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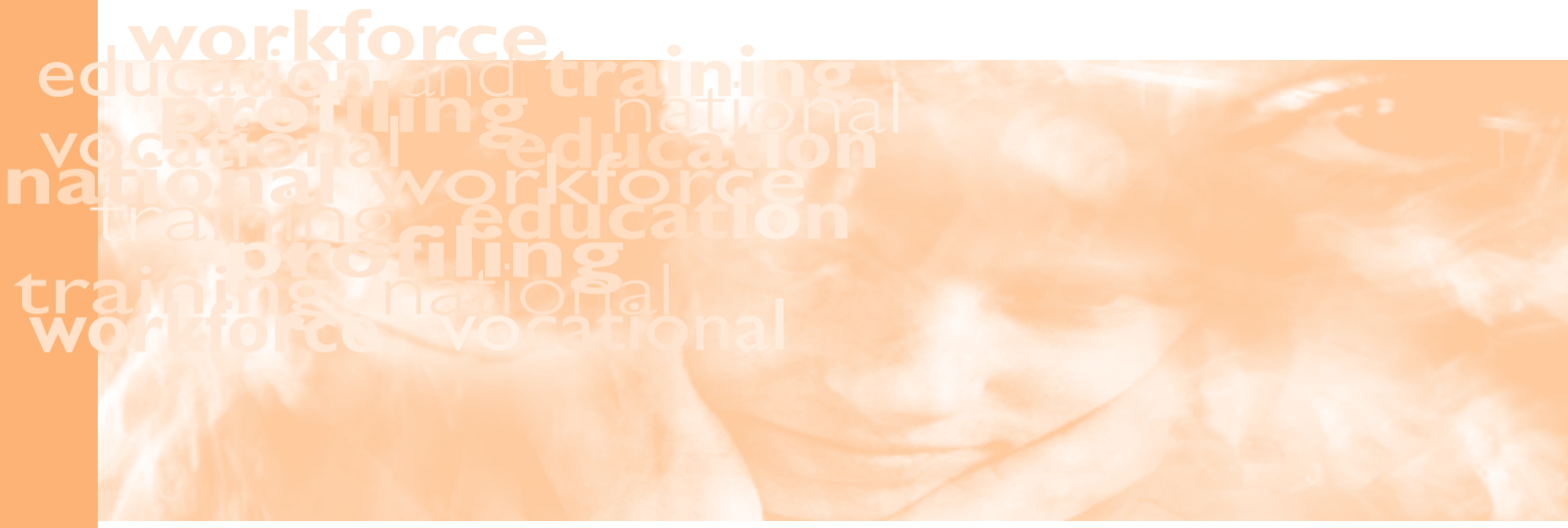

Profiling the national vocational education and training workforce

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Profiling the national vocational education and training workforce

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Level 11, 33 King William Street, Adelaide SA 5000
PO Box 8288 Station Arcade, Adelaide SA 5000, Australia
ph +61 8 8230 8400 fax +61 8 8212 3436
email ncver@ncver.edu.au

<http://www.ncver.edu.au>

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Key messages

- The vocational education and training (VET) workforce has a strategic role in the economy in equipping the workforce at large with the skills needed by industry. It is important that the VET sector is able to plan for the future and can do so on the basis of reliable projections of its own workforce. At the moment there are no reliable projections.
- The VET workforce is not well understood statistically. There are several weaknesses in the currently available data which impede future workforce planning. These include:
  - no single accepted measure of employment levels, with estimates of the TAFE workforce ranging from 39 000 to 90 000
  - no consistent definitions in TAFE administrative systems of key workforce concepts such as 'employee', 'teacher' and 'permanent'.
- The proportion of people engaged on a casual or sessional basis in TAFE is much higher than is found in the workforce as a whole. This may act as a brake on enhancing professional capability, as non-permanent staff tend to have shorter tenure and, in general, less opportunity to participate in professional development exercises.
- In common with the workforce in general, the VET workforce is ageing. Although there is no current problem of labour supply, there will be a high number of people retiring in coming years, particularly those employed by TAFE institutes.
- There are mixed messages on the qualifications of the VET workforce. While the proportion of VET professionals holding a post-school qualification is relatively high at two-thirds, and higher still in TAFE at four in five, relatively few have a qualification in education or training. This proportion will need to increase if vocational education and training is to remain quality assured.
- The profile of the TAFE workforce appears to have more in common with those in higher education and schooling than it does with other parts of the VET workforce, such as those employed by non-TAFE providers or those providing training within enterprises. Movement of employees across the VET workforce form a potential recruitment pool for TAFE institutes grappling with an ageing workforce, but this may raise issues about standards and modes of teaching and learning.

Executive summary

In Australia at the present time there is a gap in information relating to people employed as vocational education and training (VET) professionals. There have been a series of earlier studies which have examined various jurisdictions, notably Victoria, and a number of limited surveys have focused on a particular issue. However, to date, no national profile of the VET or technical and further education (TAFE) workforce has been undertaken.

This report consolidates two studies. The first is a national study of the TAFE workforce—that is, those working in TAFE institutions—using point-in-time administrative data from the states and territories as at June 2002. The second forms part of a larger Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) national project entitled *Enhancing the capability of the VET professional* (Dickie et al. 2004). This second study, which covers those working in both private and public registered training organisations, relied primarily on two Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) surveys—the Census of Population and Housing, and the Survey of Education and Training—for the years 1996 to 2001. Both surveys provide a national picture.

Overall, data were found to be inconsistent, both across states and territories and in data sources. For the national study of the TAFE workforce, only two data elements were collected on a consistent basis across jurisdictions. These were age and sex. There were also no consistent definitions across jurisdictions of key workplace concepts such as 'teacher' and 'employee'. The ABS data, while providing national demographic data on the VET workforce, were not especially useful for examining job characteristics, such as working hours and employment status. There were also discrepancies in fields, such as numbers employed and employment status, depending on the data source used. Nevertheless, some broad observations on the nature of the VET workforce can be made.

Key findings

The work of VET professionals is broadening

VET professionals are made up of VET practitioners—those involved in a range of 'direct' activities, such as delivery, development, and review and assessment of courses or modules—and other professional staff who are involved in indirect activities, such as administrative support, marketing programs and management. Over the period 1997–2001, VET professionals became more involved in direct activities, and somewhat less involved in indirect activities, with an overall effect of greater multi-tasking.

VET professionals are mostly VET practitioners

Most VET professionals spend at least some time involved in direct activities and therefore most can be considered VET practitioners. However, the amount of time spent on direct activities is highly varied. Among VET practitioners employed in a TAFE organisation, around one in two spend at least half of their time on direct activities. Outside TAFE, most VET practitioners spend little time on direct provision. Indeed, a clear majority of VET practitioners employed by other organisations providing education and training spend very little time on direct activities. The implication is that these VET practitioners are not employed primarily to provide vocational education and training.

VET professionals are no older than the workforce at large

The age profile of VET professionals has moved upwards over the period 1997–2001, with 34% of these people aged 45 years or older in 2001, nearly identical to the proportion of all employed people in Australia in that age bracket (33%). However, VET teachers in TAFE are on average much older than VET professionals taken as a whole (61% aged 45 years or more). They have a similar age profile to that of teachers in the higher education and schools sectors—partly due to the time needed to acquire the skills and experience to teach.

There are roughly equal numbers of male and female teachers in TAFE

The Census of Population and Housing data also indicate that overall, there are more teachers who are part-time than there are those who are full-time. However, more males are in full-time positions than are females. Most TAFE teachers are employed on a non-permanent basis. It also appears that this situation is not confined to the TAFE sector, and that the trend is towards greater use of both part-time and non-permanent staff.

More than two out of three VET professionals have a post-school qualification

Professionals in TAFE are more likely to hold a post-school qualification (eight in ten) than other VET professionals (two in three). Professionals in TAFE are also more likely to hold a VET-related qualification, while those outside TAFE are slightly more likely to hold a bachelor degree or postgraduate qualification. However, most VET practitioners do not have qualifications in education or training, a situation which is being remedied, for permanent staff at least, in some jurisdictions.

Implications for workforce planning

Any national aggregated assessment of the TAFE workforce is influenced by the situation in New South Wales. The NSW TAFE workforce accounts for 45% of the TAFE workforce and over half (52%) of the teaching workforce. NSW TAFE has the highest proportion of part-time, non-permanent teaching staff, a figure likely to be reflected in any national aggregate.

These findings have important implications for workforce planning for VET professionals, particularly teachers in the TAFE sector. Three in five teachers whose main job is in the TAFE sector are aged over 45, almost double the average for the Australian workforce as a whole. They mostly enjoy permanency and are well qualified. Their jobs are broadening. At the same time, the sector is making increasing use of part-time and non-permanent staff, most of whom do not have formal qualifications in education and training. These people now make up a majority of professionals employed in the sector.

Outside the TAFE sector the implications of ageing for workforce planning are less immediate. At the same time, the findings do raise questions about whether VET professionals are sufficiently well accredited to be delivering training, since nine out of ten do not have *any* qualifications in education or training. Any investigation of this issue must, however, acknowledge that most VET professionals outside the TAFE sector are not primarily employed to provide vocational education and training.

As previously highlighted, the findings must take account of the difficulty in gaining data on the number and characteristics of VET professionals, a situation exemplified by the fact that there is no definitive count of the number employed. More and richer data would go some way towards improving the ability of the sector to engage in workforce planning.

The final part of this consolidated report presents a rationale and options for a regular national data collection of the VET workforce.

Data collection relating to the workforce can be improved in a variety of ways, with the choice of method determined by level of precision required, the character of the data sought, and the costs of obtaining it. Data can be generated in two ways—as a by-product of an administrative system, or freshly generated by way of a survey. In the context of the professional VET workforce, data can be accumulated through an administrative collection undertaken via the human resource management systems of registered training organisations, or a survey of employees. The choice of method depends on a desire for accuracy (an administrative collection) as opposed to more subjective data on attitudes to work and a lower cost (an employee survey).

Introduction

Background and purpose

The nature of the workforce and work in Australia and other developed countries have undergone considerable change in recent times (Callus & Lansbury 2002). One of the major changes that has taken place is a movement in employment from goods-producing industries towards service industries. This change in industrial structure has had implications for the types of skills required by workers. How workers are employed has also changed, with increasing levels of 'flexible' work arrangements, such as casual and part-time work (Wooden 2002). In addition to these changes, there have been increased levels of female participation, increased levels of educational attainment, and an ageing of the workforce.

Changes have also occurred to the nature of work in vocational education and training (VET) and in the VET environment, such as changes in government policy, an increased emphasis on private sector practices, and the introduction of a training market. These changes have also affected the nature of the workforce. Work roles and the types of skills required are substantially altered. In addition, the VET workforce is ageing, and there are significant levels of female staff and casual and part-time staff. All of these changes have implications for the nature of professional development required. Appendix 1 describes in detail the context in which the VET workforce operates.

Understanding the nature of the VET workforce is essential for effective planning for the future workforce, both in terms of the required composition of the workforce, and also in terms of professional development needs. Collection of baseline data on the composition of the workforce is needed as a first step in this planning process. Good baseline data are valuable in informing decision-making at the state and registered training organisation level, and in providing an understanding of the workforce at a national level. However, as will be seen, obtaining consistent, national data on various aspects of the national VET workforce has proved to be somewhat elusive.

A 2002 joint report by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) judged that the VET sector was relatively well served with statistical information. Six areas were, however, identified as poorly served, one of which covers data on the national VET workforce.

Since that time, two national reports have been produced on this topic. The first was undertaken by NCVER for the National Training Statistics Committee, with state training authorities asked to complete pre-specified tables on the technical and further education (TAFE) workforce employed in their jurisdiction as of June 2002.

The second report was also undertaken by NCVER as part of the Quay Connections consortium for the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) national project, *Enhancing the capability of the VET professional* (Dickie et al. 2004). That report used two different ABS sources, the Census of Population and Housing and the Survey of Education and Training, to profile VET professionals.

This present report consolidates the data analysis from both national reports. Firstly, the data on the TAFE workforce using administrative data supplied by state training authorities are presented. This is followed by the data on VET professionals taken from the ABS Census of Population and Housing and the Survey of Education and Training. The final part of this report presents the rationale and options for a regular national data collection of the VET workforce.

Data sources and issues

Three main sources of data are available. The TAFE workforce report used aggregate administrative data gathered from the states and territories as at June 2002 and the VET professional report used data from two primary ABS sources—the Census of Population and Housing, and the Survey of Education and Training.

Data and the data sources were found to be inconsistent across states and territories. From the national study of the TAFE workforce, it was established that there were only two fields collected on a consistent basis across all jurisdictions: age and sex. On all other fields there was some inconsistency, particularly in relation to employment status and qualifications held. Most importantly, there were no consistent definitions on key workforce concepts such as 'teacher' and 'employee'.

While providing a nationally consistent demographic profile of the VET workforce, the ABS data were found not to be especially useful for examining job characteristics, such as working hours and employment status. There is also a disparity in areas such as numbers employed and employment status information, depending on the mechanism used to collect the data.

The inconsistency of data available suggests that it may be timely to explore options for a regular national collection of VET workforce data. These options are discussed in the final part of this report.

Summaries of the information available from these three data sources are shown in table 1. Further information on the two ABS sources is contained in appendix 2.

Table 1: Data sources and what they can identify

	Administrative data	Census	Surveys
VET teachers	Only currently available for TAFE. Widely inconsistent definitions applied to teacher and employee.	Identified through occupation of main job. Can be divided into TAFE and non-TAFE by intersecting with industry of main job.	Survey of Education and Training can be used to identify people who are directly involved in providing education or training, from which it is possible to infer VET teachers according to the kind of provider employing them.
VET workforce	As above, with caveat limited to employed.	Workforce as a whole cannot be identified, but those employed in TAFE (as their main job) can be.	As above, for anyone involved in providing education or training.

National study of the TAFE workforce

Research purpose

The aim of this national study is to undertake the first step and describe the characteristics of the TAFE workforce (that is, those employed in TAFE institutions), including a profile of the skills and qualifications of the workforce. This information may assist those involved in workforce planning to gain a better understanding of the extent to which the current skills of the workforce match the environment in which the workforce operates.

The study contains information gathered via point-in-time data to profile the TAFE workforce, sourced from aggregate data provided by the states and territories. The types of data requested include:

- age
- gender
- employment status (full-time, part-time, sessional/casual/contract)
- staff position (permanent/non-permanent)
- work area
- length of service.

In addition, information relating to qualifications and the skill profile of the TAFE workforce was also requested from the states and territories but was largely unavailable at that time. This included data on:

- the qualifications of current employees
- the range of staff development available
- the range of staff development opportunities taken up
- industry experience of staff
- previous career/jobs held by staff.

Methodology

Background

Following confirmation in September 2001 of in-principle support from ANTA to explore the feasibility of undertaking a national study to profile the TAFE workforce further, NCVER developed a statement of purpose and methodology for the project in consultation with the states and territories.

Purpose and scope

The aim of the national study is to describe the characteristics of the TAFE workforce, including a profile of the skills and qualifications of both the teaching and non-teaching workforce.

Methodology

The states and territories were asked to supply point-in-time data to profile the TAFE workforce, including data on the qualifications and skill profile of staff. In order to minimise inconsistencies in data collection across states and territories, cross-tabulated templates were developed, incorporating the data elements specified in the research purpose.

TAFE workforce statistics

TAFE workforce data collection

The data provided in this section include information on gender, age, employment status, areas of employment and length of service. One of the objectives of this data collection was to provide a national overview. However, a complete profile of the TAFE workforce in Australia has not been reported as the following section explains.

The statistics present state and territory information, rather than national data, to identify and report TAFE workforce trends. In some instances, where all authorities have supplied similar information, estimated national figures are given. Percentages have been reported in order to compare states and territories and to identify these trends.

TAFE workforce data collection issues

For this project, information was initially requested which related to gender, age group, staff position, hours worked, to full-time equivalent employees, employment status, length of service, teacher/training qualifications and areas of employment for non-teaching staff.

All states and territories were able to provide some level of information about the TAFE workforce. Information ranged from one table of employee statistics, consisting of staff positions by gender and employment status, to an institute-level analysis of all information requested (excluding teaching qualifications) to respondent level data.

Overall, all states and territories were able to provide information by gender and, except for one state, age group statistics. The majority of other variables collected show some level of differentiation in terms of terminology, data values or data categories. In particular, there was limited information regarding teaching/training qualifications (only one data provider supplied this information), hours worked, teaching and non-teaching hours for teachers and their full-time equivalents.

All states and territories were able to report numbers of employees for a limited number of employment options; for example, two states were able to provide full-time equivalent (FTE) numbers, but not hours worked.

As noted above, with the exception of one data provider, information about teacher qualifications was not provided, and no states or territories were able to provide data in relation to staff development, staff industry experience and previous career/jobs held by staff.

Access to TAFE workforce data

Several states and territories indicated that there was limited access to the data for the period required. The main reasons for limited access were:

- that the TAFE workforce data cannot be sourced from the institutes without negotiation
- that the workforce information is not on a central or departmental system. The information needs to be sourced from other systems. For example, human resource systems are outside central TAFE in some states. In addition, some information is not kept on the departmental system
- that only partial information could be provided because the combination of data elements requested does not reside on one system. For example, the number of teachers is available, but a

breakdown of full-time and part-time teachers is not available on the system and this information needs to be sourced from another external database.

Resources required to compile data

The compilation of the TAFE workforce data was undertaken manually by a number of data providers. Some states indicated that some of the required information was not on the departmental human resource system; for example, field of study by length of service. Therefore to gather this data would require a manual exercise, possibly undertaken by individual institutes. This would take considerable time and resources.

In these instances the collection process could not be automated, a situation which impacted on the ability to gather and compile information for this project, both in terms of time and resources.

The TAFE workforce findings

There are more than 62 500 TAFE employees in Australia. New South Wales accounts for over 45% of this figure and Victoria close to 23%. Table 2 shows the total number of TAFE staff and the proportion of males and females by state and territory.

Table 2: Total number of TAFE employees by staff position, gender and state/territory[1, 2]

	NSW[3]	Vic	Qld[4]	WA	SA	Tas	NT	ACT	Total
Teachers									
Male	10 460	4 800	2 120	1 400	1 380	280	30	330	**20 800**
Female	11 690	4 150	2 200	1 400	1 420	200	20	410	**21 490**
Total	**22 150**	**8 950**	**4 320**	**2 800**	**2 800**	**480**	**50**	**740**	**42 290**
Non-teachers									
Male	2 420	1 770	1 280	780	430	210	20	130	**7 040**
Female	3 700	3 560	2 630	1 360	1 250	350	50	280	**13 180**
Total	**6 120**	**5 330**	**3 910**	**2 140**	**1 670**	**560**	**70**	**410**	**20 210**
All males	12 890	6 570	3 400	2 170	1 810	490	60	470	**27 860**
All females	15 390	7 710	4 830	2 770	2 670	550	60	690	**34 670**
All staff	**28 280**	**14 280**	**8 220**	**4 940**	**4 480**	**1 030**	**120**	**1 150**	**62 500**

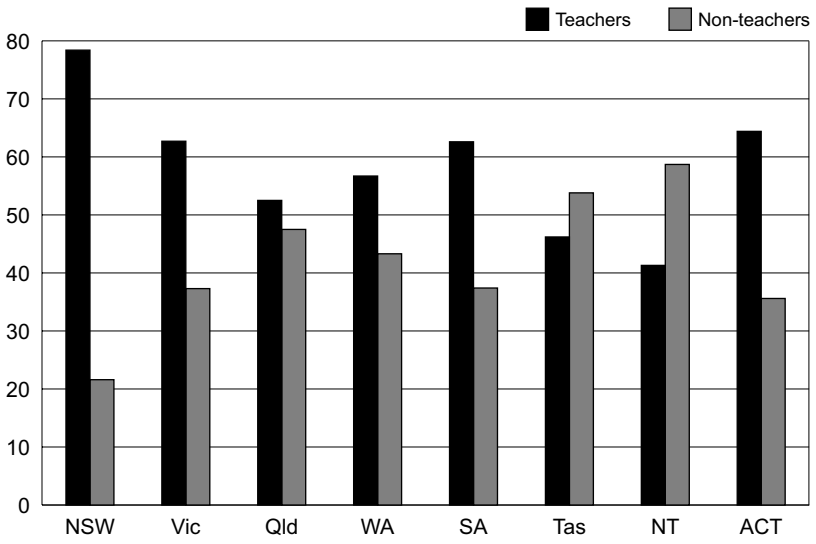
Notes: 1 Due to rounding some figures may not sum.
2 'Point-in-time' data for the week beginning 3 June 2002 were specified. Queensland data provided as at 2 June 2002.
3 TAFE NSW data are specified as 'head count', rather than full-time equivalent (FTE).
4 Queensland's 'head count' data equates to 6386 FTEs.

Staff position

About two-thirds of TAFE employees are teaching staff (as defined by individual states and territories).

There were more teaching than non-teaching staff in all states except for the Northern Territory and Tasmania (figure 1). New South Wales had the highest proportion of teachers, accounting for 78.4% of staff, followed by the Australian Capital Territory with 64.4%, Victoria and South Australia with 62.7% and 62.6% respectively, Western Australia with 56.7% and Queensland with 52.5% of staff in teaching positions.

Figure 1: Proportions of teaching and non-teaching staff across states and territories



Gender

Females represent 55.5% of TAFE staff in Australia and this trend is consistent across all states and territories. South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory have the highest proportion of female staff, with 59.7% and 59.5% respectively in this category. In Queensland, females account for 58.7% of the workforce while the other states vary from 52.1% to 56.0%.

Male employees represent 44.5% of the TAFE workforce. The Northern Territory and Tasmania have the greatest proportion of male employees with 47.9% and 47.0% respectively, while Victoria has slightly less at 46.0%. Figures for other states and territories range from 40.5% to 45.6%.

Overall, there are slightly more female than male teachers. Total figures in table 2 show that there are approximately 21 500 females compared with 20 800 male teachers. Interestingly however, there are almost twice as many females in non-teaching positions (13 200) compared with males (7000).

The ratio patterns of teaching to non-teaching staff differ by sex and state (table 3).

Table 3: Proportion of TAFE employees by staff position, sex and state and territory (%)[1]

	NSW[2]	Vic	Qld[3]	WA	SA	Tas	NT	ACT
Males								
Teachers	81.2	73.1	62.4	64.4	76.5	56.5	58.6	71.3
Non-teachers	18.8	26.9	37.6	35.6	23.5	43.5	41.4	28.7
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
Females								
Teachers	76.0	53.8	45.5	50.8	53.2	37.0	25.4	59.7
Non-teachers	24.0	46.2	54.5	49.2	46.8	63.0	74.6	40.3
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Notes: 1 'Point-in-time' data for the week beginning 3 June 2002 were specified. Queensland data provided as at 2 June 2002.
2 TAFE NSW data are specified as 'head count', rather than full-time equivalent (FTE).
3 Queensland's 'head count' data equates to 6386 FTEs.

There are more male teachers than male non-teaching staff across all states and territories. In New South Wales, 81.2% of all male TAFE staff are teachers. This proportion is also high in South Australia (76.5%), Victoria (73.1%) and the Australian Capital Territory (71.3%). Proportions in the other states and territories range from 56.5% to 64.4%.

The trends are not consistent for female employees. There are:

- more females in teaching than non-teaching positions in the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria. New South Wales has the highest proportion of female teachers with 76%
- more females in non-teaching than teaching positions in Tasmania, the Northern Territory and Queensland. In the Northern Territory only a quarter of female TAFE employees are in teaching positions. These figures are higher in Queensland and Tasmania, where 45.5% and 37% respectively of the female TAFE workforce are teachers.

There is a similar proportion of female teaching and non-teaching staff in Western Australia.

By way of comparison, of the 81 145 higher education staff in Australia in 2002, 42.6% (34 601) were classified as academic[1], and 57.5% (46 554) as non-academic. In terms of gender, 62.0% (21 439) of academic staff were male and 38.0% (13 162) female, while 61.9% (28 815) of non-academic staff were female, and 38.1% (17 729) were male (Department of Education, Science and Training 2003b).

Furthermore, a recent report by the Department of Education, Science and Training (2003a) indicates that the school teaching[2] workforce is becoming increasingly feminised. The report notes that the ratio of female to male teachers increased from 1.4 in 1982 to 2.1 in 2002. The increase was larger for primary school teachers than for secondary school teachers. For the Australian labour force overall in 2002, of the 9.964 million people participating, 55.9% were male and 44.1% female (ABS 2002a).

To provide more details about staff positions, the following tables report teaching and non-teaching staff separately.

Teaching staff[3]

Employment status of teaching staff

Table 4 presents the proportion of teachers who are full-time and those who are not full-time, by permanent and non-permanent. The Australian Capital Territory is not included in this table.

Overall, there are more teachers who are not full-time than full-time teachers in all states except the Northern Territory, Tasmania and Queensland. New South Wales has the highest proportion of non-full-time teaching staff, with 78.2%.

By contrast, the Northern Territory has the highest proportion of full-time teachers (86.0%), closely followed by Tasmania (80.7%). Queensland also has slightly more full-time staff, with 51.4%.

---

[1] Academic staff are those employed to carry out teaching and/or research functions, and also senior staff such as vice-chancellors, deputy vice-chancellors, principals, and deputy principals. Non-academic staff are those other than specified for academic classifications. They are employed to support academic staff (Department of Education, Science and Training 2003b)

[2] The ABS defines teaching staff as those 'who have teaching duties and spend the majority of their time in contact with students. They include principals, deputy principals, and senior teachers mainly involved in administration' (ABS 2002b, p.30).

[3] Teachers as used in this report for Queensland include staff classified as teachers, tutors or workplace trainers as at 2 June 2002. It is not a functional breakdown.

Table 4: TAFE teachers by sex, employment status and state and territory (%)[1,2,3]

	NSW[4]	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	NT	ACT
Full-time—permanent								
Male	13.0	22.3	24.0	18.7	16.9	51.4	34.0	na
Female	8.8	9.7	13.5	8.3	7.6	23.9	10.0	na
Total	**21.8**	**32.0**	**37.4**	**27.1**	**24.5**	**75.3**	**44.0**	**na**
Not full-time[2]—permanent								
Male	0.0	2.2	0.9	1.6	0.5	3.4	0.0	na
Female	0.3	6.9	4.1	3.7	2.2	11.7	0.0	na
Total	**0.3**	**9.1**	**5.1**	**5.3**	**2.7**	**15.1**	**0.0**	**na**
Full-time—non-permanent								
Male	0.0	7.8	7.0	9.3	11.7	1.8	30.0	na
Female	0.0	4.5	6.9	6.0	9.7	3.5	12.0	na
Total	**0.0**	**12.3**	**14.0**	**15.3**	**21.5**	**5.4**	**42.0**	**na**
Not full-time[2]—non-permanent								
Male	34.2	21.3	17.1	20.3	20.1	0.8	4.0	na
Female	43.7	25.3	26.4	32.0	31.1	3.5	10.0	na
Total	**77.9**	**46.6**	**43.5**	**52.3**	**51.3**	**4.3**	**14.0**	**na**
All teachers	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Notes: 1 'Point-in-time' data for the week beginning 3 June 2002 were specified. Queensland data provided as at 2 June 2002.
2 'Not full-time' may include part-time, casual and sessional teachers.
3 Due to rounding some figures may not sum.
4 TAFE NSW data are specified as 'head count', rather than full-time equivalent (FTE).

Table 5 shows that there are more male teachers in full-time positions than not full-time in all states, except New South Wales. The Northern Territory has the highest full-time employment rate, with 94.1% of the male teaching workforce in this category. The other states range from 56.2% to 63.2%. In contrast to this trend, 72.4% of male teachers in New South Wales are not full-time.

Females show the opposite trend. There are more females in non-full-time positions than in full-time except for the Northern Territory. In New South Wales 83.3% of female teachers are in non-full-time positions. In the Northern Territory 68.8% of female teachers are full-time.

Table 5: Percentage of TAFE teachers by sex, employment status and state/territory, 2002

	NSW	NT	Qld	SA	Vic	WA
Females						
Full-time	16.7	68.8	40.1	34.2	30.7	28.6
Not full-time	83.3	31.2	59.9	65.8	69.3	71.4
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
Males						
Full-time	27.5	94.1	63.2	58.1	56.2	56.3
Not full-time	72.5	5.9	36.8	41.9	43.8	43.7
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
All						
Full-time	21.8	86.0	51.4	46.0	44.3	42.4
Not full-time	78.2	14.0	48.6	54.0	55.7	57.6
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

By comparison, for the Australian labour force overall in 2002, 70.1% of workers were classified as full-time, and 29.9% part-time. In terms of gender, 53.3% of females were classified as full-time, while 84.6% of males were full-time (ABS 2002a).

Permanent and non-permanent teachers

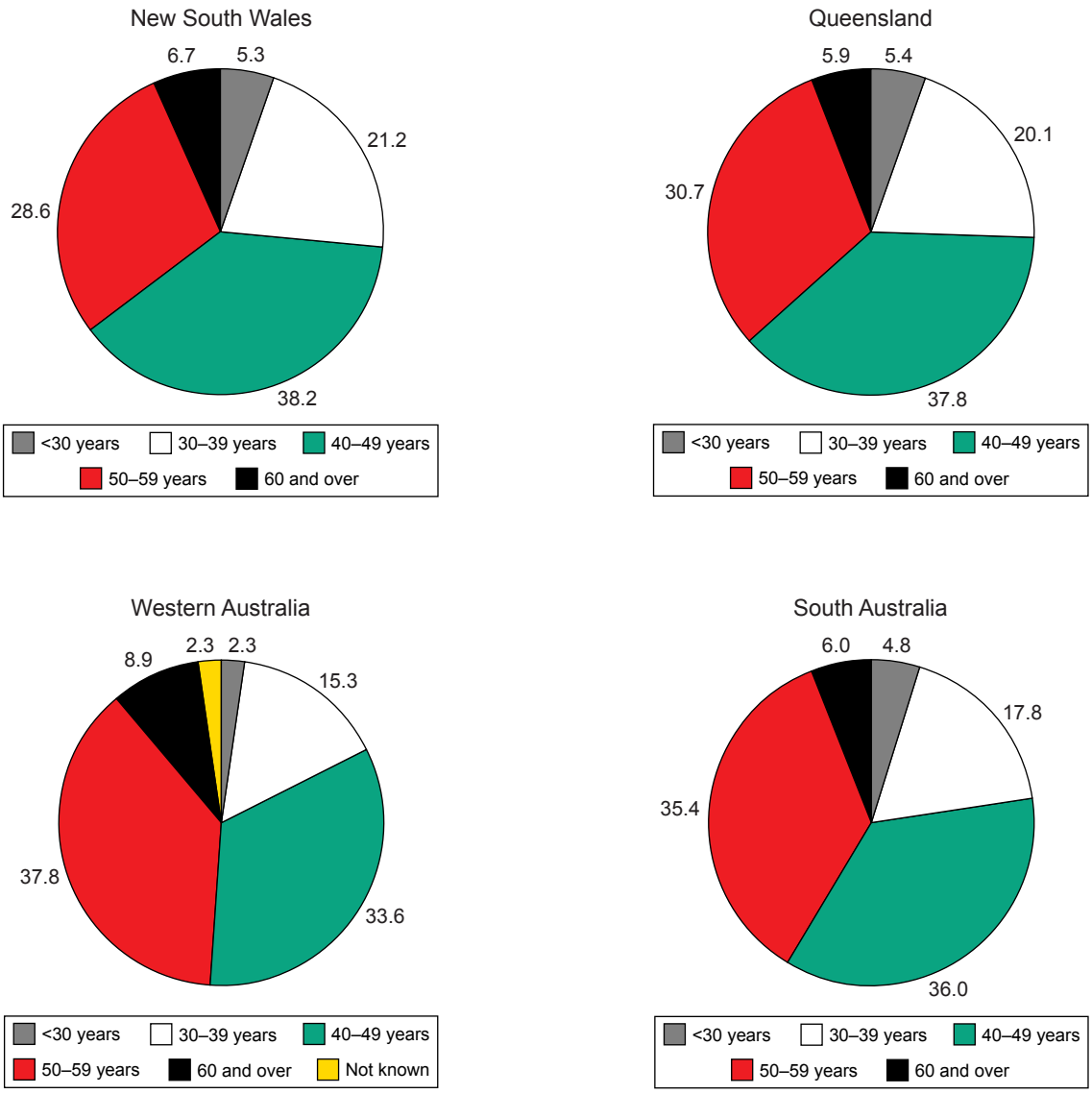
TAFE teachers overall are employed on a non-permanent basis (based on statistics excluding data from the Australian Capital Territory and Tasmania). The higher proportion of non-permanent staff is consistent across all states and territories. There is also a higher proportion of male than female teachers in permanent positions across all states and territories.

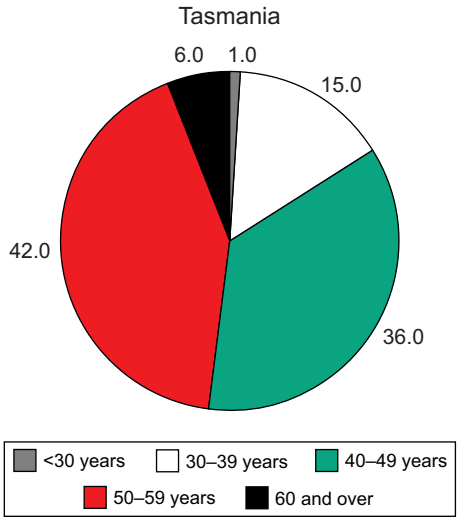
Across the states and territories, this figure is as high as 77.9% in New South Wales and 72.8% in South Australia, and as low as 56.0% in the Northern Territory. The proportion of permanent teaching staff ranges from 22.1% to 44.0% across the states and territories. The Northern Territory, Queensland and Victoria have the highest permanent rate of 44.0%, 42.5% and 41.1%.

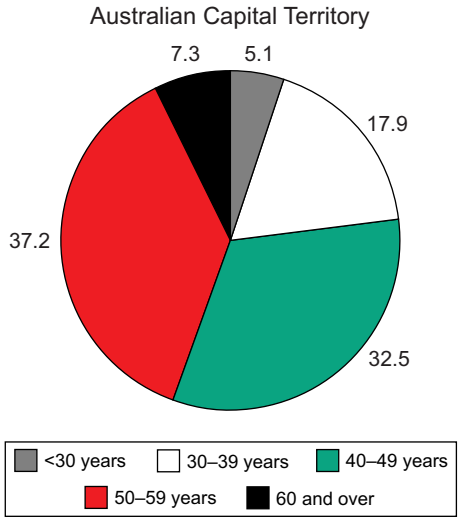
Age of teaching staff

The age profiles of TAFE teachers are presented in figure 2. Victoria is excluded.

Figure 2: Age profiles of TAFE teachers by states/territories (%)







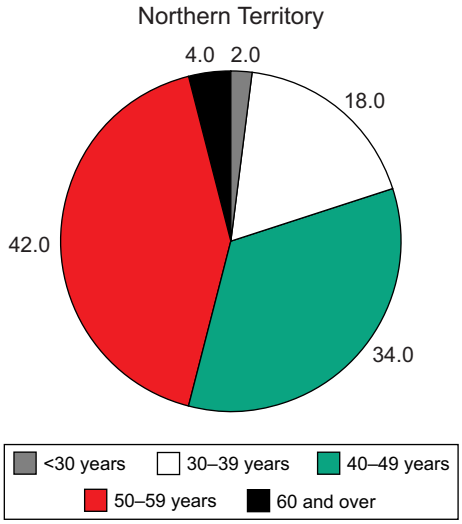


Table 6 shows that there are very few permanent teachers under the age of 30. In New South Wales, Queensland and the Northern Territory, there were similar proportions of permanent teachers in the 40–49 and 50–59 age groups. However, there were far fewer proportionately in the 40–49 age cohort in Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory, compared with those in the 50–59 age cohort. Contract/temporary and sessional/casual teachers are younger than permanent staff. Between 3.6% and 9.2% of contract staff are under 30, and about 7% to 8% of casual staff are under 30 for the four states and territories which provided data for this category. These data are consistent with findings of other writers (for example, Kronemann 2001; David Rumsey and Associates 2002).

By way of comparison, data for the Australian labour force overall in 2002 indicates that 43% of the labour force was under 35, while approximately 33% was over 45 years of age (ABS 2002a). For the higher education sector, approximately 5.5% of staff falling within academic classifications are under 30 years of age, while about 38% are 50 or over (Department of Education, Science and Training 2003b). Further data for the schools sector indicate that, in 2001, approximately 30% of school teachers are under 35, while 42% were aged 45 years or more (ABS 2002b). Further data by the Department of Education, Science and Training (2003a) indicate that the school teacher population is ageing. In 1986 the median age of school teachers was 34, while in 2001 the median age had risen to 43.

Table 6: Percentage of TAFE teachers by age and employment status, 2002[1,2]

	NSW[3]	Qld	WA	SA	TAS	NT	ACT
Permanent							
<30 years	0.4	1.3	0.1	0.4	0.7	0.0	0.4
30–39 years	8.7	12.0	6.8	5.7	11.6	22.7	7.1
40–49 years	40.5	40.4	27.8	32.2	36.0	40.9	33.2
50–59 years	46.7	40.3	50.0	56.8	45.4	36.4	51.8
60+ years	3.6	6.0	12.0	4.9	6.3	0.0	7.5
Not known	0.0	0.0	3.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total number	*4 900*	*1 840*	*910*	*760*	*430*	*20*	*270*
Contract/temporary							
<30 years	-	9.2	5.1	3.8	4.3	3.6	6.2
30–39 years	-	27.7	26.4	22.2	41.3	17.8	27.9
40–49 years	-	37.6	41.1	43.3	32.6	28.6	40.2
50–59 years	-	22.2	21.8	26.5	17.4	42.9	24.7
60+ years	-	3.5	4.8	4.1	4.3	7.2	1.1
Not known	-	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total number	*na*	*1 020*	*690*	*880*	*50*	*30*	*100*
Sessional/casual							
<30 years	6.7	8.0	-	8.3	-	-	8.3
30–39 years	24.8	24.9	-	22.2	-	-	23.1
40–49 years	37.5	34.8	-	33.0	-	-	29.9
50–59 years	23.4	24.7	-	28.2	-	-	30.0
60+ years	7.6	7.5	-	8.2	-	-	8.8
Not known	0.0	0.0	-	0.0	-	-	0.0
Total number	*17 250*	*1 470*	*1 200*	*1 160*	*0*	*na*	*380*
All teachers							
<30 years	5.3	5.4	2.3	4.8	1.0	2.0	5.1
30–39 years	21.2	20.1	15.3	17.7	14.5	18.0	17.9
40–49 years	38.2	37.8	33.5	36.0	35.6	34.0	32.5
50–59 years	28.5	30.7	37.8	35.4	42.8	42.0	37.2
60+ years	6.7	5.9	8.9	6.0	6.1	4.0	7.3
Not known	0.0	0.0	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total number	*22 150*	*4 320*	*2 800*	*2 800*	*480*	*50*	*740*

Notes: 1 'Point-in-time' data for the week beginning 3 June 2002 were specified. Queensland data provided as at 2 June 2002.
2 Due to rounding some figures may not sum.
3 TAFE NSW data are specified as 'head count', rather than full-time equivalent (FTE).

Length of service

Length of service data were provided by New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia. Since the data submitted by the states used different year ranges, each state's data are tabulated separately. The New South Wales data include length of service by male/female for permanent teachers only. The other three states provide data for permanent/non-permanent staff by gender.

Table 7: Percentage of TAFE teachers by length of service, employment status and gender[1]

	New South Wales—permanent teachers only[2,3]						
	<2	2–4	5–9	10–14	15–19	20+	Total no.
Females	7.2	5.3	28.2	27.1	19.6	12.5	1870
Males	5.4	3.7	18.1	22.8	17.4	32.6	2820
All	6.1	4.3	22.2	24.5	18.3	24.6	4690

Notes: 1 'Point-in-time' data for the week beginning 3 June 2002 were specified. Queensland data provided as at 2 June 2002.
2 Excludes 210 educational resources staff.
3 TAFE NSW data are specified as 'head count', rather than full-time equivalent (FTE).

	Queensland[1]						
	<1	1–4	5–9	10–14	15–19	20+	Total no.
Females							
Permanent	0.4	15.8	31.9	22.1	21.3	8.4	760
Temporary	29.0	31.9	29.7	2.4	6.7	0.3	590
Males							
Permanent	0.4	9.1	17.8	23.2	25.5	24.1	1080
Temporary	34.0	37.8	22.9	0.7	2.6	1.9	420
All							
Permanent	0.4	11.9	23.6	22.8	23.8	17.6	1840
Temporary	31.1	34.4	26.9	1.7	5.0	1.0	1010

Note: 1 Queensland data represent length of service in the Queensland Public Service. This may or may not have been all with TAFE.

	South Australia						
	<2	2–4	5–9	10–14	15–19	20+	Total no.
Females							
Permanent	0.4	8.3	17.8	24.6	29.0	19.9	280
Contract	12.8	44.3	28.3	10.2	3.0	1.4	500
Males							
Permanent	0.6	4.1	8.4	26.4	21.7	38.7	490
Contract	18.2	44.2	24.2	8.9	2.9	1.6	380
All							
Permanent	0.5	5.6	11.8	25.8	24.3	31.9	770
Contract	15.1	44.3	26.6	9.6	3.0	1.5	880

	Western Australia						
	<2	2–4	5–9	10–14	15–19	20+	Total
Females							
Permanent	0.8	1.2	43.5	23.8	19.2	11.5	260
Contract	30.1	47.0	20.1	2.2	0.0	0.7	280
Males							
Permanent	0.2	1.6	21.6	16.7	16.1	43.7	490
Contract	40.9	40.5	16.8	0.7	0.7	0.4	270
All							
Permanent	0.4	1.5	29.3	19.2	17.2	32.5	750
Contract	35.4	43.8	18.4	1.4	0.4	0.5	550

For the four states, a substantial proportion of permanent teachers have had at least 15 years of service (ranges from 41.4% to 56.2%). There was a larger proportion of males than females with 15 or more years of service in all four states. By contrast, there were relatively few permanent teaching staff with fewer than five years service across the four states (range from 1.9% to 12.3%). For each of the states, there are more permanent female teachers with fewer than five years service than permanent male teachers.

As would be expected, length of service for non-permanent staff teaching is lower than for permanent teaching staff. Indeed, for the three states which reported these data, between approximately 59.4% and 79.2% of non-permanent staff had fewer than five years service. There were also more non-permanent male than female teachers with fewer than five years service for the states reporting these data.

Non-teaching staff

Employment status of non-teaching staff

Table 8 presents the full-time and part-time figures for TAFE staff in non-teaching positions. The data excludes the Australian Capital Territory and Tasmania. Queensland and Western Australia classify casual staff in a separate category.

Table 8: TAFE non-teaching staff by sex, employment status and state/territory (%)[1]

	NSW[2]	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	NT	ACT
Male non-teaching staff								
Full-time	81.7	74.0	85.0	76.9	80.7	91.9	91.3	na
Part-time	18.3	26.0	7.4	5.9	19.3	8.1	8.7	na
Casual	-	-	7.6	17.2	-	-	-	na
Total number	*2420*	*1770*	*1280*	*780*	*430*	*210*	*30*	*130*
Female non-teaching staff								
Full-time	66.6	54.1	76.0	58.4	58.1	61.7	62.5	na
Part-time	33.4	45.9	17.4	20.2	41.9	38.3	37.5	na
Casual	-	-	6.6	21.4	-	-	-	na
Total number	*3700*	*3560*	*2630*	*1360*	*1250*	*350*	*50*	*280*
All non-teaching staff								
Full-time	72.6	60.7	78.9	65.1	63.9	73.2	71.8	na
Part-time	27.4	39.3	14.1	15.1	36.1	26.8	28.2	na
Casual	-	-	7	19.8	-	-	-	na
Total number	*6120*	*5330*	*3910*	*2140*	*1680*	*560*	*80*	*410*

Notes: 1 'Point-in-time data for the week beginning 3 June 2002 were specified. Queensland data provided as at 2 June 2002.
2 TAFE NSW data are specified as 'head count', rather than full-time equivalent (FTE).

There are more full-time than part-time non-teaching staff in the states and territories which reported this data. Between 60.7% to 78.9% of TAFE employees in non-teaching positions are employed on a full-time basis. Queensland has the highest full-time rate of 78.9%, while New South Wales reports 72.6% of staff in this category.

Proportionately, males are more likely to be employed on a full-time basis than females. Across every jurisdiction reporting data there is a greater proportion of full-time males in non-teaching positions than females. For example, in Queensland 85.0% of males are in full-time non-teaching positions compared with 76.0% of females.

Conversely, there is a greater proportion of females in part-time/casual positions compared with males. For example in Victoria, 45.9% of females are in part-time positions compared with 26.0% of males.

These data are in contrast to the data for teaching staff, where several states had more part-time than full-time teaching staff. There are also more males than females in full-time positions for non-teaching staff across all states and territories.

The rate of full-time employment for non-teachers is also more in line with the Australian labour force overall (70% overall, full-time; 53% females full-time and 85% males full-time).

Permanent and non-permanent non-teaching staff

Numbers of permanent and non-permanent non-teaching staff by gender are shown in table 8. Data for permanent/non-permanent breakdown were not available for Tasmania. Contract, temporary, casual or sessional staff are included in the non-permanent status. Data provided under other for Victoria include executive staff classified as permanent contract.

Table 9: Proportion of TAFE non-teaching staff by sex, teaching position and state/territory (%)[1]

	NSW[2]	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	NT	ACT
Male non-teaching staff							
Permanent	72.0	40.1	70.5	54.5	49.9	68.0	57.5
Non-permanent	28.0	22.5	29.5	45.5	19.1	32.0	42.5
Other	-	37.4	-	-	31.1	-	-
Total number	*2420*	*1770*	*1280*	*780*	*430*	*30*	*130*
Female non-teaching staff							
Permanent	64.4	48.7	65.5	49.3	54.3	54.3	59.8
Non-permanent	35.6	26.9	34.5	50.7	25.0	45.7	40.2
Other	-	24.4	-	-	20.7	-	-
Total number	*3700*	*3560*	*2630*	*1360*	*1250*	*50*	*280*
All non-teaching staff							
Permanent	67.4	45.8	67.1	51.1	53.2	59.2	59.0
Non-permanent	32.6	25.5	32.9	48.9	23.5	40.8	41.0
Other	-	28.7	-	-	23.4	-	-
Total number	*6120*	*5330*	*3910*	*2140*	*1680*	*80*	*410*

Notes: 1 'Point-in-time' data for the week beginning 3 June 2002 were specified. Queensland data provided as at 2 June 2002.
2 TAFE NSW data are specified as 'head count', rather than full-time equivalent (FTE).

Non-teaching staff are primarily employed on a permanent basis. Excluding Tasmania, there are approximately 11 460 permanent staff in non-teaching positions. This represents approximately 56.7% of non-teaching staff. New South Wales and Queensland have the highest proportion of permanent employees, with 67.4% and 67.1%, respectively. This figure is lower for the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory, with approximately 59% of permanent staff. South Australia and Western Australia have slightly more than half of their workforces in permanent positions at 53.2% and 51.1% respectively.

The permanent/non-permanent breakdown for teaching staff is in contrast to these data. Approximately 70% of teaching staff are employed on a non-permanent basis.

Age of non-teaching staff

The age profile of permanent and non-permanent employees in non-teaching positions is presented in table 10. Figures for Victoria are not included. The Western Australian figures exclude casual non-teaching staff.

Table 10: TAFE non-teaching staff by age, permanent status and state/territory (%)[1,2]

	NSW	Qld	WA[3]	SA	Tas	NT	ACT
Permanent non-teaching staff							
<30 years	7.2	11.8	7.2	23.3	6.6	10.3	10.8
30–39 years	20.4	21.9	19.0	21.1	16.2	7.7	29.0
40–49 years	35.4	33.9	33.5	28.5	35.3	33.3	29.3
50–59 years	31.9	27.9	33.7	25.0	34.1	41.0	26.0
60+ years	5.1	4.5	6.0	2.2	7.8	5.1	4.9
Not known	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	2.6	0.0
Total number	*4130*	*2620*	*1090*	*890*	*490*	*40*	*240*
Non-permanent non-teaching staff							
<30 years	18.0	34.6	19.2	32.3	29.0	21.9	41.7
30–39 years	20.6	24.2	25.5	18.5	17.4	21.9	20.2
40–49 years	29.7	27.3	31.3	28.2	34.8	34.4	20.2
50–59 years	20.5	12.0	19.2	17.4	18.8	12.5	15.4
60+ years	11.0	1.8	3.4	3.6	0.0	0.0	2.4
Not known	0.0	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	9.4	0.0
Total number	*1990*	*1280*	*620*	*780*	*70*	*30*	*170*

Notes: 1 'Point-in-time' data for the week beginning 3 June 2002 were specified. Queensland data provided as at 2 June 2002.
2 TAFE NSW data are specified as 'head count', rather than full-time equivalent (FTE).
3 Excludes 430 casual staff whose age is unknown.

The table shows that between 6.6% and 23.3% of permanent non-teaching staff are under 30 for the states and territories which reported data on this category. In addition, between 30.9% and 46.1% of permanent non-teaching staff were over 50. Moreover, between 18.0% and 41.7% of non-permanent non-teaching staff are under 30, with between 12.5% and 31.5% over 50.

The age data for non-teaching staff indicate that they are younger than teaching staff (see table 5). However, they are still older than the Australian labour force overall. In the higher education sector, data for 2002 show that 16.6% of staff classified as non-academic were aged under 30, with 28.6% being aged 50 or older (Department of Education, Science and Training 2003b). Within this sector, non-academic staff are younger than academic staff.

Areas of employment

Areas of employment for non-teaching by gender were provided for staff in New South Wales, the Northern Territory and Tasmania. As the organisational structure is different for each state or territory, the data are largely non-comparable.

Teacher/training qualifications

Except for one data provider, information about teacher qualifications were not provided.

Comments from the states and territories in relation to the collection of this information indicated that:

- It would be difficult to convert old qualifications to new qualifications.
- It is possible to obtain the qualifications information but this requires time and resources since this would be a manual operation.

Staff development, staff industry experience and previous career/jobs held by staff

No information in relation to these categories was provided by any of the states and territories.

Conclusion

The data collected for this study are limited in scope and vary across the states and territories. They are also limited in that it is point-in-time data rather than time series. As a result, a significant number of data collection issues were identified along with gaps in the data.

Despite the problems with the data collection, some broad observations can be made about the data collected. Firstly, any national aggregates of the TAFE workforce would be strongly influenced by what is occurring in New South Wales. The NSW TAFE workforce accounts for 45% of the overall TAFE workforce and 52% of the teaching workforce. As New South Wales has the lowest proportion of full-time permanent (or conversely, the highest proportion of part-time, non-permanent) teaching staff, this situation would be reflected in national aggregates of the TAFE teaching workforce.

Secondly, the age-related data indicate that the permanent TAFE workforce, particularly the teaching workforce, is quite old by comparison with the Australian workforce overall. This has implications in terms of the need to replace these staff as they retire. TAFE institutes will need to consider appointment and succession planning strategies. One option that might be considered here is the recruitment of casual staff to permanent positions. There are also further implications in terms of professional development. Given the changing roles of TAFE teachers, consideration needs to be given to the professional development required. David Rumsey and Associates (2002) suggest that, given the changing nature of the VET practitioner, there needs to be a wider range of professional development strategies.

Thirdly, the data also show that the TAFE workforce has a large number of casual/sessional staff. One of the arguments for a large contingent of casual/sessional staff is that it provides flexibility in the workforce. However, casual staff often do not have the same educational knowledge as permanent staff, and have limited access to professional development. David Rumsey and Associates (2002) point out that strategies need to be put in place for the development of career paths for casual staff, and for access to appropriate professional development.

Getting the measure of the VET professional[4]

Introduction

For this study, the full range of publicly available past studies have been examined to draw out consistent findings.[5] We have also identified two ABS primary sources—the Census of Population and Housing, and the Survey of Education and Training—which provide nationally consistent information on the VET workforce. More details on both are contained in appendix 2, including caveats in relation to their use, the main one being that neither source is especially useful for examining job characteristics, such as working hours and employment status. However, these sources are valuable for providing a nationally consistent demographic profile of the VET workforce, and how that varies across different types of providers. These two ABS sources also provide highly valuable information on what it is that those working in the VET sector do. Appendix 2 summarises the concepts and terms used in this study.

Activities of VET professionals

The work of VET professionals is broadening

From the Surveys of Education and Training, we obtain information on the kind of education and training activities that VET professionals are involved in. These can be sub-divided into direct and indirect activities, with direct activities constituting the development, delivery and assessment of courses/modules.

Figure 3 details the activities undertaken by VET professionals, comparing 1997 with 2001. Most VET professionals are involved in a range of activities, with an average of three of the seven activities selected. The most common activity is delivery of courses or modules; the least common is marketing programs.

Between 1997 and 2001, the focus of activities undertaken by VET professionals has changed, with individuals now considerably more likely to be involved in direct activities than they were in 1997. Conversely, they are less likely to be involved in indirect activities. The best illustration of this is the fall in the proportion involved in management of education or training, which ranked as the most common activity in 1997 and fell to third in 2001. The overall conclusion, therefore, is that the job of the VET professional has broadened over the period.

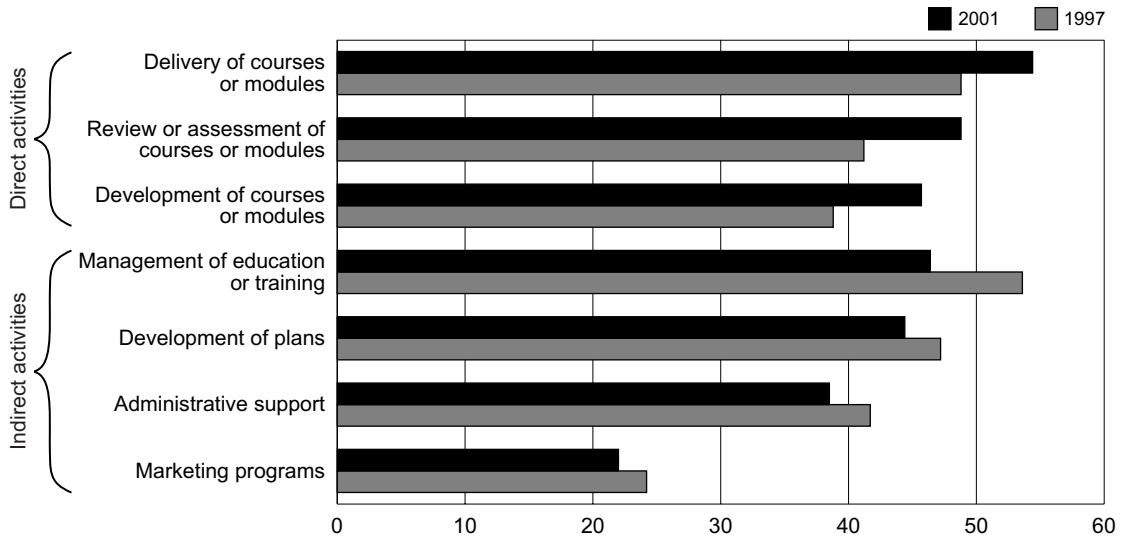
While the role has broadened, it has also become more challenging, as the study by Harris et al. (2001) shows. Their Delphi survey of teachers/trainers and key stakeholders identified the main challenges facing VET professionals, almost all of which were concerned with responding to change

[4] This chapter is based on work undertaken by NCVER for the ANTA national project, Enhancing the Capability of VET Professionals (Dickie et al. 2004).

[5] We set more store by national studies than state-specific studies in this report, as the state-specific studies are limited to Victoria and findings may not be applicable in other states. The national study of the TAFE workforce, for instance, shows significant variation in TAFE workforce composition across jurisdictions.

in the external environment, whether market-driven (competition, training packages, responsive to industry), technology (flexible delivery, information technology) and the changing nature of work (job security).

Figure 3: Activities undertaken by VET professionals, 1997 and 2001



Source: ABS (1997, 2001a)

VET professionals are mostly VET practitioners

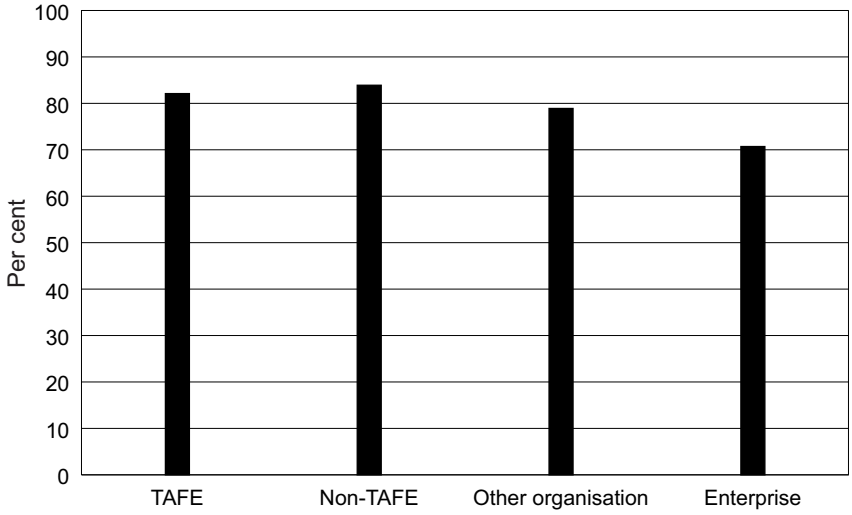
Figure 3 demonstrated how VET professionals were more involved in direct VET activities in 2001 than they were in 1997. Involvement in direct VET activities—delivery, development and assessment of courses/modules—is the core activity of VET practitioners.

Using this definition, most VET professionals are involved in one form or another of these direct VET activities; in other words, VET professionals are also largely VET practitioners.

Figure 4 breaks down the percentage of VET professionals involved in direct activities by the kind of training provider which had employed them. The figure shows that VET professionals employed in TAFE or with non-TAFE training organisations, both of which provide education as their main activity, are more likely to be involved in direct VET activities than individuals employed in other organisations providing training, or enterprises whose main activity is not the provision of education.

Reinforcing the previous finding vis-à-vis the broadening role of the VET professional, a comparison with 1997 reveals the proportion who were involved in some direct activities to have increased from 80% to 88% in 2001.

Figure 4: VET professionals involved in direct activities, by type of training provider, 2001 (%)



Source: ABS (2001a)

Outside TAFE most VET practitioners spend little time on direct provision

As well as enquiring about the kinds of activities they were involved in, the Survey of Education and Training asks VET practitioners how much time they spend per week on delivery, development or assessment of courses/modules. By relating this to how many hours they are employed in total each week, the proportion of time they spend on these direct activities can be determined. This measure is then categorised into 'very little' (less than 10% of their time), 'up to half' (between 10% and 49%), and 'half or more'.

Using this measure, figure 5 shows, by provider type, the amount of time spent by VET practitioners on direct activities. It very clearly demonstrates that the amount of time differs markedly according to the kind of provider for whom the work has been undertaken. Among VET practitioners employed in a TAFE organisation, around one in two spends at least half of their time on direct activities, while three in ten spend 'very little' time. The sharpest contrast is with VET practitioners working outside the education industry. A clear majority of these VET practitioners, those employed by other organisations providing training and enterprises, spend 'very little' time on direct VET activities, while only around one in ten spend at least half of their time on such activities. A clear implication of this is that these VET practitioners are not primarily employed to provide vocational education and training. It is a sideline to their main tasks.

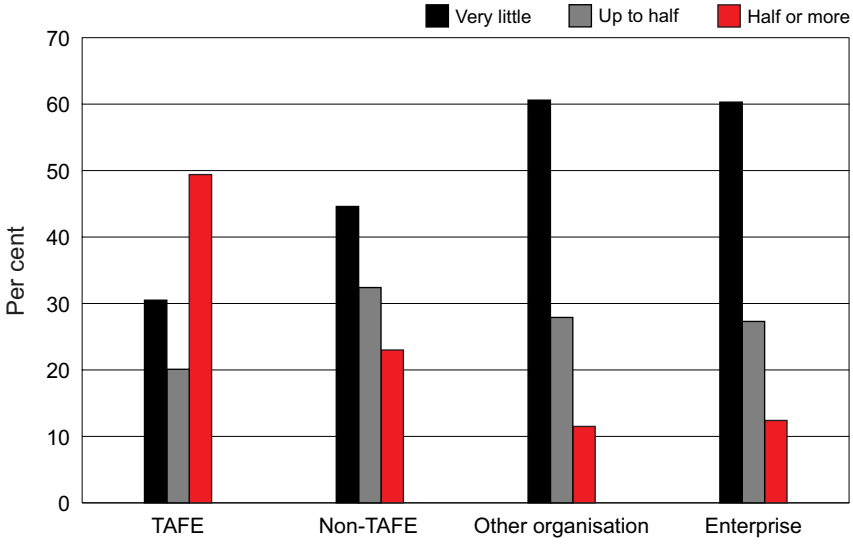
Ageing of VET professionals

The age profile of VET professionals matches the Australian labour force

It is well known that the Australian population is ageing. The current median age of the population is 34 years, and it is expected to reach 45 years by the middle of this century. Many industry sectors are conscious of both the ageing of their own workforces, and the likely heightened competition for younger talent in coming years as the number of young people entering the labour market begins to shrink.

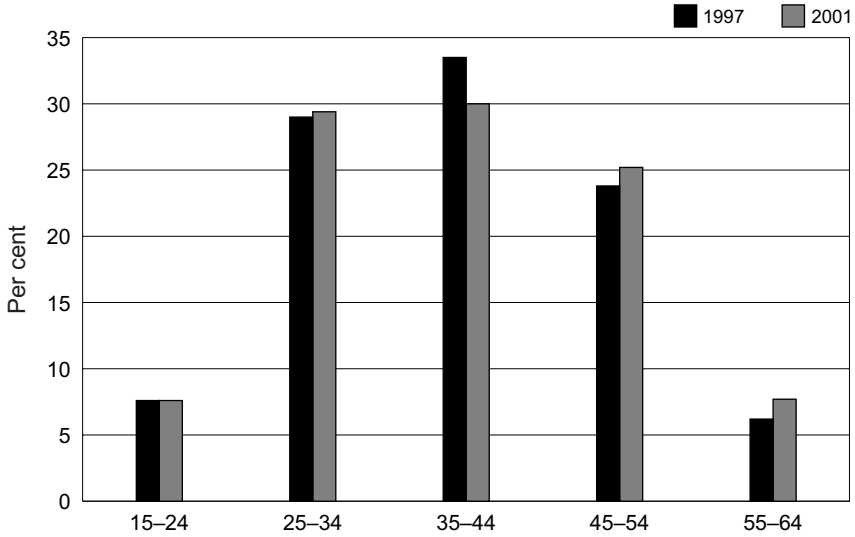
In line with other industry sectors, figure 6 shows that the age profile of the VET professional moved upwards between 1997 and 2001. Just over one in three (34%) was an 'older worker' (aged 45 and over) in 2001. There does, however, remain a significant percentage of individuals aged up to 35 (37% in 2001). These figures correspond closely to those for the Australian workforce as a whole, with 42% of employed persons under 35 years and 33% over 45 years in 2001 (ABS 2002a).

Figure 5: Working time spent by VET practitioners on direct activities, by type of training provider, 2001 (%)



Source: ABS (2001a)

Figure 6: Age profile of VET professionals, 1997 and 2001 (%)



Source: ABS (2001a)

VET practitioners in TAFE are, on average, older than VET professionals as a whole

Bearing in mind that a high percentage of VET professionals are VET practitioners (refer figure 4), the census data on VET teachers (or practitioners) in TAFE can be used to examine their age structure.

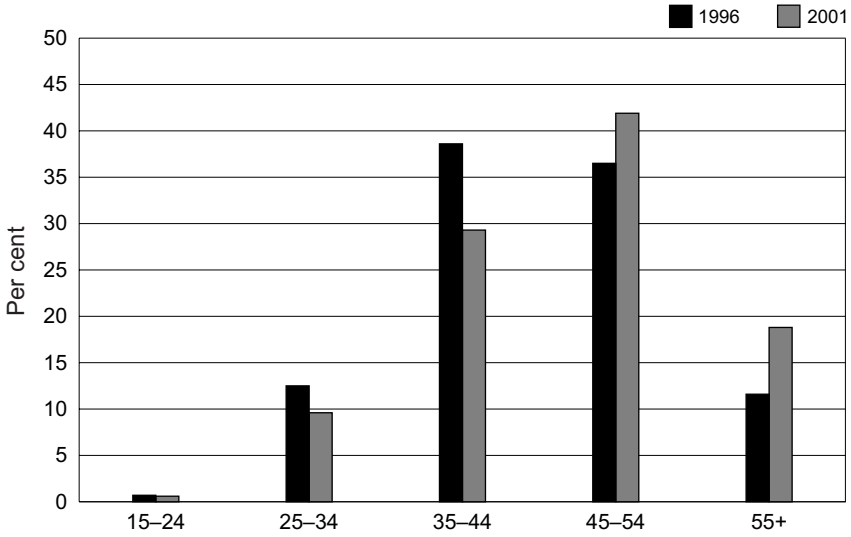
The data indicate that TAFE teachers have an older age profile than is the case for VET professionals as a whole and, therefore, they are also an older workforce than is the whole Australian workforce. In 1996, 48% of VET practitioners were aged 45 or over. By 2001, this had increased to 61%, with 16% aged 55 or more.

This is consistent with other studies. For example, a recent study of the Victorian TAFE teacher workforce found 63% were aged between 41 and 60, with 4% 61 and over (Office of Public Employment 2002). A 1999 survey of 686 teachers and trainers across 394 registered training

organisations found that about 45% of teachers and trainers were in their forties, and 11% were aged 55 years or more (Harris et al. 2001).

While TAFE teachers have an older age profile, so too do teachers in other education sectors. In higher education, 38% of academic staff are 50 or over, while just 6% are under 30 years of age (Department of Education, Science and Training 2003b). In the schools sector, approximately 30% of schoolteachers are under 35, while 2% were aged 45 years or more (ABS 2002b). The median age of schoolteachers was 34 in 1986 and had risen to 43 in 2001 (Department of Education, Science and Training 2003a). This older age structure in education is, in part, a reflection of the time required to gain the skills and experience needed to be employed as teachers.[6]

Figure 7: Age profile of VET practitioners in TAFE, 1996 and 2001 (%)



Source: ABS (1996, 2001b)

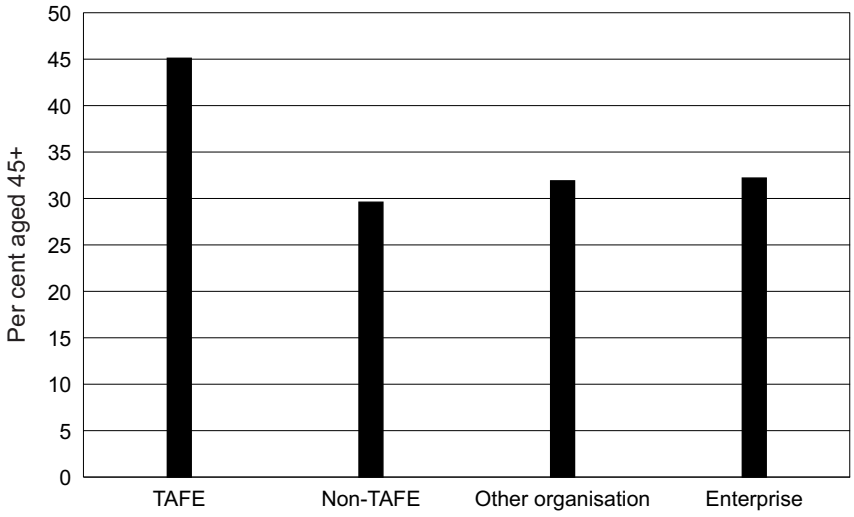
Older VET professionals are concentrated in the TAFE sector

The finding that TAFE teachers are older than VET professionals as a whole is also borne out in figure 8. This compares the proportion of VET professionals aged 45 years or more by the kind of provider who employed them. It clearly shows that the percentage of older VET professionals in TAFE is considerably higher than in all other provider types. Indeed, for these other provider types, people employed by them as VET professionals tend not to be older than the Australian workforce overall.

In the context of workforce planning, to the extent that ageing is an issue for the VET system, it is one that is very much more pronounced in the TAFE sector.

[6] In New South Wales, for example, full-time teachers employed in TAFE institutes are required to have both a degree and at least three years of industry experience.

Figure 8: Older VET professionals by type of training provider, 2001 (%)



Source: ABS (1996, 2001b)

Employment status of VET professionals

Permanent TAFE teachers have long tenure

One of the reasons for an older age profile in the TAFE teaching workforce relates to the fact that many staff have long tenure. The previous chapter on the national study of the TAFE workforce reported length of service of teaching staff by permanent/non-permanent status for four states. For all four states, around half of permanent teachers had 15 or more years of service (range of 41% to 56%). In most states, only around one in ten permanent staff had five or fewer years of service (range of 1.9% to 12.3%). Not surprisingly, length of service for non-permanent staff was much lower. For the three states reporting this, around two in three non-permanent staff had five or fewer years of service (range of 59% to 79%).

The Victorian study on the TAFE workforce (Office of Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment 1999) provided data on length of service for teaching staff with ongoing contracts, and for non-sessional teachers. The data indicated that teachers with ongoing contracts had been with their current institute for an average of thirteen years. The average was higher for males than for females—14 compared with 10 years. A quarter of males had been with their current organisation for 20 or more years, 41% 15 or more years, and two-thirds ten or more years. For females, 17% had been with their current organisation for 15 or more years, and 42% for ten or more years.

Data for non-sessional teachers indicated that they had been with their current employer for an average of nine years. For males, the average was eleven years, and for females, seven years. The average for staff in metropolitan areas was ten years by comparison with eight years for staff in regional areas. When examined in terms of field of study, the highest average length of employment was for engineering (14 years), building (12 years), and visual/performing arts (11 years).

A survey by Harris et al. (2001) examined years of employment of teachers and trainers with their current organisation. Overall, half had been with their current employer for five years or fewer, with 17% being with the current employer for over 15 years, and 27% over ten years. However, when divided into provider type, TAFE staff were found to be far longer-serving than their private sector counterparts. Not surprisingly, longer-serving staff were also more likely to be permanent. Longer-serving staff were also more likely to be male, and shorter-serving staff, female. In terms of field of education, teachers in information technology and service/hospitality tended to have fewer years of service.

There are roughly equal numbers of male and female VET practitioners in TAFE

Table 10 provides data on the proportion of TAFE practitioners by gender and employment status from the 2001 census. It shows that there are slightly more male than female VET practitioners in TAFE (51% compared with 49%). The previous chapter on the national study of the TAFE workforce came up with near identical figures: 51% female and 49% male (excluding Tasmania).

The 2001 Survey of Education and Training, however, indicates that there are significantly more male than female VET practitioners in TAFE (61% compared to 39%), although this is based on a relatively small sample. The census and TAFE workforce figures are, however, more plausible.

Table 11: TAFE practitioners by gender by employment status, 2001 (%)

	Full-time	Part-time	Not stated	Total
Male	29.3	21.0	0.8	**51.1**
Female	16.4	32.0	0.5	**48.9**
Total	**45.7**	**53.0**	**1.3**	**100.0**

Source: ABS (2001b)

More TAFE teachers are employed part-time than full-time

The census also indicates (table 11) that around 46% of TAFE teachers were employed on a full-time basis in 2001, while around 53% were part-time. It must be noted here that the census only identifies TAFE teachers where that is their *main* job. The census figures are, therefore, certain to *understate* the true proportion of part-time employees in TAFE, because some people whose main job is in another field, and who teach with TAFE on a casual basis, will not have been captured. Nonetheless, the finding from the census that a majority of TAFE teachers work on a part-time basis is a highly significant one. It compares with an overall proportion of 30% in the Australian workforce (ABS 2002a).

This finding is supported by the national study of the TAFE workforce data, which shows that there are more teachers who are part-time than full-time in all states except the Northern Territory and Queensland (very narrowly, with 49% part-time). New South Wales has, by far, the highest proportion of non-full time teaching staff, with 78%.

Both the census and the TAFE workforce data also indicate that, overall, there is a greater proportion of males than females in full-time positions. Consequently, there is a greater proportion of females than males in employment who are part-time.

Most TAFE teachers are employed on a non-permanent basis

The national study of the TAFE workforce also categorised staff as being permanent or non-permanent. This is conceptually distinct from working hours (that is full- or part-time). It is possible to work full-time and not be employed permanently, and vice versa. In practice, however, those working part-time are also normally non-permanent.

The study found that a clear majority of TAFE teachers were employed on a non-permanent basis. This trend was consistent across states and territories, and ranged from about 56% of staff being non-permanent in the Northern Territory, to 77% in New South Wales. The data also indicated that, apart from the Northern Territory, non-permanent staff tended to be employed non-full-time. In contrast to this, permanent staff tended to be employed full-time.

In terms of gender, and across all states and territories reporting these data, there was a much greater proportion of males employed permanent full-time than females. Consistent with this, more females than males were employed on a non-permanent, non-full-time basis across all states and territories reporting these data.

Most other studies support these findings, and show that the clear trend is towards hiring greater numbers of part-time and non-permanent staff.

Data from the Victorian TAFE workforce indicate that 54% of TAFE teachers are male and 46% female, while 49% of teachers were full-time and 51% part-time. In addition, while more males were either ongoing or contract teachers, more females were sessional teachers. By comparison, in 1993, 61% of Victorian TAFE teachers were male, and 39% female, while 59% of the teaching staff were full-time, and 41% part-time. While there was a much greater proportion of males than females who were ongoing teachers (79% as compared to 21%), there were more females than males employed as contract or sessional staff (Davies & Gribble 2002a, 2002b). An earlier 1998 study on the Victorian TAFE workforce (Office of Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment 2000) showed similar trends, with 53% of teaching staff being classified as permanent, 33% contract, and 14% sessional. More males than females were classified as permanent (62% of males and 38% of females).

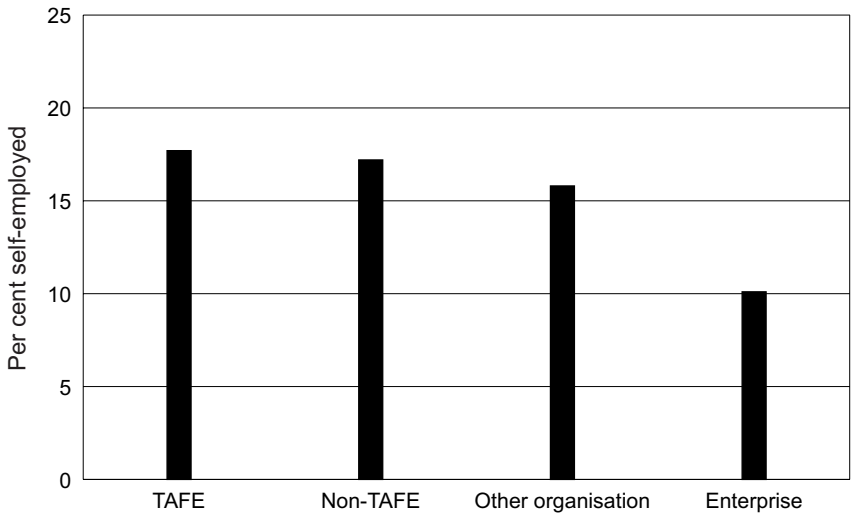
The use of part-time workers, mostly contract/sessional or otherwise casual, is not confined to the TAFE sector. The 1999 survey of 394 registered training organsations found that, of 11 084 teachers and trainers reported on, 40% were permanent staff, 25% contract, 30% casual, and 5% self-employed contractors (Harris et al. 2001). While more males were permanent, contract, or self-employed, more females were employed as casual/sessional staff.

Similarly, a 1998 study on staff training in the commercial sector of Victorian VET found that over 70% of teaching staff in the commercial organisations surveyed were either sessional or part-time staff. One explanation for this is that many teachers employed in the commercial sector derive income from other sources (Fawcett, Parrott & Strachan 1998).

A high proportion of VET professionals are self-employed

The 2001 Survey of Education and Training indicated that close to 18% of VET professionals working in TAFE were self-employed, closely followed by those in private training organisations (17%) and other training organisations (16%). Only 10% of VET professionals working in an enterprise were self-employed (figure 9). Self-employment status refers to a person's *main* job, which may or may not be as a VET professional, so this should be regarded more as an individual attribute rather than a job attribute. Indeed, what it suggests is that many VET professionals are employed on a casual or sessional basis to teach in the area of expertise which constitutes their main job.

Figure 9: VET professionals who are self-employed, by type of training provider, 2001 (%)



Source: ABS (2001a)

Qualifications of VET professionals

More than two out of three VET professionals have post-school qualifications

Figure 10 shows the proportion of VET professionals holding particular qualifications by the type of training provider employing them. These are sub-divided into postgraduate, bachelor degree, and other post-school (or VET) qualifications.

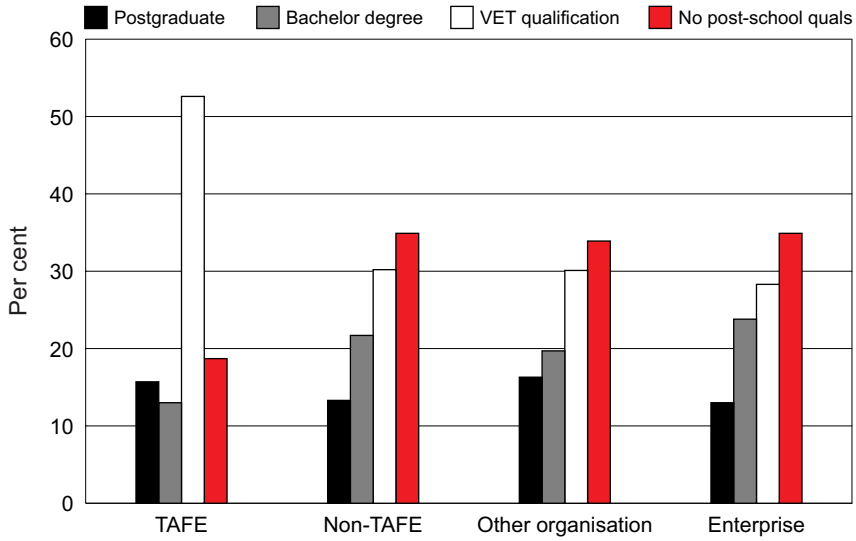
VET professionals in the TAFE sector were much more likely to hold a post-school qualification than all other VET professionals, roughly eight out of ten, compared with two out of three. They also had the highest proportion with VET qualifications, more than half. VET professionals working outside TAFE were slightly more likely to hold a bachelor degree or postgraduate qualification.

VET professionals are significantly more qualified than the workforce as a whole. In 2001 around half of the Australian workforce (aged 15–64) held a post-school qualification, with 18% with a degree or higher, and 31% with VET qualifications.

Most VET practitioners do not have qualifications in education or training

The Survey of Education and Training asked VET practitioners whether they held a qualification in education or training. The very clear finding is that most do not. Apart from VET practitioners working in TAFE, where it is around one in three, only around one in ten have a qualification specifically in the field of education or training.[7]

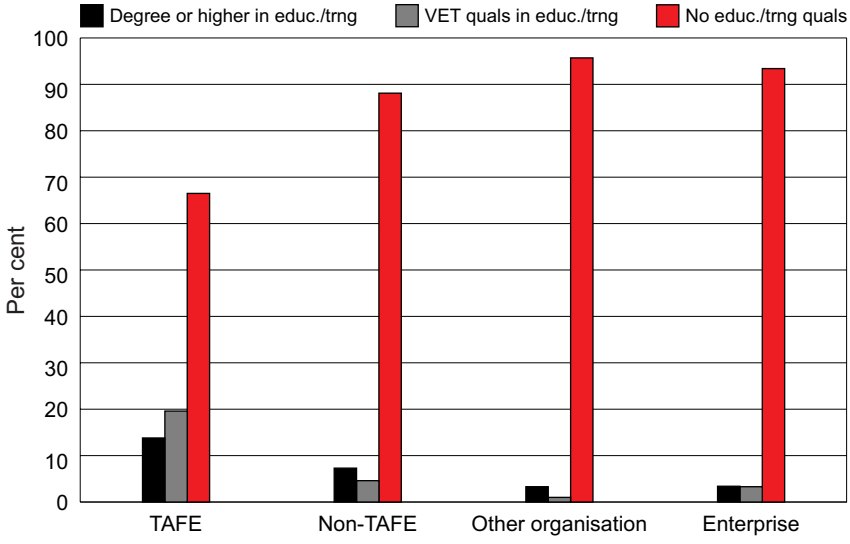
Figure 10: Qualification of VET professionals by type of training provider, 2001 (%)



Source: ABS (2001a)

[7] One explanation offered for the relatively low incidence of educational qualifications in TAFE is the operation of a quasi-recognition of prior learning system where post-school qualifications coupled with a range of relevant VET experiences are deemed equivalent, for the purposes of delivery and assessment, to the requirements of the Certificate Level IV in Workplace Training (New South Wakes correspondence).

Figure 11: Education and training qualifications of VET practitioners, by type of training provider, 2001 (%)



Other studies tend to suggest that a higher level of VET professionals have education-related qualifications, although an important qualifier here is that the level of qualifications is very closely associated with employment status.

Data on the qualifications of VET providers were gained from a survey undertaken in 1999 of 651 teachers and trainers employed across 394 registered training organisation (Harris et al. 2001). The qualifications were segmented both by type of registered training organisation and mode of employment. Teachers and trainers employed by TAFE had a greater proportion of trades-related qualifications than those employed by private registered training organisations (17% compared with 6%), and teaching awards (89% compared with 58%). A greater proportion of teachers and trainers in private registered training organisations had non-teaching postgraduate qualifications than in TAFE (25% compared with 15%), and workplace trainer assessor/training qualifications, notably the Certificate IV in Workplace Training (62% compared with 43%).

Differences were also found among teachers employed under different modes of employment. In particular, a greater proportion of permanent staff were found to have completed:

- postgraduate qualifications other than in teaching (21%, compared with 12% for contract staff and 17% for casual staff)
- trade certificates (14% of permanent, compared with 10% of contract, and 8% of casual staff)
- bachelor degrees in education (20% of permanent, compared with 16% of contract and 9% of casual)
- teaching diplomas (24% of permanent, compared with 10% of contract, and 15% of casual staff).

Other data on qualifications were obtained in 1999 from a survey of 174 industry registered training organisations in Victoria (Auscorp Marketing & Strachan Research 2000). Based on the survey results, the main type of qualifications teaching staff held in these registered training organisations were:

- an education/teaching qualification (23% of providers employ full-time teachers with these qualifications, 21% part-time and 19% sessional)
- a Certificate IV in Workplace Training and Assessment (16% of providers employ full-time teachers qualified at this level, 13% part-time and 11% sessional)

- a Category I and Category II workplace trainer and assessor qualifications (14% of providers employ full-time teachers qualified at this level, 10% part-time and 22% sessional)
- a bachelor degree other than in education (14% of providers employ full-time teachers qualified at this level, 22% part-time and 13% sessional).

A recent Victorian study of human resource records from seven institutes and a survey of 1675 teachers showed that 83% had an educational qualification, most commonly a diploma (27%) or a postgraduate qualification (26%). This study may, however, be influenced by the employment status of the teacher; that is, whether they are employed on a full-time/part-time or permanent/non-permanent basis.

These findings suggest that differential employment requirements may be used in hiring staff in TAFE systems, with greater emphasis placed upon qualifications in general, and educational qualifications in particular, for permanent staff.

Conclusion

This report has drawn on several previous studies of the VET workforce and original analyses of ABS data from the Census of Population and Housing and the Survey of Education and Training to provide a statistical profile of VET professionals. Several caveats are attached to the use of the ABS data, notably that they are largely unsuitable for examining job characteristics, such as working hours. One point, which neatly illustrates the inadequacy of existing data sources, is that it is not possible to produce a reliable count of the number of people working as VET professionals.

The character of the VET professional workforce reflects changes affecting the workforce at large. Over the past couple of decades, the main changes have been greater participation by women, substantial growth in part-time and casual employment, and increasing educational attainment. Any workforce planning must acknowledge and accommodate these wider changes.

With data caveats in mind, it is nonetheless clear that there are looming workforce planning issues facing the VET sector. These can broadly be divided into two kinds: those facing TAFE systems and those facing other training providers.

Within TAFE systems, the major immediate issue confronting workplace planners is the ageing of the workforce. Three in five TAFE teachers are aged 45 or more, including 16% who are aged 55 or more. This means that the sector is facing disproportionately high levels of workforce attrition over the coming decade. The second issue facing TAFE systems is the apparent gap in employment status between permanent qualified teachers and non-permanent teachers who are considerably less well qualified. Older teachers are concentrated in the first of these groups. The second group is in the ascendancy and is growing relative to the first group.

Outside the TAFE sector, the issue of workforce ageing is less pressing—although no more so than for those interested in workforce planning in other industries, bearing in mind that the median age of the workforce as a whole is increasing. The immediate issue here is the credentials of VET professionals. Around one in three have no post-school qualification. Around nine in ten do not have any formal qualifications in education or training. It is a legitimate question to ask what defines these people as 'professionals'. In delivering any policy response to that question, it must also be recognised that most VET professionals working outside the TAFE sector are *not* primarily employed to provide vocational education and training.

Where to from here?[8]

Where are we now?

The two studies reported on here used three sets of data to develop a profile of the VET professional. Across the three different sources there was enough commonality in the findings to give a broad analysis of the characteristics of VET professionals, and to distinguish between those employed in TAFE and those employed in other sectors. However, several weaknesses were identified:

- ✧ There was a very large disparity in the total numbers employed as VET professionals (for example, between 17 400 and 71 300 in TAFE), and in the VET workforce as a whole (for example, between 39 000 and 90 400 in TAFE). (See also table 12.)
- ✧ Data on employment status (that is, self-employed/contractor, permanent employee, temporary employee) were unreliable.
- ✧ There was a lack of consistent data on the qualifications of VET professionals, with ABS survey data suggesting large proportions without post-school qualifications against smaller-scale studies suggesting much lower proportions.
- ✧ There was almost no understanding of the 'psychological contract' the VET workforce has with their employers (that is, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, career goals).
- ✧ All of the above issues were located *within* jurisdictions as well as across jurisdictions, even in those where some effort has been devoted to filling this data gap (for example, Victoria).

Table 12: Different estimates of the size of the VET workforce

	Administrative data[1]	Census[2]	Surveys[3]
VET teachers	Total not available	24 500	357 000[4]
	42 300 (in TAFE)	17 400 (in TAFE)	71 300 (in TAFE)
VET workforce	Total not available	Total not available	478 700[4]
	62 500 (in TAFE)	39 000 (in TAFE)	90 400 (in TAFE)

Notes: 1 As at June 2002.
2 As at August 2001.
3 As at May 2001.
4 Excludes enterprise-based staff who provide training.

There is, in fact, no shortage of data on the VET workforce. The problem is that it is located in the human resource management systems of individual registered training organisations, and varies considerably in detail and sophistication.

[8] This chapter is based on work undertaken by NCVER for the ANTA national project, Enhancing the Capability of VET Professionals (Dickie et al. 2004).

Why is a regular national data collection important?

Firstly, we must ask what is to be gained from having *national* data, which are *accurate*, *consistently defined*, and which are therefore capable of *enabling comparisons* to be made *over time* and *across different providers* or different parts of the country?

There are at least two generic reasons why a national collection would be valuable.

The first is that it is a strategically important industry and the absence of workforce planning initiatives (based on reliable data) creates a risk that the industry may be unable to satisfy future demand because of skill shortages or skill gaps in the existing VET workforce. Where deemed important, either by governments or by industry/professional associations, efforts are made to close the data gap. In other industries, it often takes a skill shortage to precipitate action—information technology specialists being an example from the 1990s, and nursing a current example. For workforce planning purposes, it would obviously be desirable to have information which enabled a crisis to be averted. In the VET sector, the existing data analysis suggests no current problem of labour supply, but an expected high number of people retiring from the TAFE workforce in coming years, given its age structure.

The second reason for a collection is that VET delivery, in common with some other service industries, is highly labour-intensive; that is, wages and salaries form a very high proportion of recurrent costs. It is estimated, for example, that 68% of state training authority budgets in 2002 was spent on wages and salaries, much higher than the all-industries share. Knowing more about what is being purchased with these funds may improve how it is allocated and spent.

A regular national collection would:

- provide a benchmark for individual registered training organisations and jurisdictions to assess their profile against that of national level data (for example, type of provider)
- enable national or jurisdiction-specific initiatives in workforce development or organisational capability to be monitored and evaluated
- inform understanding of flows in and out of the workforce, which would be a necessary platform for developing any workforce projections.

Options for a regular national collection

Workforce data, like any data, can be gathered in a variety of different ways. The choice of method is determined once the level of precision required of the results, the character of the data sought, and the costs (including the compliance costs) of obtaining it have been identified.

We can broadly distinguish between data which arise as by-products of an administrative system or data freshly generated via a survey. We can also distinguish between data obtained from employers or from members of the VET workforce. This gives rise to three possibilities, since an administrative collection from employees is not applicable. The advantages and disadvantages of these three options for workforce data collection—administrative through the employer, employer surveys and workforce surveys—are shown in table 13. This suggests that the two main competing options are an administrative collection through the human resource management systems of registered training organisations or a survey of employees. The choice of one over the other would be determined by the desire for accuracy (an administrative collection) over the demand for more subjective data on attitudes to work and a lower cost (an employee survey).

In summary, without reliable benchmark data, any exercise in workforce planning will be flawed. With reliable benchmark data, it is possible to make predictions of the size of the VET workforce, the numbers and age profile of those exiting the VET workforce, and therefore the level of recruitment that will be required to make up the shortfall.

Table 13: Options for a VET workforce data collection

Type of collection	Kind of data collected	Advantages	Disadvantages
Administrative—employer RTOs would download an extract of records from in-house human resource system, to some prescribed standard, and submit these data to the data collection agency.	Basic demographics: age, sex, disadvantaged groups. Employment characteristics: working hours, nature of contract, tenure, pay. Qualifications. Skill development activity in recent period.	Data are at individual employee level, which offers the maximum opportunity for analysis. Extremely useful for monitoring workforce flows, and analysing determinants of quits. Subject to RTO compliance, data would be highly accurate.	Expensive to mount, mostly in initial set-up costs. Compliance costs could be high, at least for RTOs with unsophisticated human resource systems. Information about employees limited to basic demographic and employment characteristics.
Survey—employer The data collection agency would ask a series of questions of RTOs, most likely in the form of a postal questionnaire, as responses would require recourse to records.	Pre-specified tables showing workforce composition by basic demographic and employment characteristics, e.g. age by sex, sex by full- or part-time.	Inexpensive to mount.	Compliance costs could be as high as above, i.e. the types of data being sought may require RTOs to produce reports from their human resource systems to answer the questions. Data would be aggregated at RTO level, and would be much less amenable to a range of analyses (i.e. can only give the same level of breakdown as used in the survey questions).
Survey—workforce The data collection agency would survey individual employees, most likely by a postal questionnaire, although a telephone survey might also be suitable.	Basic demographics: age, sex, disadvantaged groups. Employment characteristics: working hours, nature of contract, tenure, pay. Qualifications. Skill development activity in recent period. Attitudes to work and career.	Data are at individual employee level which offers the maximum opportunity for analysis. Relatively inexpensive to mount, although more expensive than a survey of RTOs as there would need to be a two-stage sampling process of working through the RTOs to identify employees to be surveyed.	Compliance costs for RTOs lighter, although would need to be a conduit for sampling employees. Non-response likely to be considerably greater than for an administrative collection, particularly in publicly funded sector. Some of the data items would be captured with less accuracy than through an administrative collection, especially employment characteristics.

Note: RTO = registered training organisation

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Appendix 1: The nature of the VET workforce and its environment

The changing nature of the VET environment

In recent years there have been many changes in the VET environment. Some of the major factors that have contributed to the changing nature of work are outlined in the following section.

The introduction of a training market

This has involved creating a more market-based environment for training, and opening up the training market to private providers. Under this approach, training providers compete to provide training services. The rationale behind this approach is increased efficiency in skill provision and increased economic competitiveness (Hall et al. 1999; Kell 2002). There is also a significant amount of unaccredited training being used by employers.

The policy of 'user choice' was also introduced as part of the reform. Under user choice, public funds are provided to registered training organisations chosen by employers involved with the New Apprenticeships scheme. The principle of user choice embeds the notion of a 'market', in that registered training organisations need to service the interests of their clients (employers) in order to receive funding (Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry 2002).

The shift to a training market has had significant implications for TAFE. Previously operating as a quasi-monopoly, it now has to compete with a variety of other providers. This has meant that TAFE has needed to adopt private sector practices in order to be able to successfully compete for student resources. Table 14 shows that the proportion of students enrolled in VET by provider type. It shows that the proportion of students enrolled in TAFE declined between 1996 and 2000 in favour of private providers. However, the proportion of students enrolled in TAFE did increase from 2000–2002.

Table 14: Proportion of students by provider type 1996–2002 (%)

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
TAFE and other government providers	82.9	78.2	75.0	74.8	75.5	76.8	78.2
Community education providers	15.4	15.4	15.2	14.3	13.0	13.6	12.4
Other providers	1.7	6.3	9.8	10.9	11.5	9.5	9.4

Source: NCVER various, *Australian Vocational Education and Training statistics: Students and courses—At a glance*

An industry-driven system and the implementation of training packages

Following on from the introduction of a training market has been a shift towards a demand-side orientation. In particular, the VET sector has become an industry-driven system. The emphasis is on providing skills relevant for work. As part of this industry focus, training packages were introduced in 1996. With their underlying competency-based approach to training, training packages are nationally endorsed and are developed by industry to meet the needs of industry or specific enterprises.

The competency-based approach has meant that there has been a shift from a time-serving curriculum-based approach to training to one which measures outputs (competencies). This approach recognises skills obtained in the workplace, both formally and informally (Chappell & Johnston 2003). As such, learning in the workplace has also taken on increased importance (NCVER 2003).

Training packages have been a major challenge for VET practitioners, with a shift in thinking required from the previous knowledge-based approach to teaching (David Rumsey and Associates 2002). They have also changed the nature of practitioners' work, with practitioners needing to undertake more facilitating, more training in workplaces and, increasingly, develop relationships with industries (ANTA 2002). There is also a greater requirement for flexible ways of operating, so that programs meet the needs of particular industries (Kroneman 2002).

Introduction of new technologies and changes in delivery methods

There is now a far greater emphasis on flexible delivery strategies in order to meet client needs (David Rumsey and Associates, 2002). Delivery can take place in the classroom, at the workplace, in schools, online and by distance. This has also meant that the practitioner's role has become more complex, with practitioners needing to: manage multiple assessment activities; act as mentors to students; be more flexible in terms of availability; cater for the differing learning styles of students; and master the various technologies involved (David Rumsey and Associates 2002; NCVER 2002).

The overriding theme to changes in the VET system has been a more business-oriented approach in the sector, with an emphasis on meeting client needs, flexibility, competition and economic efficiency.

Nature of the workforce and modes of employment

Changes which have taken place in the environment surrounding the VET sector have implications for the nature of the workforce required. In particular, there is a need for alignment between meeting the needs of the clients and the structure of the workforce (Victorian TAFE Association 2001). There have been, apart from a couple of studies (Kronemann 2001; Office of Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment 2000), limited data available on the nature of the VET workforce (ANTA 2003). However, the available literature and data do indicate some trends.

Firstly, in common with the Australian workforce and many overseas workforces, the VET and in particular the TAFE, workforce is ageing. A study of the Victorian TAFE workforce found that, in 1999, more than 40% of male, and 30% of female teachers with ongoing contracts were aged 50 years or over (Office of Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment 2000). A survey of Australian Education Union members conducted in 2000 found the average age of TAFE teachers in the sample to be 47 years (Kronemann 2001). In addition, David Rumsey and Associates (2002), on the basis of focus groups conducted in 2002, suggests that the mean age of permanent VET practitioners in Western Australia is about 53 years. By comparison, the Open Training and Education Network (1992) claims that, in the early 1990s, the bulk of TAFE employees were aged 30 to 45, and furthermore, would still be in the system in 2000. The ageing workforce has implications in terms of replacing staff who will be leaving the system over the next few years.

Secondly, there is believed to be a trend towards a more casualised workforce. Smith et al. (2001) claim that in TAFE in recent years there have been signs of a major shift from employment of staff on a tenured full-time basis to employment on part-time, casual and sessional bases. In Victoria for example, the percentage of sessional teaching staff increased from 10% of the workforce in 1993 to 14% in 1998. In addition, the percentage of teaching staff employed on a contract basis increased from 31% in 1993 to 34% in 1998 (Office of Post Compulsory Education, Training and Employment 2000). From the same data, Shah (2000) found an increase in part-time work and a

decrease in (mainly male) full-time employment from 1993–1998. Furthermore, Simon (2003) claims that 70% of NSW TAFE teachers are part-time casual.

As a cautionary note, despite there being some data—mainly from Victoria—showing increases in part-time and sessional (casual) work, there have been a paucity of comparative data for Australian TAFE over a period of time. One report from the early 1990s (Open Training and Employment Network 1992) claimed that there were approximately 18 000 tenured and 32 000 non-tenured (temporary) staff in TAFE. Furthermore, the non-tenured staff were equivalent in hours to 10 600 full-time staff. This means that the non-tenured staff were doing, on average, about one-third of the hours of tenured staff. These figures indicate that there were high levels of non-permanent and part-time work in TAFE already, at least back to the early 1990s.

The trend away from full-time permanent employment is not unique to TAFE or VET, but is part of a trend towards 'non-standard' work in many economies (Marginson 2000). In the case of VET, greater use of part-time and casual staff may be due to the competitive pressure being brought to bear on the VET sector, as well as the need to have a flexible workforce (Chappell & Johnston 2003). More specifically, Simon (2003) claims that the large use of part-time and casual staff is part of a cost-cutting measure. David Rumsey and Associates (2002) point out, however, that this trend has implications for the 'stock of knowledge in adult learning principles and educational theory' (p.32), and points to a need for effective professional development.

Thirdly, the change in industrial structure towards the service industries has implications for the type of training demanded. More training is being demanded in areas such as business and finance, tourism, hospitality and information technology. Alternatively, less training is being demanded in manufacturing and other goods-producing industries.

This change in demand for training is partly related to the fourth point. There appears to have been, in common with the workforce overall, increased levels of female participation in the VET and TAFE workforces. Shah (2000) found in the Victorian TAFE system over the period 1993–1998, an increase of 5.9% in the employment of females, while there was only an increase in the employment of males of 0.5%. Shah points out that this change mirrors the change in industrial structure. That is, the industrial structure has changed in industries in which females are more likely to be employed. He then argues that this means that women have a greater role in training provision.

Teacher roles and responsibilities

In line with the changing nature of work in VET, the role of the VET practitioner has also been changing. For example, Down (2000) points out that the need to deliver training packages has placed VET teachers and trainers in a pivotal role which demands from them a greater degree of professional expertise and flexibility—in constructing suitable learning pathways, creating learner-centred learning environments, and facilitating effective, consistent teaching, learning and assessment. In an environment in which the teacher was previously almost totally reliant on pre-packaged centrally prepared learning resources, she says, many of these skills have either been forgotten or never learned.

Chappell and Johnston (2003) discuss how the VET practitioners' role has expanded *beyond* that of the traditional teacher. In addition, the changes are altering the teachers' personal concepts of their role within the educational process and their relationships with students—their very identity as TAFE teachers.

More broadly, there is now a greater diversity of roles in VET. An NCVER publication, *The vocational education and training workforce: New roles and ways of working—At a glance* (NCVER 2004) discusses how the VET workforce consists of permanent staff employed in VET institutions, and a contingent workforce employed in a variety of ways and locations. These contingent staff consist, for example, of human resource development specialists, workplace

trainers, workplace assessors, training consultants, and casual and contract teachers. They are as important as, but have different roles from the permanent institutionally based staff.

The roles of VET practitioners now cover multiple dimensions with many required to cross 'traditional' boundaries in order to provide an integrated and flexible service. These dimensions include educational institutions versus enterprises, public versus private, and those directly involved in the delivery of education versus those not directly involved. The full-time TAFE teacher is now only a small part of the overall VET workforce.

Professional development

The expanding roles of VET practitioners and the changing composition of the workforce have important implications for the skills and knowledge of workers, and consequently their professional development needs.

David Rumsey and Associates (2002) discuss the professional development of VET practitioners in terms of a range of strategies required to address skill gaps. These strategies include, for example:

- integrating professional development into part of the overall strategic planning cycle for VET
- recognising that there are now many different types of VET practitioners with differing roles, and that they have differing professional development needs
- using collaborative arrangements to share skills and knowledge across different types of practitioners. For example, TAFE/VET teachers can share their educational expertise; workplace trainers can share their expertise on current processes and technologies used in industry; and supplier trainers can share their expertise in emerging technologies
- developing strategies in relation to an ageing workforce. These include succession planning and recruitment strategies, and also strategies which develop career pathways for casual/sessional/contract staff
- developing professional development options for practitioners to update instructional and assessment competence, as the advent of training packages and online learning have significant implications for delivery methods, and assessment of courses
- developing personal skills to help cope with and adapt to change. These skills include communication, networking, problem-solving and flexibility.

Account also needs to be taken of the professional development needs of VET managers. Mulcahy (2003), for example, examined the roles of managers and leaders in a changing VET environment and, based on these roles, their consequent professional development needs. Mulcahy's study found that leaders and managers in VET need expertise in business management and development, strategic and change leadership, people management, education management, and boundary spanning. However, the study also found a shortfall in the current professional development activities of managers and leaders. In the current environment where there is a need to develop external relations and form partnerships, Mulcahy sees networking and teamworking skills to be important elements of management development.

The issue of minimum qualification levels for VET teachers has also been raised. The Australian Education Union (2002) believes that the certificate IV level qualification from the Assessment and Workplace Training Package is the minimum qualification for VET teachers. However, this training package is currently under review and there is concern that the minimum-level qualification is not adequate for all VET practitioners. David Rumsey and Associates (2002) advocate that the new training package should provide a range of qualifications from certificate level III to advanced diploma in order to meet the needs of a diverse range of practitioners.

Overarching these issues is the role of staff development in professionalism.[9] Thomas (2001) saw benefits in professionalising the workforce, claiming that it would have a significant positive effect on the morale of teachers, and as a result, increase the likelihood of teachers seeking to develop their skills beyond those required merely for entry into teaching, or maintenance of registration. This means that not only do VET professionals and organisations benefit from professional development, but so also do VET clients (industry and students).

Staff perceptions

The changes to the VET system and consequent changes to the roles of VET professionals have had a considerable impact on the way they view their work. Some of the major issues impacting on VET professionals are highlighted in a survey of just under a thousand TAFE teachers (including about 180 sessional/casual staff) undertaken in 2000 by the Australian Education Union (Kronemann 2001).

When respondents to the survey were asked about the five changes that have most impacted on their work, TAFE funding cuts was the most frequently cited change (53% of respondents). Other frequently cited changes included: constant restructure (45% of respondents); reporting and accountability requirements (39%); cuts to teaching staff (36%); changes in delivery modes and curriculum (33%); reduced job security/greater casualisation (33%); training packages (32%); cuts to support staff (32%); technological change (27%); changing student clientele (19%); and workplace training and assessment (18%).

In terms of changes impacting on work and life, 86% of respondents indicated that their workload had increased, with a concomitant increase in stress at work. Respondents also indicated an erosion of: the ability to maintain professional standards and provide quality education (68% of respondents indicated this); professional interaction between staff (61%); relations/interactions with students (approx 50%); and their ability to maintain and update technical skills (30%). However, it must be noted that the last figure is balanced by the fact that more than 40% also said their ability to maintain and update technical skills had, in fact, increased.

There are also issues of particular concern to casual staff. Kronemann (2002) points out that, for casual staff, there is the additional pressure which comes from trying to meet the range of teaching demands from within the limited time and insecurity of their positions. The lack of employment security, she says, causes the teachers a great deal of anxiety—which is compounded by self-imposed pressure on them to perform exceptionally well in order to maximise their chances of further appointments.

[9] In this context, 'professionalism' suggests striving for best teaching practice.

Appendix 2: Primary data sources and concepts and terms used

Census of Population and Housing, 1996 and 2001

The census gathers information on occupation, and as VET teachers are a discrete occupational group (in the classification used for these purposes), it is possible to isolate this group, and create a profile of them based on other census information—such as sex, age, and highest educational attainment.

There are two caveats to using the census. Many individuals provide insufficient information on the census form to allow their occupation to be classified down to such a fine level as a VET teacher. This means that there will be an under-count of the true number. It also means that we must assume that those who did provide sufficient detail generally have similar characteristics to those who did not. A more important caveat is that the census only obtains the occupation of a person's *main* job. For those who have more than one job, only the main job counts. This is a significant qualifier in VET where we know from other studies (for example, the national study of the TAFE workforce) that there are very large numbers of contract/sessional teachers employed in the system. Those who are employed on this basis, and who have other jobs which account for a greater proportion of their working time, will not be included in the count. For this reason, the census data are not very useful for discussing employment status (for example, full- or part-time work).

Survey of Education and Training, 1997 and 2001

These surveys included a block of questions put to people who said they were involved in education or training activities as part of their job. Based on whom they provided the service for, it is possible to identify people working in vocational education and training. For these individuals, information is available on demographic characteristics, job characteristics, the kind of VET activities they are engaged in, how many hours they spend in delivering VET, and whether they hold qualifications in education and training.

This source also has limitations. As a sample survey, it is subject to sampling error and, as the number of respondents who said that they worked in VET is relatively small, the capacity to 'drill down' is limited. This is especially the case for those working in the TAFE sector. A second limitation is that the job information only relates to an individual's main job and it is not possible to tell from the survey whether that job is in VET.

Table 15 summarises how the two primary data sources match the VET professional project definitions and scope.

Table 15: How ABS sources match onto VET professional project definitions and scope

	Education is main activity		Education is not main activity	
	TAFE	Non-TAFE	Other organisations providing training	Enterprises
VET practitioner	Both census and SET	Both census and SET	SET only	SET only
VET professional	SET only	SET only	SET only	SET only

Note: SET = Survey of Education and Training

Concepts and terms used in the report

This report is part of a larger project on the future of the VET professional, defined in the project as staff employed in delivery, and staff providing leadership, management and direct support, and therefore a sub-set of the larger VET workforce. Table 15 explains how we have matched existing research and data sources into this definition.

Operational definitions of VET professionals and VET practitioners

For already published reports, we are limited to the definition used by the researchers, and we must judge how well it matches. For the two primary sources, we examined the questions asked and have used them in such a way as to get the best approximation to our definition. The census identifies VET teachers, but not other VET professionals (for example, industry liaison managers). It is, therefore, more aligned with the project definition of a VET practitioner—lecturers, teachers and trainers. The Survey of Education and Training covers the entire VET workforce, and the scope to VET professionals can be narrowed by examining the range of activities people say they are involved in. These are:

- development of courses/modules
- delivery of courses/modules
- assessment of courses/modules
- management of education or training
- development of plans
- administrative support
- marketing programs.

A VET professional has been defined as those involved in any of the first five activities listed above. This means that those who said they were *only* involved in administrative support or marketing programs lie in the VET workforce, but are *not* VET professionals. The first three activities listed, which the survey calls direct activities, are used to define a *VET practitioner*.

Employers of VET professionals and VET practitioners

Most of the secondary sources are limited to the TAFE sector. The census has as its scope VET teachers in the education industry, employed in TAFE or outside TAFE. The Survey of Education and Training is not limited in scope. For that source, the employers of VET professionals (and practitioners) are grouped into the following categories:

- TAFE
- non-TAFE training organisations (adult and community education, skill centres, business colleges, other private training organisations)
- other organisations which provide training (professional or industry association, product manufacturer or supplier), but not as their main business
- enterprises who provide in-house training for their employees.

The first two provider types are those whose main activity is education and training, and who can reasonably be assumed to be registered training organisations. Most of their delivery is likely to be nationally recognised training. Some of those working for the other two provider types are also likely to be involved in providing nationally recognised training, but this is unknown. Some staff may be employed by more than one different kind of provider, though this was not canvassed in the survey, and our assumption is that the likely incidence of this is low.

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