliance with the approved protocol, and*
 - d) *Compliance with any conditions of approval.*
- 8) A *Final Report* and a copy of the published material, either in full or abstract, must be provided at the end of project.

Yours sincerely

M. Knott

for

Ethics Executive Officer

Research Services

Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) (Melbourne Campus)

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Prof. Sue Kilpatrick
School of Education, Warrnambool
cc: Zich Zichy-Woinarski

FROM: Deakin University Human Research Ethics Committee (DU-HREC)

DATE: 1 July 2009

SUBJECT: Project EC 102-2009 (Please quote this project number in future communication.)
Wither Rural Industries? Their influence on the education debate

The application for this project was considered by the DU-HREC Executive.

Approval has been given for Zich Zichy-Woinarski, under the supervision of Prof. Sue Kilpatrick, School of Education, to undertake this project for a period of three years from 1 July 2009.

The approval given by the Deakin University Human Research Ethics Committee is given only for the project and for the period as stated in the approval. It is your responsibility to contact the Executive Officer immediately should any of the following occur:

- Serious or unexpected adverse effects on the participants
- Any proposed changes in the protocol, including extensions of time.
- Any events which might affect the continuing ethical acceptability of the project.
- The project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.
- Modifications are requested by other HREC's.

In addition you will be required to report on the progress of your project at least once every year and at the conclusion of the project. Failure to report as required will result in suspension of your approval to proceed with the project.

DU-HREC may need to audit this project as part of the requirements for monitoring set out in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans (1999)

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'V. Bates'.

Vicky Bates, Secretary
On behalf of DU-HREC
03 9251 7123

APPENDIX 2

Letter of Introduction

Locked Bag 1372 Launceston
Tasmania 7250 Australia
Telephone: (03) 6324 4000 Fax: (03) 6324 4040
Email: rural.health@utas.edu.au
Website: www.utas.edu.au/ruralhealth



UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF RURAL HEALTH

16th May 2007

"Whither Rural industries? Their influence on the education debate."
Information Sheet

This study is being undertaken by Zich Woinarski who is currently undertaking his Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Tasmania and is supervised by Associate Professor S. Kilpatrick who is Chief Investigator of the project and Director of the Department of Rural Health and Professor J. Williamson.

This study seeks to explore and consider what input rural and related industries have on the provision of education in Rural Australia. Whilst this work will look at education per se, it will have particular emphasis on vocational training and skills formation in these rural and related industries and communities, and will review the development of education policy and its implementation and whether this takes cognisance of those needs. From this work it is hoped to develop a template which will assist rural industries and rural communities to influence education and vocational training in order to maximise the utilisation of scarce educational resources for the benefit of the community.

This research is considering three [3] case studies which had particular vocational training initiatives. These are:

1. the introduction of GST in 2000
2. National Rural Skills Traineeship in 1994
3. introduction of Competency based Training in 1997

Your input into the development of one or more of these training initiatives was important and we seek your advice and understanding in how these initiatives evolved, the issues which needed to be considered and to reflect on what lessons were learned from your involvement and input with particular reference to rural and related industries.

Participation in this study is voluntary and any research data gathered during this study will be kept confidential. Also your identity will be kept confidential and that any information you supply will not identify you as a participant

For your assistance, I set out the process for which I will seek your advice and comments.

1. Most interviews will be conducted by telephone.
2. You will be provided with an outline of the questions prior to the interview.
3. You will need to allow about 45 minutes for the interview.
4. Zich Woinarski will contact you by telephone to arrange an appropriate time and date to undertake the interview.
5. At the start of the interview Zich Woinarski will seek your permission to tape the interview, you may decline permission.
6. As part of the study process you are able to withdraw your data at any time within twenty eight [28] days of the interview.
7. All interview data used in this study will be kept in a locked and secure filing cabinet in the Department of Rural Health, University of Tasmania and will be destroyed five[5] years after the completion of the study
8. An Executive Summary of the work will be made available to those interviewees who indicate an interest in the final outcomes

The University of Tasmania, Human Ethics Committee has approved this study. If you have any concerns about the manner in which the project is conducted you may contact the Executive Officer of the Human Research ethics committee (Tasmania) who can be contacted on 0362267479 or human.ethics@utas.edu.au

If you are prepared to take part in this study please contact S.R. Zichy-Woinarski 63826280 or 0418135080 or email, zics@bigpond.com

More information on the study can be obtained from Associate Professor Sue Kilpatrick, phone 03 6324 4000.

[signatures]

Sue Kilpatrick

John Williamson

S.R. Zichy-Woinarski

APPENDIX 3

Letter of Support: Primary Employers Tasmania



28 Garfield Street, South Launceston, PO Box 3014, Launceston Tasmania 7250
 Ph: 03 6343 2244 • Fax: 03 6343 2822 • e-mail: primaryemployers@bigpond.com • ABN 95 330 573 650
 Primary Employers Tasmania incorporating TFGA Industrial Association (Federal) and Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Employer's Association (State)
 Registered under the Workplace Relations Act 1996 (CTH) and the Industrial Relations Act 1984 (Tas)

Date

Address Block

Line 2

LINE 3

Line 4?

Dear ,

WITHER RURAL INDUSTRIES? THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE EDUCATION DEBATE

On behalf of Primary Employers of Tasmania, I am writing to seek your assistance for Zich Woinarski who is currently undertaking his Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Tasmania. This study is being supervised by Associate Professor S. Kilpatrick who is Chief Investigator of the project and Director of the Department of Rural Health, University of Tasmania and Professor J. Williamson.

This study seeks to explore and consider what input rural and related industries have on the provision of education in Rural Australia. Whilst this work will look at education per se, it will have particular emphasis on vocational training and skills formation in these rural and related industries and communities, and will review the development of education policy and its implementation and whether this takes cognisance of those needs.

From this work it is hoped to develop a template which will assist rural industries and rural communities to influence education and vocational training in order to maximise the utilisation of scarce educational resources for the benefit of the community.

This research is considering three (3) case studies which had particular vocational training initiatives. These are:

1. the introduction of the GST in 2000
2. National Rural Skills Traineeship in 1994
3. introduction of Competency Based Training in 1997

Your input into the development of one or more of these training initiatives was important and Zich Woinarski seeks your advice and understanding in how these initiatives evolved, the issues which needed to be considered and to reflect on what lessons were learned from your involvement and input with particular reference to rural and related industries. The enclosed Information Sheet has more details

If you are prepared to take part in this study please contact S.R.Zichy-Woinarski, 6382 6280 or 0418 135 080 or his e-mail address zics@bigpond.com

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'KJ Rice'.

Keith J Rice
 Chief Executive

The University of Tasmania, Human Ethics Committee has approved this study.

Representing the Workplace Relations interests of:



Proudly Sponsored by:



APPENDIX 4

**University of Tasmania Information Sheet
Deakin University Plain Language Statement
Consent Form**

Locked Bag 1372 Launceston
Tasmania 7250 Australia
Telephone: (03) 6324 4000 Fax: (03) 6324 4040
Email: rural.health@utas.edu.au
Website: www.utas.edu.au/ruralhealth



UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF RURAL HEALTH

16th May 2007

**"Wither Rural industries? Their influence on the education debate."
Information Sheet**

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This study seeks to explore and consider what input rural and related industries have on the provision of education in Rural Australia. Whilst this work will look at education per se, it will have particular emphasis on vocational training and skills formation in these rural and related industries and communities, and will review the development of education policy and its implementation and whether this takes cognisance of those needs. From this work it is hoped to develop a template which will assist rural industries and rural communities to influence education and vocational training in order to maximise the utilisation of scarce educational resources for the benefit of the community.

This research is considering three [3] case studies which had particular vocational training initiatives. These are:

1. the introduction of GST in 2000
2. National Rural Skills Traineeship in 1994
3. introduction of Competency based Training in 1997

Your input into the development of one or more of these training initiatives was important and we seek your advice and understanding in how these initiatives evolved, the issues which needed to be considered and to reflect on what lessons were learned from your involvement and input with particular reference to rural and related industries.

Participation in this study is voluntary and any research data gathered during this study will be kept confidential. Also your identity will be kept confidential and that any information you supply will not identify you as a participant

For your assistance, I set out the process for which I will seek your advice and comments.

1. Most interviews will be conducted by telephone.

2. You will be provided with an outline of the questions prior to the interview.
3. You will need to allow about 45 minutes for the interview.
4. Zich Woinarski will contact you by telephone to arrange an appropriate time and date to undertake the interview.
5. At the start of the interview Zich Woinarski will seek your permission to tape the interview, you may decline permission.
6. As part of the study process you are able to withdraw your data at any time within twenty eight [28] days of the interview.
7. All interview data used in this study will be kept in a locked and secure filing cabinet in the Department of Rural Health, University of Tasmania and will be destroyed five[5] years after the completion of the study
8. An Executive Summary of the work will be made available to those interviewees who indicate an interest in the final outcomes

The University of Tasmania, Human Ethics Committee has approved this study. If you have any concerns about the manner in which the project is conducted you may contact the Executive Officer of the Human Research ethics committee (Tasmania) who can be contacted on 0362267479 or human.ethics@utas.edu.au

If you are prepared to take part in this study please contact S.R. Zichy-Woinarski 63826280 or 0418135080 or email, zics@bigpond.com

More information on the study can be obtained from Associate Professor Sue Kilpatrick, phone 03 6324 4000.

[signatures]

Sue Kilpatrick

John Williamson

S.R. Zichy-Woinarski

**DEAKIN UNIVERSITY
PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM**



TO: Key Informants

Plain Language Statement

Date: 20th April 2009

Full Project Title: Whither Rural Industries? Their influence on the education debate.

Principal Researcher: Professor S. Kilpatrick

Student Researcher: Zich Zichy-Woinarski

Associate Researcher(s):

This Plain Language Statement and Consent Form is # pages long. Please make sure you have all the pages.

1. Your Consent

You are invited to take part in this research project. This Plain Language Statement contains detailed information about the research project. Its purpose is to explain to you as openly and clearly as possible all the procedures involved in this project so that you can make a fully informed decision whether you are going to participate.

Please read this Plain Language Statement carefully. Feel free to ask questions about any information in the document. You may also wish to discuss the project with a relative or friend or your local health worker. Feel free to do this.

Once you understand what the project is about and if you agree to take part in it, you will be asked to sign the Consent Form. By signing the Consent Form, you indicate that you understand the information and that you give your consent to participate in the research project.

You will be given a copy of the Plain Language Statement and Consent Form to keep as a record.

2. Purpose and Background

The purpose of this project is to investigate the question how rural industries and rural communities can influence the education debate to their benefit and long term outcomes

A total of 20 people will participate in this project.

This study seeks to explore and consider what input rural and related industries have on the provision of education in rural Australia. Whilst this work will look at education per se, it will have particular emphasis on vocational training and skills formation in these rural and related industries and communities, and will review the development of educational policy and its implementation and whether this takes cognisance of those needs

You are invited to participate in this research project because you are a key informant in one of the selected case studies or you have been identified by a key informant as a source of benefit to these case studies.

The results of this research may be used to help researcher Zich Zichy-Woinarski to obtain a Doctorate of Philosophy degree.

3. Funding

There is no funding for this research

4. Procedures

Participation in this project will involve

1. An interview of about 40-50 minutes which will be conducted at a mutually convenient location, or by telephone.
2. You will be provided with an outline of the questions prior to the interview
3. You will be contacted by e-mail or telephone to arrange an appropriate time and date to undertake the interview.
4. At the start of the interview we will seek your permission to audio-record the interview; you may decline permission.
5. As part of the study process you are able to withdraw your data at any time within twenty eight [28] days of the interview

5. Possible Benefits

Possible benefits include the development of a template which will assist rural industries and rural communities to influence education and vocational training in order to maximise scarce educational resources for the benefit of rural communities. We cannot guarantee or promise that you will receive any benefits from this project.

6. Possible Risks

It is anticipated there will be minimal risk from your involvement.

7. Privacy, Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information

Participation in this study is voluntary and any research data gathered during this study will be kept confidential. Your identity will be kept confidential and any information you supply will not identify you as a participant. In any publication, information will be provided in such a way that you cannot be identified.

All interview data used in this study will be kept in a locked secure filing cabinet and password protected computer at Deakin University and will be destroyed six [6] years after final publication of the study results.

8. Results of Project

The project will produce a publicly available report which will be delivered to the Federal and State Governments, Educational Authorities, National and State Farming Organisations and be available to improve the delivery of vocational and skills formation in rural industries and rural communities. The template will provide interested parties with the opportunity to match education and skills formation to the community needs and how to lobby for its implementation.

In addition a number of case studies and journal articles will be developed based on the findings.

9. Participation is Voluntary

Participation in any research project is voluntary. **If you do not wish to take part you are not obliged to.** If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are free to withdraw from the project at any stage. You may choose not to answer any question. You may withdraw any data you

have supplied up until twenty eight [28] days after the interview. Any information obtained from you to date will not be used and will be destroyed. Your decision whether to take part or not to take part, or to take part and then withdraw, will not affect your relationship with Deakin University

Before you make your decision, a member of the research team will be available to answer any questions you have about the research project. You can ask for any information you want. Sign the Consent Form only after you have had a chance to ask your questions and have received satisfactory answers.

If you decide to withdraw from this project, please notify a member of the research team or complete and return the Revocation of Consent Form attached. This notice will allow the research team to inform you if there are any health risks or special requirements linked to withdrawing.

10. Ethical Guidelines

This project will be carried out according to the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (2007) produced by the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia. This statement has been developed to protect the interests of people who agree to participate in human research studies.

The ethics aspects of this research project have been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of Deakin University and by the University of Tasmania, Human Research Ethics Committee [Tasmania] Network.

11. Complaints

If you have any complaints about any aspect of the project, the way it is being conducted or any questions about your rights as a research participant, then you may contact:

The Manager, Office of Research Integrity, Deakin University, 221 Burwood Highway, Burwood Victoria 3125, Telephone: 9251 7129, Facsimile: 9244 6581; research-ethics@deakin.edu.au.

12. Reimbursement for your costs

You will not be paid for your participation in this project.

13. Further Information, Queries or Any Problems

If you require further information, wish to withdraw your participation or if you have any problems concerning this project (for example, any side effects), you can contact the principal researcher Professor Sue Kilpatrick or associate researcher Zich Zichy-Woinarski.

The researchers responsible for this project are:

Professor S. Kilpatrick

Office of the Pro vice Chancellor [Rural and Regional]

Deakin University

PO Box 432 Warrnambool Vic 3280

Phone: [03]5563 3138 E-mail: pvcrr@deakin.edu.au

Mr Zich Zichy-Woinarski

8 Clarke Street, Weymouth, TAS 7252

Phone: [03]6382 6280 E-mail: zics@bigpond.com



Consent Form

Wither Rural Industries? their influence on the education debate

1. I have read and understood the "Information Sheet" for this study.
2. The nature and possible effects of the study have been explained to me.
3. I understand that the study involves consideration of the provision of education for rural and related industries, with a particular emphasis on vocational training and skills acquisition
4. I understand that all research data will be stored on the University of Tasmania premises for five years and will then be destroyed
5. Any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction
6. I agree that research data gathered from me for the study may be published provided that I cannot be identified as a participant
7. I understand that the researchers will maintain my identity confidential and that any information I supply to the researchers will be used only for the purpose of the research
8. I agree to participate in this investigation and understand that I may withdraw at any time without any effect, and if I so wish, may request that any data I have supplied to date be withdrawn from the research up to 28 days after the interview.
9. I understand that I will participate in an interview process of 30-45 minutes which will seek information on issues relating to the case studies listed in the Information Sheet

Name of Participant

Signature

Date

Statement by Investigator

☐ I have explained the project and the implications of participation in it to this volunteer and I believe that the consent is informed and that he/she understands the implications of participation

☐ The participant has received the Information Sheet where my details have been provided so participants have the opportunity to contact me prior to consenting to participate in this project

Name of Investigator

Signature of Investigator

Date

APPENDIX 5

Interview Outline and Questions

Interview Outline

Thankyou to agreeing to participate in this study, “Wither Rural industries? their influence on the education debate.”

This research is considering three [3] case studies which had particular vocational training initiatives. These are:

1. the introduction of GST in 2000
2. National Rural Skills Traineeship in 1994
3. introduction of Competency based Training in 1997

For your assistance, I set out the process for which I will seek your advice and comments

1. Most interviews will be conducted by telephone.
2. You will be provided with an outline of the questions prior to the interview.
3. You will need to allow about 45 minutes for the interview.
4. Zich Woinarski will contact you by telephone to arrange an appropriate time and date to undertake the interview.
5. At the start of the interview Zich Woinarski will seek your permission to tape the interview, you may decline permission.
6. As part of the study process you are able to withdraw your data at any time within twenty eight [28] days of the interview.
7. All interview data used in this study will be kept in a locked and secure filing cabinet in the Department of Rural Health, University of Tasmania and will be destroyed five[5] years after the completion of the study
8. An Executive Summary of the work will be made available to those interviewees who indicate an interest in the final outcomes

S.R. Zichy-Woinarski
63826280 or 0418135080

Interview Questions

1. Could you describe the process of setting up the [Vocational Training and Education(VET) policy] initiative and could you outline your role in the process

2. When developing [VET] policy initiative, were did you seek advice

Prompts

- A. what causes policy development
- B. who did you consult with
- C. were community groups involved in the consultation stage-rural/remote
- D. how did you consult with industry groups-NFF,AIG,ACCI etc
- E. was research undertaken to see whether a similar policy had been developed overseas

3. When implementing VET policy how did you undertake the implementation phase within your agency or in conjunction with another agency?

Prompts

- A. how was implementation driven
- B. who did you consult with
- C. did you involve community groups in the implementation stage
- D. did you seek industry assistance in the implementation stage
- E. did overseas examples help with the implementation stage
- F. did you trial prior to implementation

4. How did you evaluate the success of VET initiatives

Prompts

- A. how did you define success
- B. what evaluation process did you undertake
- C. how did you measure success
- D. did you involve communities in the evaluation process
- E. how did you take cognisance of their views in any review

F. did you seek industry input

Preamble prompt- thankyou for your comments to these questions, I would now like to seek more specific amplification with particular consideration to rural industries and rural/remote communities.

5. Did you consider they had any input into the development, implementation and evaluation of VET and if so how did it occur

Prompts

- a. issue of access and equity
- b. issue of isolation
- c. how did you ensure standards were at least equal to those delivered in capital cities
- d. capital expenditure on equipment/facilities
- e. teachers maintaining their skills
- f. technological advances outstripping teachers skills- rural industries
- g. community consultation
- h. who/what were the drivers- individuals, community or industry organisation

Preamble prompt- in view of your remarks to the last question may I ask

6. What policy settings do you consider will be needed in the future to ensure that rural industries and rural communities have a significant input into VET training policy?

Prompts- at this stage seeking to start to develop the ideas which may go into the template which is part of the thesis. This covers a whole range of issues and will use the previous prompts, but this will depend on what evolves.

- a. how significant did you see this cohort
- b. did they have a significant input
- c. did you think the rural industry and rural communities input is significant
- d. how would you demonstrate this
- e. can you give me a couple of examples

7. What responsibility, if any, do Australian rural industries and rural communities have to influence, in a global economy, the policy, processes, development and implementation in respect to VET. Can you comment on their ability to exert this influence

Prompts

- a. this is the big ticket item
- b. looking forward to the future

8. Turning to the case study xxxx, can you describe for me the process of establishing xxx

Prompts

- a. whose idea was it
- b. what were the major barriers
- c. what/who helped the process
- d. how was it delivered
- e. was it evaluated and what were the results
- f. what were the immediate/long term outcomes
- g. did the policy development provide a positive or negative out come for the community and those who participated