

Partners in a Learning Culture

the way forward...



Acknowledgment for use of Aboriginal Tribal Language

The Australian Indigenous Training Advisory Council (AITAC) and the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) would like to acknowledge Henry Fourmile Senior, Yidinji Elder and traditional owner of the Queballum (tribal name meaning cyclone) of the Gimuy (Cairns) area for the permission to use his tribal language in this document.

Aboriginal people around Australia use different names to describe themselves. Some of these are used in this document.

SA: Nungas
VIC, NSW: Koories
WA: Noongars
QLD: Murries
ACT: Koories
NT: Yolongu
TAS: Pallawa

Indigenous Disclaimer

Indigenous Australians are warned that images of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people appear in this document. At the time of publication this did not include images of deceased persons.

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Artist Profile



Davina Kelly

Davina Kelly is a woman of the Yiman peoples of north-eastern Queensland and was born in Brisbane in 1966.

Davina titled the cover artwork *Paths of Learning* – symbolic to this document’s message: “The crossing of arms is the joining of past, present and future – the coming together of people in partnership. People are boarding, eager to participate in the journey of a learning culture. Some are already on the ride to their future achievements.”

Life experiences, general knowledge, and research on her family, culture and Australia’s Indigenous history influence Davina’s work. Mixed media is her preferred form of expression.

Davina has a Diploma in Visual Arts from Kangaroo Point Institute of TAFE and is currently undertaking a Bachelor of Contemporary Australian Indigenous Art at Griffith University’s Queensland College of Art. In her spare time, she teaches at Kangaroo Point TAFE.

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Special insert

VET Pathways to Better Futures for Indigenous Australians

Wurrban Janda (pronounced: woo-bun/jun-dar)

meaning: to see tomorrow and go forward in the right direction.

Our Vision and Our Journey – Sharing a Learning Culture

We've all been sharing a historic journey with a great destination since the birth of *Partners in a Learning Culture* and its *Blueprint for Implementation*, our first *National Strategy for Vocational Education and Training for Indigenous Australians 2000–2005*.

Along the way, we've seen a strengthening of partnerships between Indigenous communities, governments, training and education providers, industry, and other interested Australians.

This document shares our progress and provides a way forward as a result of changes to the national context over the past four years and our *mid-term review* findings. The most significant change being the announcement of the dissolution of ANTA on 30 June 2005, and the functions of the National Training System moving to the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST). While *Partners in a Learning Culture's Blueprint* continues to provide a clear, well-thought-out map for our journey, the mid-term review findings helped us set our sights on new priorities to progress more easily and make the rest of our journey even more rewarding.

With just under a year left of this first national strategy, there is still a lot of ground to cover. Our new priorities show us where we need to focus for

the remainder of the Blueprint and beyond. We've come a long way with many national partners' support and now we look forward to bringing new partners along for the rest of our journey.

Important to these partnerships and our shared learning is our use of language. Australia has had over 200 Indigenous languages. Some of these are still strong, some are endangered, some destroyed, some live only in memories, and others are being revived.

We're using one of these languages in this document's headings as we see this as central to truly sharing a learning culture. I would like to acknowledge Henry Fourmile Senior, Yidinji Elder and traditional owner of the Queballum (tribal name meaning cyclone) of the Gimuy (Cairns) area for permission to use his tribal language.

This document briefly covers our past, present and future – celebrating our achievements and focusing us more clearly on the ways ahead.

The Australian Indigenous Training Advisory Council (AITAC) has provided advice to DEST to ensure the significant work that has occurred nationally over the past five years as a result of *Partners in a Learning Culture* is continued in the New National Training System.

I'd like to thank all of you who've contributed to this journey and our successes to date, and invite you to continue advancing our journey in partnering in a learning culture.



**Bill Wilson
Co-Chair**

Australian Indigenous Training Advisory Council



Ja Gawuru Yurrunu

(pronounced: jar/gar-woo-roo/you-roon-you)

meaning: road/path from long time ago the old track.

Pathways from the Past

Our journey began in 2000 with a first for Australia – *Partners in a Learning Culture: Australia's National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy for Vocational Education and Training 2000–2005*. Our destination:

A vocational education and training (VET) system which renews and shares an Indigenous learning culture with all Australians in a spirit of reconciliation, equity, justice and community economic development and sustainability.

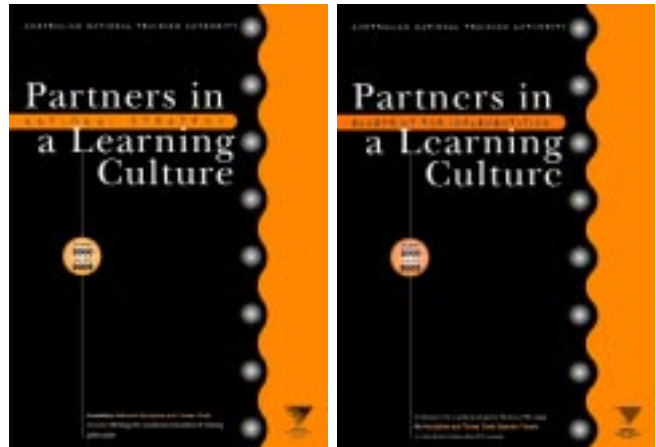
We set four objectives – our signposts – to guide this journey to 2005:

1. increasing the involvement of Indigenous Australians in decision-making about policy, planning, resources and delivery
2. achieving participation in VET for Indigenous Australians equal to those of the rest of the Australian community
3. achieving increased, culturally appropriate, and flexibly delivered training, including use of information technology, for Indigenous Australians
4. developing closer links between VET outcomes for Indigenous Australians, and industry and employment.

Our *Partners in a Learning Culture Blueprint for Implementation 2000–2005* laid clear maps: strategies, actions, accountabilities and timelines for finding our way.

As with any challenging journey, we needed to take time to look at how we were travelling and how far we'd come. We needed to track our progress and look at how we were going to help all partners on this journey, many coming from different directions, reach our destination together.

Our mid-term review of the Blueprint in 2003 gave us guiding information – it showed us where progress had been made and also shone a light on pathways to work on.



The mid-term review findings showed us:

- while progress is being made in every area of the Blueprint, overall progress is “gradual, patchy and uneven” and reporting needs to be systematised
- participation of Indigenous Australians in VET is very strong – twice that of other Australian students – but, set against all other indicators, Indigenous Australians are faring less well than non-Indigenous Australians
- pass rates of Indigenous students have decreased and withdrawal rates also continue to be higher than for non-Indigenous students
- employment outcomes for Indigenous students have improved overall but remain considerably poorer than for non-Indigenous students.

In another positive response to our need to improve training opportunities and outcomes for Indigenous Australians, TAFE Directors Australia (TDA) established a *Charter for Indigenous Education and Training*. The Charter supports both the objectives of *Partners in a Learning Culture* and *Shaping our Future*.

There have also been other significant national changes affecting the road we're travelling including the recognition of critical skills shortages in Australian industries such as building and construction, metals, manufacturing, and automotive.

The mid-term review showed where we need to alter our travel plans to meet the changes of this new environment, particularly around linking training to employment outcomes. Our six new priorities bring renewed focus to our destination and are aimed at encouraging creative and flexible responses by all partners.

While still working on our original Blueprint's objectives, these new priorities are part of encouraging all those sharing the journey – national partners – to travel with the Blueprint in a way that links with their own needs and overall directions. We hope to engage all partners in greater efforts towards reaching each of these six priorities:

1. Building the Capacity of the VET Sector
2. Creating more Pathways
3. Improving Funding Frameworks
4. Culturally Appropriate Product Development, Design and Delivery
5. Links to Employment
6. Growing VET Sector Partnerships.



Ja Gawuru Yingu Yalungunda

(pronounced: jar/gar-woo-roo/yin-goo/yah-loon-goon-dar)

meaning: road/path from this day today, this the track we use today.

Pathways of the Present

AITAC believes that, to achieve the goals of the Blueprint, there are six priority areas requiring focus for the remainder of the term of the Blueprint. These are based on the key findings of the mid-term review. These priority areas have been endorsed by ANTA MINCO and are presented throughout the rest of this report.

Priority 1. Building the Capacity of the VET Sector

We can see progress with the strengthening of **Indigenous influence within the VET system** through formal institutional mechanisms such as Indigenous membership on state training authorities and the Australian National Training Authority. The appointment of an Indigenous person to the Authority's Board in 2001 marked a significant milestone in this regard.

This is less the case in organisations providing industry and training advice. Also, as there has been limited progress in increasing the number of Indigenous employees in VET, Indigenous perspectives and advice are often not part of core business.

The mid-term review identified the need to place a stronger focus on organisations providing industry and training advice. These organisations need to develop well-defined mechanisms for involving Indigenous Australians to ensure that the advice they give to governments and the decisions they make about training, reflect the needs and aspirations of Indigenous Australians and their communities.

Participation of Indigenous Australians in VET is very strong. Indeed, it is almost twice the rate for non-Indigenous people and if this were the only yardstick, we would believe that we had exceeded all expectations.

Closer examination, however, shows that much of this participation is in multi-field education which focuses on enabling skills such as literacy, numeracy, study and employment skills, and in low-level preparatory courses.

This reflects:

- the high numbers of Indigenous students who speak a language other than English at home
- the lower levels of schooling achieved.

Before Indigenous students can be expected to successfully participate in higher-level courses at a comparable level to non-Indigenous students, they will first need the skills to undertake these courses. The responsibility for achieving this is shared between the school sector, post-secondary sector (including Adult Community Education), industry, and communities.

The ***National Indigenous Research Strategy – Indigenous Australians in Vocational Education and Training 2003–2006*** is aimed at shedding further light on possible strategies.

This research is looking for practical ways to improve training, employment, and social and individual outcomes for Indigenous Australians. It will also focus on policy development, decision-making and practice in VET for Indigenous Australians informed by sound evidence, high-quality data and critical evaluation.

In addition to this comprehensive research, there are the *Growing the Desert: Effective Education Pathways for Remote Indigenous peoples and the Aspirations, Opportunities and Obstacles: The Goulburn Valley Koorie Community Vocational Education and Training Participation* projects.

These projects are looking in more detail at the factors affecting Indigenous participation in VET across the desert region in central Australia and in a Victorian urban community.

The Australian National Training Authority has provided funds to TDA for the development of a ***Charter for Indigenous Education and Training***, for adaptation and use by TAFE institutes and other training providers around Australia.

case study

Opening Doors – North Queensland Innovation and Success in Health influencing National Policy and Funding

The Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker Education Program Aboriginal Corporation is a community-controlled organisation *Opening Doors* for Indigenous health care workers.

The Corporation with a team of partners began an innovative project called *Opening Doors* to support general practices in providing culturally appropriate services for their Indigenous Australian clients.

Opening Doors is a first for Australia and is about filling gaps where services are limited and there are no Aboriginal medical services operating. It also provides complementary services in main centres where existing services are unable to cope with the demands of increasing primary health care problems faced by Indigenous Australians.

Significantly, the project has provided an opportunity for Queensland's Indigenous people to work in mainstream health with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous clients.

Doctors involved from six general practices believed service delivery for their Indigenous clients would be improved with the inclusion of Indigenous health workers in general practices.

Opening Doors required interested Aboriginal applicants to commit to full-time employment outcomes as a prerequisite to entering the training. Once this was achieved, a new mixed mode of study program was designed to limit the impact on the workplace. The final program design was structured around six one-week blocks, supported by weekly online sessions, on-the-job training visits and a mentoring program.

Applicants then entered into a full-time training position of 38 hours per week involving working in the practice and completing appropriate accredited training in Certificate IV in Indigenous Primary Health Care. This training was fully funded by the Department of Employment and Training and Abstudy (through Centrelink, and Department of Employment, Science and Training).

The Corporation oversees the training and provides mentoring to both trainees and doctors. Unexpected spin-offs from the project already include:

- Indigenous client numbers have increased in all participating practices
- Indigenous clients are using a service that works at understanding issues and reconciling differences as a part of service delivery



Colleen Purcell and Sarah Van Hooren

- Indigenous health workers are establishing links with other minority clients particularly those from non-English backgrounds
- the perception of health workers has been elevated in the community – they're now seen as health professionals first, not just people who work only with Murrils
- the development of the new National Health Worker competency standards by opening up a new career pathway
- highly innovative training using mixed modes of delivery to minimise disruption to the workplace
- influencing national health policy and funding through changes to Medicare to support the project.

Importantly it has created six Indigenous health care worker places with GPs providing improved services in six communities across North Queensland, and a further pool of four qualified workers currently in the community or with Queensland Health. Each of the participants received a Certificate IV in Indigenous Primary Health Care with clear pathways to more advanced and tertiary level training.

More broadly, the changes to the Medicare schedules to support the project may result in further Medicare changes to create greater incentives for doctors to change services to meet the needs of an increasing number of Indigenous clients.

Opening Doors is funded by the Department of Health and Ageing through the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health. Core funding is supported through engaging the Australian Government, state government agencies and the community through a number of partnerships and contracts.

connected to priorities 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6

Priority 1 (continued). Building the Capacity of the VET Sector

As part of the work by TDA to develop the Charter, practical tools and resources will be developed and distributed to support training providers develop their own version of the Charter in consultation with their local Indigenous community/ies.

To help us further our journey in building the capacity of the sector we need to:

- work with national research findings focusing on practical outcomes in policy and delivery, shaped by Indigenous Australians, and building the capacity of Indigenous researchers
- increase the number of Indigenous employees at all levels of the VET system – from on-the-ground delivery (teachers, academic advisers, counsellors and liaison officers) to senior policy, planning, and administration roles
- increase Indigenous voices on key decision-making bodies and in key research roles (the national *Survey of Indigenous Staff in Vocational Education and Training* project profiling Indigenous employment will provide valuable information)
- incorporate Indigenous advice and perspectives into all VET sector business processes to meet Indigenous Australians' expectations
- incorporate Indigenous-related initiatives into current national VET sector professional development activities to increase cultural awareness and improve Indigenous employees' ability to advance their careers
- increase the numbers of Indigenous Australians qualifying for *Certificate IV in Training and Assessment* in each State and Territory to build the sector's capacity to support Indigenous students.



case studies

Oana Mallacka – State Plan for Change in Tasmania

(pronounced: o-r-na/mull-r-ka)

meaning: to inform and grow

While the proportion of Aboriginal people in VET in Tasmania is quite high, they are not participating in the higher certificate level of training and they are not found in important decision-making roles.

Oana Mallacka, Tasmania's State Plan for implementing Partners in a Learning Culture, is changing this.

Oana Mallacka's success is based on a partnership between stakeholders including the Aboriginal community, a variety of Aboriginal organisations,

State and Federal agencies, Group Training Organisations and Registered Training Organisations. These partners work together to identify the strategies and actions best suited to Tasmania's Aboriginal people.

TAFE Tasmania has taken up the vision of *Oana Mallacka* with their own strategies for implementing it in their areas of responsibility such as:

- Aboriginal staff recruitment
- increasing participation by Aboriginal people in mainstream courses
- training in prerequisite skills
- providing information to the Aboriginal community.

These strategies aim to increase participation and successful completion of VET programs by Aboriginal people in Tasmania.

connected to priorities 1, 2, 5 & 6

BIMA's Remote Pilot Project for Youth in Cape York

The Brisbane Indigenous Media Association (BIMA) has successfully operated the popular 4AAA Murri Country radio station in Brisbane for many years. Now they're taking their expertise in broadcast radio training to four Cape York communities – Weipa, Aurukun, Kowanyama and Cooktown – where they're teaching Indigenous youth the skills they need for community broadcasting.

The local community radio stations in Cape York (generally referred to as BRACS: Broadcasting for Remote Aboriginal Communities Scheme) play a big role in community governance. Providing pathways in media for young Indigenous community members will not only help sustain these radio stations, it will also give these young people the chance to influence media in their communities and promote their vision for their communities' futures.

The students have already had the chance to participate in a live national broadcast from the communities of Napranum and Aurukun on the "Lets Talk" radio program hosted by Tiga Bayles.

This showed the power of radio with listeners nationally getting a better insight into the issues and history of the people in the area. Most of the students have low literacy and numeracy levels but had no trouble operating the electronic and radio equipment.

Now they're excited with the idea of a Youth Radio Show where they can play their own music, news and views. As a Registered Training Organisation, BIMA will deliver training for Certificates II, III and IV in Broadcasting (Radio) to secondary students and some older community members at each location.

The training approach will be flexible and responsive to community issues and needs – including a virtual online classroom, videoconferencing, and on-the-job training in Cape York and Brisbane. This Indigenous Media Pathway Project is funded by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training.



Joey Wapau and Steve Ellis

connected to priorities 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6

Priority 2. Creating more Pathways

Encouraging Indigenous students to stay in school by increasing its relevance and building pathways to work-based learning, has been a focus of the very successful *VET in Schools* program.

As many Indigenous students do not currently go beyond Year 11 – particularly those in rural and remote communities – we need to increase emphasis on the junior years of secondary schooling.

We need to add to this effort by improved career counselling and mentoring to help younger Indigenous students broaden the choices they perceive themselves as having, and identify more opportunities available to them.

Beyond the focus on schools, we are also working on improving pathways between lower and higher levels of training. Although there has been steady improvement in Indigenous students' access and attainment in higher-level and more industry-relevant courses, progress has been slow and compromised by a decrease in pass rates and a high level of withdrawals – a major obstacle.

To help overcome these obstacles to successful participation and completion of courses, particularly in rural and remote Australia, the mid-term review identified necessary services:

- literacy and numeracy skills development
- childcare
- career counselling and mentoring
- customised Training Packages
- tutoring
- income and accommodation.

Our mid-term review also told us we need to:

- deal with the gaps identified in VET for Indigenous Australians in correctional facilities (juvenile and adult)
- improve access to recognition of prior learning and recognition of current competencies for Indigenous Australians.

Partners in a Learning Culture identified **VET in correctional facilities** as critical to improving Indigenous prisoners' learning opportunities. It also has the potential to reduce recidivism and assist in the transition from prison to work.

Given the high rates of Indigenous incarceration this also has important ramifications for Indigenous families and communities. So far, we have not had a sufficiently concerted effort regarding VET for Indigenous Australians in prison.

By creating these pathways, we link VET to meaningful work for Indigenous Australians. *Shaping our Future*, the national strategy for VET, embraces this goal with its national objective:

Indigenous Australians will have skills for viable jobs

Priority 3. Improving Funding Frameworks

In some areas, *knowing* what needs to be done to improve Indigenous participation in and outcomes from VET is not enough. Permeating the mid-term review has been the issue of how to adequately resource the necessary initiatives to reduce the problem.

We know that training providers and employers who provide opportunities and support services to Indigenous students are likely to incur greater costs – this is particularly the case in rural and remote areas. So, given that the total pool of available resources is unlikely to grow, we need to find ways to better use existing resources. For the longer term, we need new funding models that can support fundamental change in organisations by allowing for long-term planning.

This will be particularly important in meeting the staffing and professional development needs already identified.

Our funding needs include:

- adequate learning supports and guidance for Indigenous students, such as childcare, equipment, tutoring, mentoring by industry and community mentors such as Elders, and career guidance
- supports and incentives for Indigenous students and training providers to increase the number of Indigenous students studying at Certificate III and above
- covering additional costs incurred by some training providers in adapting learning resources so that they are culturally appropriate.

We have to give national attention to the support and expansion of specialised programs for imprisoned Indigenous Australians. Our approach will be long term and again informed by:

- national research on *Vocational Education and Training for Indigenous People in Correctional Institutions*
- the *National Strategy for VET for Adult Prisoners and Offenders in Australia Implementation Plan* (due for completion in 2005).

case study

Course Meets Real Needs in the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula

Dinghies are a popular mode of transport in the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula region. When they break down, people have to tow or freight both dinghy and motor to Thursday Island for repairs. This is expensive and often involves a long wait.

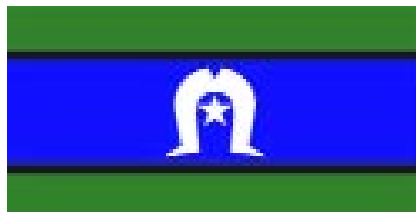
The solution was to train people so they could do repairs in their own communities. But community members didn't have the prerequisite Qualified Mechanic Licence to be able to do the Outboard Motor Mechanics Course.

So two field officers from TAFE, Leo Akee and Geiza Stow, put in place a six-week Vocational Preparation Course to cater for Indigenous communities.

Interest in the course was high with twenty-one communities wanting it delivered locally. Tom Thaggard,

a Fijian teacher with an understanding of Creole (Fijian), was given the job of teaching the course.

Tom's teaching approach was responsive to the students' learning styles increasing student interest in the course and gaining great results.



Students received pass marks greater than 80 percent with some getting 100 percent. Some were able to make up motors using parts from three well-known brands of outboard motors. Seeing disused motors working was a joy to everybody.

The success of the course has also resulted in some councils establishing small maintenance and welding facilities in their own communities.

connected to priorities 1, 2 & 4

Priority 4. Culturally Appropriate Product Development and Delivery

Partners in a Learning Culture identified cultural appropriateness and flexible delivery as critical in all aspects of designing, developing and delivering VET.

Much of the activity in response to this has so far been focused on modes of delivery through the establishment of Skill Centres and developing information technology skills. While these are positive initiatives and will continue to be supported, the mid-term review found that attention needs to be refocused on the broader intent of this objective.

Cultural appropriateness and flexible delivery are not just about Skill Centres and information technology – they are about giving individuals and communities far greater control over what training is provided, when, where, how and by whom. This is essential to establishing relevant pathways for Indigenous Australians.

The mid-term review found that:

- training programs and materials need to respect and reflect Indigenous culture and learning perspectives
- training providers need to employ more Indigenous employees and increase cultural awareness amongst non-Indigenous employees.

As Training Packages are the building blocks of the national training system, we're working to ensure that the recently agreed-to Training Package Development and Review Process adequately addresses issues concerning the cultural appropriateness of training materials and delivery.

We've also prioritised:

- working with the new Industry Skills Councils by assisting with the selection of Indigenous experts from relevant industries be appointed to their organisations to ensure industry advice is genuinely responsive to the employment related needs of Indigenous Australians

- ensuring that the review of the *Training Package Equity Advisory Service* covers all aspects of cultural appropriateness in Training Packages
- providing advice to TDA on the development and implementation of their Charter for Indigenous Education and Training to assist in ensuring training can be delivered appropriately to Indigenous Australians which can be customised to meet the needs of the local community
- providing more culturally appropriate VET through Community Development Employment Projects.

Importantly, the national research on *Vocational Education and Training for Indigenous People in Correctional Institutions* will examine VET provision for Indigenous people in correctional institutions across Australia. It will explore various participation and attainment issues, including the differing needs of short- and long-term inmates, and employment and further educational opportunities after release. As an area of concern identified in the mid-term review, and remaining as a key issue from the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (1991), this will be a crucial part of the National Centre for Vocational Research's (NCVER) research program.



case studies

Yarnteen Corporation achieving Business Success

Yarnteen meaning: “all” or “everybody” (from Awabakal tribe of Newcastle)

Pathways to employment

The Yarnteen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders' Corporation has a dream for all Indigenous Australians:

To achieve economic self-sufficiency which will enable them to prosper within the whole community system and become full, free agents in their own development.

Ten years ago, Yarnteen decided that to secure the future of their organisation and provide long-term sustainable jobs for their Community Development Employment Project participants, they would take the plunge into the business world.

Their first venture, Port Hunter Commodities, is now a valued business in the Newcastle economy providing bulk storage for grains, protein meals and fertiliser. It's also providing jobs.

The major challenge for the workers first involved with the venture, their first experience of full-time work, was developing a professional work ethic. This was achieved with continuous training which stressed giving professional service to the industry.

Today, the Yarnteen Community Development and Employment Project provides part-time employment in areas as diverse as lawn maintenance, art and craft, home science, woodworking, building, landscape gardening, administration, community support, sports, and small business.

Profits from the Port Hunter Commodities enterprise have been reinvested into Yarnteen so that program participants are also part of a web of Aboriginal-owned and managed businesses and associations. These include:

- the Yamuloong Association delivering nationally accredited certificate courses and traineeship programs, a community-based job search and matching service, and advice and assistance in setting up small businesses
- the Yamuloong Group Training Company which employs apprentices and trainees and provides local employers with recruitment, training, subsidised wages, employee rotation, and counselling support services.

connected to priorities 1, 2, 4, 5 & 6

Information Technology Training in Belconnen Remand Centre – Australian Capital Territory

VET in corrections

Canberra Institute of Technology's (CIT) Yurauna Centre provides literacy and numeracy courses for Indigenous remandees at the Belconnen Remand Centre. When remandees were asked to choose further study options, they preferred a computer course.

CIT's Information Technology Department was approached and they answered the call – setting up computers in a small peer-to-peer network for training. While everyone was initially nervous, after a couple of weeks of working together a rapport was established and students' confidence increased.

Students worked their way through the workbooks with determination. Eventually, five received a Certificate I in Information Technology, five received a Statement of Attainment in Hardware, and one received a Statement of Attainment in Hardware, Word, and Excel.

The students have since spread out to Goulburn, Long Bay, Albury, and Benelong's Haven. Some have gone on to further study and all are happy with the qualifications they have achieved.

And for the future, a successful partnership between CIT's Information Technology Department and the Belconnen Remand Centre has been created.



connected to priorities 1, 2, 4, 5 & 6

Priority 5. Links to Employment

With Australia facing skill shortages in this country not seen for 40 years, Industry is left to consider how it will recruit its workforce of the future. A part of this recruitment must be consideration of the employment and related issues of Indigenous Australians who have been traditionally underrepresented in areas of Australian working life.

As highlighted in the priority areas on the preceding pages, this can be achieved with training that meets the needs of Indigenous peoples, focuses on cultural appropriateness in all aspects of its design, development and delivery. It also means increasing the involvement of Indigenous people in the decision-making process regarding training policy, planning, resources and training delivery.

Indigenous Australians are participating in VET at increasing rates. In far too many cases, however, this training is not leading to meaningful employment.

This is not to say that the skills people acquire through this participation are irrelevant to their needs and aspirations. Regardless of employment outcomes, new skills can have positive economic and non-economic outcomes for individuals and their communities, and can contribute to Indigenous political autonomy.

Recent research findings from NCVET of Indigenous students undertaking VET in 2003 tell us that 42% of those surveyed want to get a job when their study is completed.

Indigenous unemployment, however, is running at more than three times the rate for non-Indigenous Australians – higher if Community Development Employment Project participants are included, as these programs are the largest employers of Indigenous Australians.

If unemployment is not reduced, there is a danger that:

- Indigenous Australians living standards, which are already low, could plummet further
- thwarted expectations of employment outcomes could undermine Indigenous Australians' confidence in the VET system creating new futures for them.

The national research on *Vocational Education and Training, Labour Market Programs and Indigenous Employment Outcomes: A Review Project* will provide a thorough assessment of the different forms of employment preparation for Indigenous Australians to see what has and has not been working.

Explicit links between VET and meaningful work are urgently needed. We need to pursue this with a renewed emphasis on building partnerships with industry, governments and communities, both in the mainstream and in the Indigenous sector.

The ***Pathways to Employment Project***, an important development from *Partners in a Learning Culture*, is proving the value of such effort. This project is working with a number of Community Development Employment Projects to identify and respond to Indigenous participants' VET needs, so they can take up employment or small business opportunities outside of these programs.

Currently sixteen trial sites across Australia have been identified and Project Leaders are being appointed to work directly with these programs. The project involves a collaborative approach between the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations and ANTA.

In the longer term, sustainable links need to be developed between all Community Development Employment Programs, the VET system, and mainstream employment.

case studies

Lifelong Learning with TAFE in Tasmania



Eddie Thomas was born on Cape Barren Island in 1936 and was removed from his parents at just two months. Eddie was taken to an institution in Launceston where he remained until he was 21.

At 63, Eddie enrolled in the Aboriginal Foundation Course for Numeracy and Literacy through TAFE Tasmania.

He has achieved Certificate 1 in General Education and continues to work for the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre in Burnie.

In 2003 Eddie was named Tasmanian Student of the Year.

connected to priorities 2, 4 & 5

Industry and New Apprenticeships in the Northern Territory

Phil Mayo and Kevin Reid are the Northern Territory's first Indigenous printing apprentices – thanks to the commitment of Coleman's Printing to on-the-job training and New Apprenticeships.

As one of the Territory's most successful printing businesses employing between 50 and 60 people, Coleman's Printing is also a strong advocate for Indigenous employment.

This is a family-owned business established in the early 1950s by John 'Colie' Coleman and now run by Gary Coleman and his sons Michael, Justin and Tony.

These last two generations of Colemans were raised and educated in Darwin and have strong links to the local Indigenous community. Production Manager Tony Coleman said "We've all been involved at various levels with local sporting clubs, including sponsoring numerous sporting events and are very much involved on a personal level with the local Indigenous community through sport".

Tony says their "New Apprenticeship success is a result of the services of Access Working Solutions. Since finding Access Working Solutions, we have gained considerable confidence in employing Indigenous people. Access Working Solutions gets to know the business and finds people that are right for us. They have staff to mentor and support both the recruits and the business through the early months of employment".

Kevin Reid is studying a Certificate II in Printing and Graphic Arts and Phil Mayo is doing a Certificate III in Printing and Graphic Arts. Coleman's Printing has won national and local awards for its successful business approach.



Left to right – Tony Coleman, Phil Mayo and Kevin Reid

connected to priorities 1, 2, 5 & 6

Priority 5 (continued). Links to Employment

Although Indigenous **apprenticeship and trainee numbers** increased steadily over the past few years, the percentage of the total apprentice and trainee population fell over this period. Indigenous apprentices and trainees are employed by Group Training Organisations at twice the rate of all other national apprentices and trainees.

Positive results for Indigenous Australians will be increased by Registered Training Organisations' **links with local industry** and communities, and Group Training Organisations' structured and supported apprenticeships and traineeships.

Linking with *Shaping our Future's* objective for *skills for viable jobs* for Indigenous Australians, we're:

- identifying and promoting models of best practice and initiatives for improved training and employment outcomes for Indigenous Australians (particularly in rural and remote Australia)
- working with the new Industry Skills Councils to ensure that the Blueprint's objectives are understood and supported by the Councils.



case study

Tauondi College Succeeds in South Australia

(Tauondi pronounced: town - dee)

meaning: to penetrate or to break through

Tauondi College in Port Adelaide is independent and community-controlled with aims and strategies reflecting those of *Partners in a Learning Culture*.

Partnerships are fundamental to Tauondi's success. As well as preparing the ground for their graduates, they follow them into the workplace, assist with career advancement, and bring the community along to engage them in responsibility and ownership.

Adelaide CDEP participants attend Tauondi for some of their training, and Aboriginal students from secondary schools in the west and north gather at Tauondi on Fridays for VET in Schools. Tauondi also provides Aboriginal students with transport from Adelaide back to their communities to learn language in country. In-service mentor programs for Aboriginal Australians employed in community services create and support strong networks within the community.



Just some of their other successes include:

- Regional employers are targeted with good organisational cultures. Work experience placements give rise to extended networks of motivated employers and students.
- Tauondi Cultural Agency develops cultural trails in partnership with public authorities such as museums, botanical gardens and national parks, and manages bookings for tours led by their Cultural Tour Guiding graduates.
- Art students take commissions for art in public places – most often in partnerships they establish with schools and community groups.
- Business Studies students run a Practice Firm in partnership with a commercial organisation.
- Tauondi's students with a disability have organised reciprocal work and study arrangements with a large regional employer of people with a disability.
- Hospitality students cater for functions on and off the college, getting real-world experience under real pressure (and they've been known to get a standing ovation from the diners!).

connected to priorities 1, 2, 4, 5 & 6

Priority 6. Growing VET Sector Partnerships

We've also recognised the need for a renewed emphasis on building and developing partnerships with industry, government, and communities, both in the mainstream and the Indigenous sectors.

AITAC has been working in partnership with various stakeholders of the VET Sector to ensure positive outcomes can be achieved for Indigenous Australians in VET. Some of these are:

- *National Research Strategy for Indigenous Australians in VET 2003 – 2006* in partnership with NCVER
- *Indigenous E-Learning Engagement Project* in partnership with the Australian Flexible Learning Framework, and
- *Charter for Indigenous Education and Training* in partnership with TDA

We intend to further develop the positive results achieved through:

- local Registered Training Organisations' links with industry and communities
- Group Training Organisations' providing structured and supported apprenticeships and traineeships for Indigenous Australians.

We're also investigating other **strategic alliances**. The new Industry Skills Councils are being invited to play a role in ensuring that industry advice is genuinely responsive to the employment-related needs, interests and circumstances of Indigenous Australians and their communities.

Partners in industry returned a high non-reporting rate in the mid-term review, and this affected the value of our overall findings. So we're working on ways to make future reporting easier.

We also know that for the longer term, partnerships need to be developed between Community Development Employment Projects, the VET, and mainstream employment.

Shaping our Future 2004–2010 will build on these priorities, giving strength and purpose to the work that must be done to achieve our vision through to the end of the decade and beyond.

case study

Wurreker Strategy – New Era for TAFE Victoria

Wurreker meaning: message carriers

A new and exciting era for Victorian Koories in TAFE is emerging with *Wurreker* – a training strategy developed through the partnership of the Koorie Community and the Office of Training and Tertiary Education (OTTE).

Wurreker recognises the importance of the relationship between Koorie training and employment opportunities. It aims to ensure that TAFE delivery and support

services value the aspirations of the individual Koorie students and enable Koorie communities to have a say in their training needs and ultimately their future.

The strategy is based on Koorie community involvement at all levels of decision-making in post-compulsory education and training. Since its establishment in 2002 it has fundamentally changed the way planning, development and delivery of TAFE education for Koories occurs in Victoria.

Wurreker has created ways for Koorie communities to have a real say in the training that supports Koorie community development by:

- establishing Wurreker Regional Committees with total local Koorie community membership
- employing Wurreker Regional Brokers
- Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated and OTTE coordinating meetings of state government departments and other key stakeholders involved in providing education, training and employment services to Koories.

About the painting

This painting is entitled *The Wurreker* or *Message Carriers*. The story to the painting is that of Wile the Possum and Tyuling the Goanna.



connected to priorities 1, 2, 5 & 6

case study

Goolarri Media Pathways in Western Australia

Goolarri meaning: place in the West where the red dirt meets the sea

Goolarri is a dynamic Indigenous media company training and employing Indigenous people in Western Australia. Goolarri's success is attributed to the verve and enthusiasm of its dedicated staff and a strong commitment to training.

In 2003, Goolarri won the small business category in the Western Australian Training Excellence Awards and was one of only three businesses shortlisted for the ANTA Australian Training Awards.

In the same year, it won funding from the Western Australian Department of Education and Training to run a school-based traineeship program for Indigenous students interested in studying broadcasting and screen as part of their secondary education.



Rohanna Angus

Goolarri became a Registered Training Organisation in December 2003 and has established four training pathways in film and television, radio broadcasting, music, and multimedia. Goolarri is currently delivering twelve multimedia traineeships.

In 2003, twelve trainees graduated at Certificate levels II and III with multimedia qualifications and the unique experience of having first-hand experience of working on real radio and television programs. Today, one of these graduates is the manager of Goolarri Radio 99.7 FM.

In the past five years, Goolarri has established:

- Goolarri Radio 99.7 FM (the most popular station in Broome)
- Goolarri Television GTV (famous for the Mary G series produced for SBS)
- Goolarri Music Studio.

Goolarri has also developed a reality-based training model. Staff manage and deliver training onsite through an auspice arrangement with Central TAFE in Perth using multimedia Training Packages specifically adapted to suit Goolarri's operational and cultural needs.

connected to priorities 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6

National Research Strategy for Indigenous Australians in VET 2003–2006

Linking to the original Blueprint's objectives, the **National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER)** developed the ***National Research Strategy for Indigenous Australians in Vocational Education and Training 2003–2006***, in partnership with AITAC.

Research undertaken as part of the strategy aims to result in practical outcomes to improve training, employment, social and individual outcomes for Indigenous Australians.

The research strategy builds on what is already known about Indigenous people's engagement with VET and the extent to which it is helping to achieve the desired outcomes for individuals and communities. Policy development, decision-making and practice in VET for Indigenous Australians must be informed by sound evidence, high quality data and critical evaluation.

Between June and September 2004, a national survey was conducted across five different regions, from major cities to very remote areas, to find out more about Indigenous people's experiences with training. The first findings of the *Survey of Indigenous Vocational Education and Training students Experiences and Outcomes 2003 and 2004* has now been released.

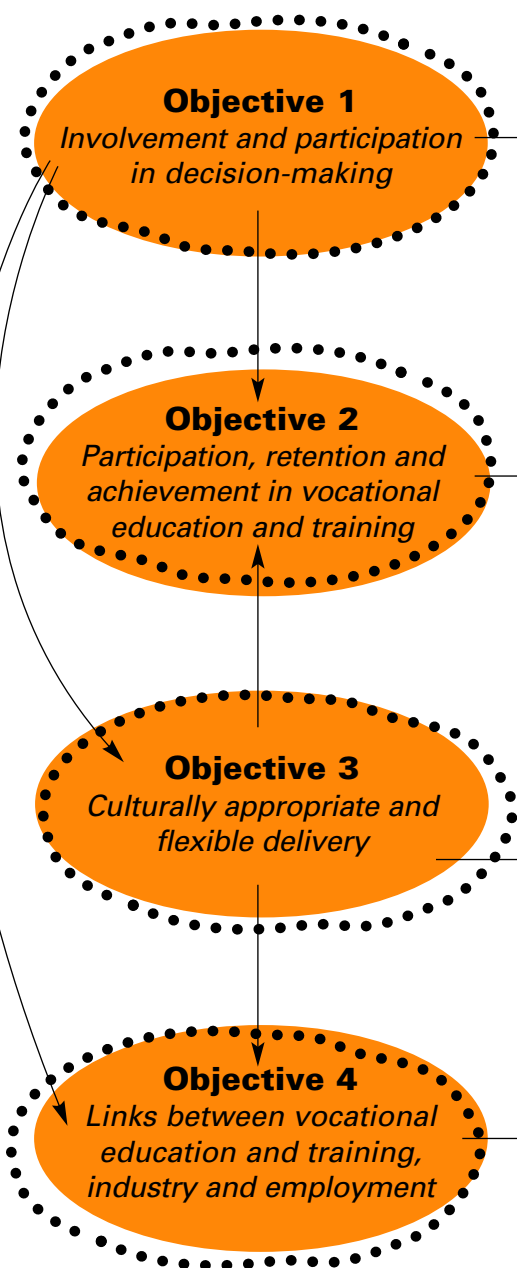
For more information about NCVER's Indigenous research, including links to related publications and the complete strategy document, please visit the NCVER website at

<http://www.ncver.edu.au/students/31008.html>.

For up to date information and the release of new publications, subscribe to NCVER News at <http://www.ncver.edu.au/newsevents/news.html>.



Blueprint National Objectives



National Research Projects



✓ indicates completed research projects

Ja Gawuru Yingu Ngaja Gurran

(pronounced: jar/gar-woo-roo/yin-goo/nah-jah/goo-run)

meaning: road/path from this day today, to the next day tomorrow, this new track.

Pathways to the Future

At the end of 2003, ANTA released *Shaping our Future: Australia's National Strategy for Vocational Education and Training 2004–2010*. This strategy signalled new pathways for Indigenous Australians to travel and fuels the journey with its national objective 4:

Indigenous Australians will have skills for viable jobs and their learning culture will be shared.

Vocational education and training will help increase employment and business development opportunities for Indigenous people and communities, providing a foundation for greater economic independence. Vocational education and training will be enriched through an exchange of learning culture. Indigenous people will be enabled to create and adapt vocational education and training products and services in order to exercise their rights to positive learning environments for their communities.

The inclusion of a national objective specific to Indigenous Australians signals a fundamental shift in our journey.

With Indigenous Australians no longer treated as fringe dwellers, their destination is now secured at the heart of our national VET effort.

So now we need to focus on our future. At the end of 2005, a final evaluation of the Blueprint will be carried out to assess our national performance in reaching the destination set by *Partners in a Learning Culture*. Once again, States and Territories and all partners will be asked to report on their progress as occurred with the mid-term review. Our national research will also shape our final evaluation.



From ANTA to DEST

With the announcement of the abolition of ANTA (1 July 2005), AITAC is continuing to work with the ANTA Board and the Australian Government's Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) in the development of new models for reporting, accountability and advisory arrangements for the future of Indigenous Australians in VET.

At the invitation of DEST, AITAC has developed a proposed model to ensure the Indigenous Client Voice is maintained in the new national training system post 30 June 2005. A proposed set of strategic Indigenous performance indicators to be considered in new Commonwealth-State Training Funding Agreements were also developed and have been structured against the ANTA MINCO endorsed six priority areas identified in this document.

The ultimate aim of performance indicators is to leverage change nationally for Indigenous VET and the providers of that training to be accountable on receipt of funding.

Effective reporting and analysis is essential to the future of our VET efforts for Indigenous Australians.

It is important that structures to support Pathways to the Future for Indigenous People:

- Enable the continued engagement of key Indigenous stakeholders in driving the Indigenous VET agenda, the *Partners in a Learning Culture* agenda, the *National Strategy* agenda, the Employment agenda whilst allowing for flexibility in engaging a broad range of Indigenous Australians to provide strategic advice
- Ensure that Indigenous views are included in the core business of the new National Training System, and
- Ensure continuity and consistency between previous and future work.



Australian Indigenous Training Advisory Council

What is AITAC?

The Australian Indigenous Training Advisory Council (AITAC) is an advisory body of the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) Board. It was established in October 2000 to oversee the implementation of *Partners in a Learning Culture* — the five-year national strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in VET — and its Blueprint for implementation.

What does AITAC do?

AITAC advises the ANTA Board on:

- strategic policy issues relating to Indigenous Australians and VET
- issues affecting access, participation and outcomes for Indigenous people in VET
- progress of and issues arising from the implementation of *Partners in a Learning Culture* and its Blueprint for implementation.

AITAC also:

- evaluates the success of strategies and component actions of the Blueprint
- indicates areas for further research into Indigenous Australians in VET and, as a result, has developed the National Indigenous VET Research Strategy with the NCVER
- across the Australian, state and territory governments, helps create a shared understanding of the outcomes to be achieved as a result of implementing *Partners in a Learning Culture*.

Membership of AITAC

AITAC members include representatives from the Australian, state and territory governments, training providers, and industry and community groups. AITAC is co-chaired by the Indigenous ANTA Board member and one Indigenous leader in the VET sector.

Since December 2003 there has been no Indigenous ANTA Board member.

If you would like further information, please contact:

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

DEST: <http://www.dest.gov.au>

Notes

...quality outcomes...quality pathways...quality futures...



...quality outcomes...
...quality pathways...
...quality futures...

