

SURVEY RESULTS REPORT

EXHIBIT G



report on a **strategic evaluation**
of reframing the future

DECEMBER 2004



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First published 2004

Electronic ISBN 1 877057 90 8

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Reading This Report

Reading the Tables

- Questions and responses are written in italics
- The base for each row is given in parentheses under the first column
- '0%' means that responses were received for a cell but when rounded the results was <1%
- _ indicates that no responses were received for a cell
- Proportions are rounded to the nearest whole percent
- Percentages have been filtered to respondents eligible to answer ("Don't Know" and "Not Applicable" responses have been removed from the calculation).

Reading the Graphs

- The relevant survey questions are indicated adjacent to the graph in Italics
- The base for the graphs refers to the total number of responses upon which the percentages have been calculated

Performance Measurement Scale

- Performance has been measured in this questionnaire using a positively weighted five-point Likert scale. This scale was positively weighted to assist in gaining a more normalised distribution of scores.
- Average scores have been based on arithmetic averages (mean score), filtered to respondents eligible to answer (don't know and not applicable responses have been removed from the calculation).
- Where average performance scores have been reported, they are based on the following numerical weights – excellent=5, very good=4, good=3, fair=2, poor=1.

Interpreting the Results

- All second line data have been analysed for significance (within groups) at the .05 level. Only significantly different results have been reported in the text. That is, when results are reported to compare groups (based on factors such as gender, age, employment classification, education, years of experience, industry or location) these differences are not due to chance (with a confidence level of greater than 95%).
- Where testing has been conducted on a second line average score, the reported figure has been rounded from one decimal place to two decimal places to provide consistency with topline average figures.

Acronyms used in this Report

Table 1: Acronyms

ACE	Adult Community Education
AEU	Australian Education Union
ANTA	Australian National Training Authority
AQTF	Australian Quality Training Framework
ITAB	Industry Training Advisory Body
NTF	National Training Framework
NTS	National Training System
PD	Professional Development
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RTF	Reframing The Future
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
TP	Training Packages
VET	Vocational Education and Training

1. Research Method

In October 2004 a national online survey was conducted with Vocational Education and Training (VET) stakeholders. The content of this survey was informed by depth interviews with people with an interest in the VET sector, including those with, and those without, previous experience with Reframing the Future (RTF).

This survey was hosted on a secure website. Email invitations included an embedded hyperlink directly to the questionnaire.

Invitations to participate in the survey were provided to relevant stakeholders via:

- RTF staff
- RTF State and Territory Contact Officers
- RTF Project Advisory Committee members
- Victorian TAFE Teachers database
- A range of other organisations including the Australian Education Union (AEU), National Employment Services Association, and national TAFE Staff Development Networks through the Victorian organisation.

Successful and unsuccessful applicants for RTF funding since the year 2000 were contacted by DMC and invited to participate.

Because of poor initial responses, the consulting team sent reminders to these organisations and groups and sought assistance from TAFE frontiers and at a forum held by the Australian Vocational Education and Training Research Association (AVETRA). A link to the survey was also provided on the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) website.

The questionnaire included 66 items measured using a Likert scale. Measures of analysis applied to this data demonstrated high levels of internal reliability (Cronbach's alpha of .95). In addition to rating scale questions, respondents also had the opportunity to provide qualitative responses to questions. A series of personal and professional demographic questions were also collected to assist in the analysis of the data.

1.1 Sample Characteristics

A total of 657 online questionnaires were completed. Respondents were asked to provide a range of personal and professional demographic questions. These responses were used to analyse the data and to validate the accuracy of the sample.

In relation to respondent's personal characteristics:

- Just over six in ten respondents (62%) were female and 38% were male
- Over three-quarters of respondents (77%) were aged over 40 years (41% were aged between 41 and 50 years, and 32% were aged between 51 and 60 years)
- Just 2% of the sample was of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent.

In analysing respondents' detailed responses to the survey, it was consistently found that males were generally less engaged, and rated the performance of RTF lower than did females. Similarly, younger respondents, and those with less than 5 years experience in the VET system, were consistently more pessimistic about the achievements and opportunities offered by RTF.

In relation to employment characteristics:

- One third of respondents (32%) were industry-based trainers or teachers, 43% of the sample were managers, 25% were industry-based assessors and 22% had other role in VET (including program co-ordination, CEO, curriculum development and administrative support)
- Most respondents were employed in permanent full-time positions (71%) or on full-time contract positions (13%). Sixteen percent of respondents were employed part-time, either permanently (7%), on a contract (6%) or casually (3%).
- Respondents were involved with a range of training packages, including, business service (45%), information technology (26%), community services (25%), tourism and hospitality (23%), and retail, wholesale and personal (20%)
- Most respondents worked for a TAFE Institute (39%), a Private Registered Training Organisation (RTO) (27%) or government (10%). Respondents were less likely to work for universities or schools (5%), enterprise or industry (5%), an Adult Community Education (ACE) provider (3%), Industry Training Advisory Body (ITAB) (2%), a Group Training Company (1%) or another organisation type (8%).
- On average respondents had been involved with VET for 11.7 years. The median level of experience was ten years. Years of experience ranged from 0 to 41 years
- Organisation size, based on the number of staff employed, demonstrated that respondents were drawn from a range of organisation sizes. While 50% of respondents were drawn from organisations with over 200 employees, 21% were drawn from organisations with ten or less employees
- Most respondents indicated that their main work location was in a city or metropolitan area (60%). Twenty-nine percent of respondents worked in a regional centre and 11% worked in a rural area. Most respondents worked in Victoria (31%), New South Wales (29%) or Queensland (17%)
- In relation to the qualifications of respondents, most indicated that they had achieved some form of postgraduate study (51%). One in five (21%) had undertaken a Bachelor degree, and 23% had undertaken a certificate or diploma. Just 2% of respondents identified their highest level of schooling as secondary school.

Table 2: Geographic Location of Main Work Location

	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	TOTAL
Base	(18)	(185)	(6)	(106)	(52)	(15)	(198)	(49)	(629)
City/ Metropolitan	2%	17%	1%	10%	7%	2%	18%	3%	60%
Regional Centre	0%	9%	-	5%	1%	0%	10%	3%	29%
Rural Area	0%	4%	-	1%	0%	0%	3%	2%	11%
TOTAL	3%	29%	1%	17%	8%	2%	31%	8%	100%

In relation to employment characteristics, there was a tendency for teachers to be more pessimistic about the achievements of RTF, and the opportunities provided through RTF than were managers. Similarly, positive attitudes towards RTF generally increased as a function of both age and experience in the VET system.

1.2 Limitation of the Research

The sampling approach adopted in this phase of the evaluation, limits the ability to generalise the results of this survey. The researchers did not have control over all the databases used or the methods of respondent solicitation. For respondents completing the survey from website invitations, self selection bias will also need to be considered.

In relation to applications for funding and participation in Applying Information and Research, the late inclusion of this sub-program in the survey limits the ability of the research to draw conclusions about this area of RTF.

2. Survey Findings

2.1 Awareness of RTF

Respondents were asked a series of questions about their awareness of RTF, and their involvement with projects. The vast majority of respondents (83%) had heard of RTF before completing the survey. Given the breadth and scope of the VET workforce targeted in this survey, this is a very high level of awareness. The 17% of respondents who were unaware of RTF were significantly more likely to be:

- Male than female (26% compared to 11%)
- Aged forty years or less (24% compared to 15% for older respondents)
- Working for a non-TAFE provider (20% compared to 11% for TAFE providers)
- Working for a small or medium VET provider than for a larger providers (20%, 22% and 13% respectively)
- Have less than 5 years experience in VET (30% compared to 12% for respondents with more VET experience).

To broaden awareness of RTF, promotional strategies need to be developed that target the non-TAFE VET workforce, particularly VET personnel working for smaller RTOs and for those who may be new to the field.

2.2 RTF Funding

Of the 504 respondents who were aware of RTF, 46% had **previously applied for funding** through RTF (making an average of 2.30 applications).

- Females were more likely to have applied for funding than were males (51% and 38% respectively)
- Respondents aged over 40 years were more likely to have applied for funding than had their younger colleagues (49% and 37% respectively)
- Managers were more likely to have applied for funding than were teachers (56% and 28% respectively)
- Applications for funding increased as a function of respondents experience in VET (from 37% for respondents with less than five years VET experience to 59% for respondents with over 16 years of VET experience)
- Respondents working for a TAFE Institute were particularly likely to have applied for fundings (54% compared to 41% for non-TAFE providers).

It is important for RTF to continue to explore ways to ensure that all VET providers are engaged in the system.

The 232 respondents who had applied for RTF funding made applications for the following sub-programs:

- Staff Development (33% applied with an average number of 2.50 applications)
- Networking and Communities of Practice (21% applied with an average number of 3.10 applications)

- Strategic Management and Change Management (15% applied with an average number of 2.9 applications)
- Applying Information and Research (3% applied with an average number of 3.5 applications)

On average, respondents who had received funding through RTF had submitted 2.1 successful applications. Respondents had received funding in the following sub-program areas:

- Staff Development (70% were successful on an average of 2.30 occasions)
- Strategic Management and Change Management (30% were successful on an average of 2.90 occasions)
- Networking and Communities of Practice (37% were successful on an average of 2.80 occasions)
- Applying Information and Research (5% were successful on an average of 4.10 occasions)

2.2.1 Performance of Funding

Respondents were asked a series of questions about RTF findings. Figure 1 shows the average (arithmetic mean) response for each question, while Table 3 shows the distribution of responses for each item (as a percentage). Items related to funding were among the lowest rated in the questionnaire.

The highest rated area of funding was:

- The accountability and reporting criteria (average of 3.38)
Teachers offered lower ratings for the accountability of funding than did managers (3.10 compared to 3.50)

The lowest rated areas of funding were:

- Amount of funding available for each project (average of 2.92)
- Requirement for match funds from the local provider (average of 2.91)

Respondents who had applied for funding once, offered lower ratings for the requirement of matched funding than did respondents who had applied for funding on more than one occasion (average of 2.90 compared to 3.20)

Respondents from smaller organisations (<50 employees) rated the requirement for matched funds lower than did respondents from larger organisations (>101 employees) (average of 2.60 compared to 3.10).

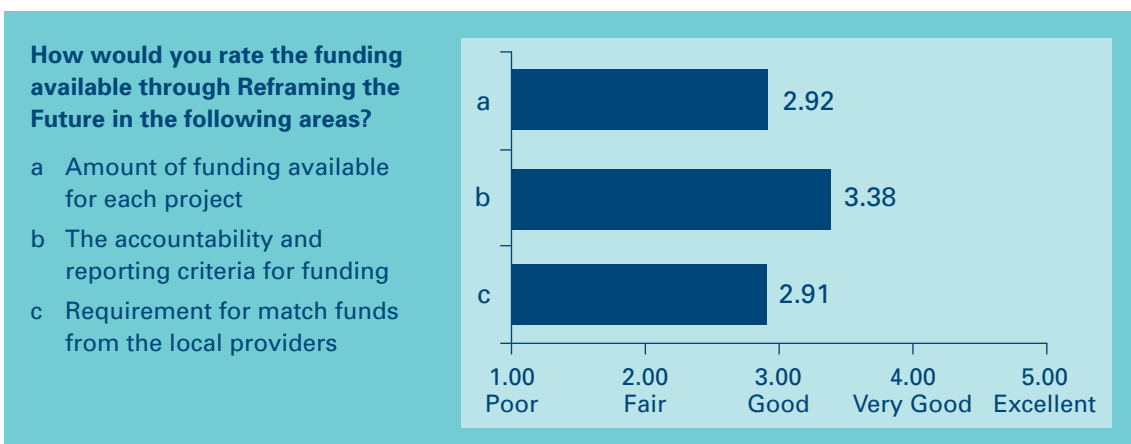


Figure 1: Funding (average scores)

The table below shows the detailed distribution of scores.

Table 3: Program Funding

	Base	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
Amount of funding available for each project	(222)	11%	23%	37%	23%	6%
The accountability and reporting criteria for funding	(207)	3%	12%	39%	38%	9%
Requirement for match funds from the local providers	(215)	9%	28%	32%	24%	7%

Respondents rated particularly low the amount of funding available for each project. In other feedback participants also expressed dissatisfaction with the inability to continue funding beyond the first year, particularly where projects involved longer-term outcomes or processes. Respondents also identified a need for more funded projects, greater funding for each individual project and flexibility in the requirement of matched funding for small RTO and Non-Government Organisations.

2.2.2 Impact of Funding for Organisations

Respondents who had received RTF funding were asked to identify how RTF provided quality inputs with real dividends for organisations. The vast majority of respondents saw multiple positive outcomes of RTF for employers. The main themes to emerge related to; increased access to funding of Professional Development (PD) opportunities for staff, improved staff skills and knowledge, increased opportunities to develop and maintain Communities of Practice and networks, increased focus on producing high quality outcomes and provision of assistance in achieving of organisational goals.

Increased opportunity to access funding for PD was the most frequently mentioned benefit of RTF for employers. Respondents were not only positive about the amount of funding for PD, but also the nature of the funding model and its impact on the type of PD on offer. Generally, respondents felt that RTF encouraged increased access to high quality PD opportunities, which were accessible to people who often did not have an opportunity to access training (e.g. sessional teachers, part time staff, staff from small RTOs or ACE providers).

"It has enabled us to focus on activities that would not have run other wise."

"Provides the funding required for staff to have the time to undertake professional development, build networks and undertake change... or valuable research which would not have been otherwise undertaken."

Participants also felt that the focus on action learning ensured that practical outcomes resulted directly from the PD, and that they were relevant to the needs of the organisation. The fact that organisations were; accountable for their spending and had to develop a timeframe, goals, aims for the project, was also seen as beneficial. Respondents contended that this resulted in projects that were structured, focused, well considered and goal-based.

"Reframing the Future has provided opportunities for real life, work place learning for staff. The learning that occurs as a result of these programs is highly effective since it is associated with real work priorities."

"It allows us to customise training specific to employer needs."

A large proportion of respondents felt that employers benefited from the improvement in the professional skills and knowledge of staff. These comments were often related to improved capacity to implement national initiatives such as the NTF, AQTF and or Training Packages as well as improved methods of assessment and delivery.

"Improved staff skills in implementing Training Packages."

"Opportunity for increased professional development that directly impacts on our institute's capability to meet ANTA's strategic goals."

"Improved understanding of the NTF and Training Packages has lead to improved teaching and assessing."

An equally large proportion of participants felt that the improved ability to deliver high quality work place training benefited employers by improving overall industry standards.

"By improving the quality of vocational education and training we offer to students and therefore industry."

"The professional development activities allow a large number of staff to access information and learn new techniques which they would not have had the opportunity do otherwise. This reflects in the quality of service and up to date legislative information provided to industry."

"Industry employers reap indirect benefits of RTF by having trainers from RTOs receiving professional development to assist with the development of skilled people for employment in the industry."

Some respondents felt that the development of staff skills and knowledge could benefit employers and their organisations in unintended way. For example, by contributing to increased levels of staff satisfaction, promoting an engaged and motivated workforce and reinforcing other skills.

"In a non-tangible manner RTF provides employees with increased self-esteem and an awareness that they do have skills and knowledge to offer their employer."

"Empowering staff and involving them in areas where they had little understanding."

"The employees have become more skilled and more productive. In my experience the benefits of increased skills, knowledge, understanding and productivity have not been limited to the project focus alone. There have been wider spin off's such as increased awareness of organisational procedures and structure, improved computer skills etc."

A smaller proportion of respondents saw the increased development of Communities of Practice and networks as being of benefit to employers. Respondents felt that networks and Communities of Practice promoted the use of best practice, reduced isolation and introspection between organisations and promoted positive relationships between VET stakeholders. They were seen as having residual secondary benefits to staff through the provision of collegial support and in some cases they were seen as benefiting the broader community.

"Enabling staff to visit other organisations and see "best practice or other practice."

"It allows greater engagement with relevant stakeholders..."

"It provided opportunities for collaboration on staff development to achieve creative solutions to real problems."

"[Our community] has benefited greatly with a 300% increase in apprenticeships and traineeships due to the Community of Practice project in 2002. This Community still exists today."

A number of participants commented favourably on the benefits of increased interaction through networks and Communities of Practice with industry. This was seen as being good not just for the parties concerned, but for the VET sector overall by promoting understanding, sharing knowledge and increasing interaction in other networks.

"Reframing the Future funding provides our only opportunity to fund networking with current and potential employers, which enables us to collaboratively design [Recognition of Prior Learning] RPL packages and pathways...customised to their needs....It also allows our staff to have fundamental contact with industry...which is obviously critical for PD."

"Through the Communities of Practice RTF has helped to strengthen our VET community and to develop more collaborative links with other RTOs and local industry."

RTF was seen by a smaller proportion of respondents as benefiting employers by facilitating the achievement of organisational goals. Some respondents stated that RTF enabled the introduction of new initiatives and programs.

"Without this funding it would not have been possible to implement new programs, prepare innovative developments, or implement change."

"RTF funding ...enabled us to introduce new programs and implement new initiatives..."

Others felt that employers benefited from the RTF focus on quality outcomes, best practice, continuous improvement and benchmarking.

"Staff become aware of new leading edge practices..."

"Employers benefit from the ground work being done...RTF provides an opportunity for quality process and instruments to be developed."

"[Participants in RTF] have gained a greater understanding of VET and the quality systems of VET...with the implementation of quality training and assessment."

Issues related to change; change management and strategic change were organisational areas which respondents felt were facilitated by RTF.

"It built up a culture that change is positive."

"[It has] structured engagement in the change process."

"It has provided a structure to work within [and] formalised a change process."

A small number of participants commented positively on the financial impact of RTF which was seen as a cost effective way of training staff, as well as facilitating the sharing of cost efficient practices. In several cases the funding was actually seen as leading to increased income for the organisation.

"Cost effective skilling of staff."

"We were able to share experiences and tools and make our own assessment practices more efficient and cost effective."

"Not only re motivated staff, provided much needed PD but also realised thousands of dollars worth of commercial income."

Respondents identified other benefits for employers such as increased engagement in discussions about policy, the ongoing nature of outcomes from RTF that often transcend the funding period, and the general positive impact RTF has on the VET sector.

RTF is delivering practical benefits to employers and providing additional benefits for individual staff, industry and the community.

2.3 Participation in RTF Projects

Of those 504 respondents who were aware of RTF, 55% had participated in a program funded through RTF. On average, respondents had participated in 1.50 programs.

The 45% of respondents who had not participated in a RTF funded program were particularly likely to:

- Work for a non TAFE provider (59% compared to 28% for TAFE Institutes)
- Have nominated secondary school, a certificate or diploma as the high level of education achieved rather than graduate or postgraduate studies (56% compared to 43%)
- Have less than five years experience in VET (60%, compared to 34% for respondents with over 16 years of VET experience)

RTF needs to improve participation levels among non-TAFE employees and with VET staff who have less experience in the sector and who have low levels of academic attainment. Specific programs to engage these sectors of the workforce should be considered.

2.3.1 Impact of Participation in Projects for Staff

Respondents who had participated in a RTF project were asked to use their experience to explain how RTF provided quality inputs with real dividends for staff. Overwhelmingly respondents identified multiple dividends for staff including improved professional skills, enhanced job satisfaction, development of ongoing networks and increased opportunities to participate in organisational and systemic change.

Most commonly respondents felt that their participation in RTF had improved their skills, knowledge and opportunities to learn. Many respondents mentioned improvements in their specific skills related to teaching, assessment, design and implementation of Training Packages and workplace teaching skills.

"The focus on workplace delivery of training was most beneficial in providing skills to help staff deliver to industry."

"[Our projects] involved up skilling staff in training and assessment, planning and delivery. By the end of the project they had a range of ideas re meeting AQTF standards...."

"Updating their knowledge and skills with regard to VET policy and directions and therefore a wider acceptance of change."

Many respondents also mentioned development of generic, transferable skills.

"The benefits to staff, in a large RTO, can not be overstated. The Reframing the Future projects have enabled staff to engage at a variety of levels in the external policy environment, to build their project management and team skills."

The capacity of RTF to contribute to participants' professional repertoire of skills and knowledge was largely attributed to the provision of opportunities for participants to reflect upon and discuss policy, best practice models, research and information.

"Allows staff time to research, to discuss to trial, to find out what is going on in VET, and reflect on and improve their practice."

"Opportunities to reflect on practice, new trends and directions for industry."

"It benefits [participants'] interpersonal skills, their capacity to link theory and practice, their opportunity to reflect on their own practices and thought patterns."

While respondents clearly appreciated opportunities to take time out from work for discussion and reflection, this alone was not seen as the only factor contributing to the development of skills and knowledge. Rather it was the action learning approach underpinning RTF, which respondents saw as combining knowledge with practical application and reflection and leading to skill development. The emphasis on practical application was viewed very favourably and was seen as innovative, flexible, inclusive and leading to quality outcomes for students and the VET sector overall.

"The action based learning methodology results in authentic learning as staff can immediately apply theoretical concepts in their own work context."

"Real practical experiences connected to current thinking, action learning ...respects content and context."

"The inbuilt reflection component means that learning is retained...the reflective practice means that VET practitioners translate theory and others' experience into their own practice."

Another positive outcome for staff mentioned by a reasonable proportion of respondents was the increased opportunity to both develop and participate in networks. Formal networks, Communities of Practice and informal networks were all seen as a positive outcome of RTF. Respondents felt that these networks contributed to; the sharing of skills and knowledge; expansion of ideas about practice and delivery; and to overcoming isolation. The role of networks in providing a forum for sharing ideas was seen as equally important as their role in providing participants with reassurance and support in dealing with change and other issues.

"The ability to network, find out what others were doing and why and seeing their own issues from others points of view."

"Networking...gives opportunity to understand differences of the training culture – enabling more consistency and improved practices."

A similar number of respondents mentioned a series of positive outcomes for staff which linked to the concept of job satisfaction. These included; increased levels of motivation; positive feelings towards change; feelings of empowerment; sense of achievement; understanding and acceptance of new initiatives and policy; sense of being valued and recognised; opportunities for consultation; and feelings of being included in decisions.

"The feeling that the work you do is valued and contributing to the greater good."

"Staff who have participated in or led projects tend to be the most engaged and motivated of our staff...I believe that this is a direct result of participation in the ANTA funded projects."

"Teachers feel that their input is valued and the opportunity for them to meet and talk through their concerns and challenges in a supportive environment is sufficiently motivating for many teachers to continue enjoying their work."

"It has allowed staff to...contribute to strategic directions and to initiate relevant programs in the Institute."

Respondents identified a range of other positive outcomes for staff such as improved capacity to implement national initiatives such as the NTF, improved understanding of the NTF and the AQTF, increased dialogue between stakeholders in the VET sector, establishment of ongoing programs, ongoing improvements to practice, increased access to PD opportunities, and improved capacity to address organisational goals.

"All projects have resulted in lasting improvements and became ongoing."

"[It] has provided a framework for professional and change management and research and at the same time as guiding projects has also inspired programs."

"Given opportunities to network, research, and access expertise and professional development which otherwise probably wouldn't or couldn't occur due to lack of resources and finances."

Respondents also felt that their learning was enhanced by the opportunities to work with RTF facilitators who they saw as highly skilled, and were seen as a key element in the success of RTF.

"Networking opportunities with highly skilled facilitators...has been informative and liberating."

A very small proportion of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the outcomes of RTF for staff. Most of these also mentioned some positive outcomes. Included in these comments were the views that RTF did not go far enough, needed more follow up, should be more closely aligned with organisational needs or was not sufficiently well supported or encouraged by their organisation.

"Some of them have been good. Others have been a bit of a waste of money."

"Our EO was obstructive regarding Reframing. She was unwilling to allow staff to attend the programs so the opportunities for us were limited."

2.4 Performance of RTF Projects

Respondents were asked a series of questions about the performance of RTF funded projects. These questions were measured using a five point Likert scale.

Figure 2: Performance of Projects (average scores) shows the average (arithmetic mean) response for each question, while Table 4 shows the distribution of responses for each item (as a percentage).

The overall ability of RTF projects to train organisations, not just individuals received an average rating of 3.35 (out of five). Forty-six percent of respondents rated this aspect of RTF programs as excellent (14%) or very good (32%).

From the accompanying chart it can be seen that funded projects performed strongest in relation to:

- **Accessibility of projects (average of 3.39)**
It is not surprising that the perception of the accessibility of RTF projects increased with the number of projects that respondents had undertaken.
- **Range of projects (average of 3.48)**
Females rated the range of project available significantly higher than did males (3.60 compared to 3.30)
Managers offered significantly higher ratings for the range of projects available than did teachers (3.60 compared to 3.20)
- **Quality of projects (average of 3.47)**
Perceptions of the quality of RTF projects increased with the number of project in which the respondent had participated
Respondents from metropolitan areas of Australia offered significantly higher ratings for the quality of projects than did respondents from regional Australia (average of 3.60 and 3.30 respectively).

The performance of programs was weakest in relation to:

- **Promotion of projects (average of 3.15)**
It is not surprising that respondents who had not participated in any RTF projects were more likely to offer a negative rating for the promotion of projects than were respondents who had participated in multiple projects (average of 2.3 compared to 3.4 respectively)
- **Local support for projects (average of 3.18)**
Similarly, respondents who had not participated in any RTF projects were more likely to offer a negative rating for the local support of projects than were respondents who had participated in multiple projects (average of 2.3 for participation in no projects, 2.9 for participation in one project and 3.4 for participation in more projects).

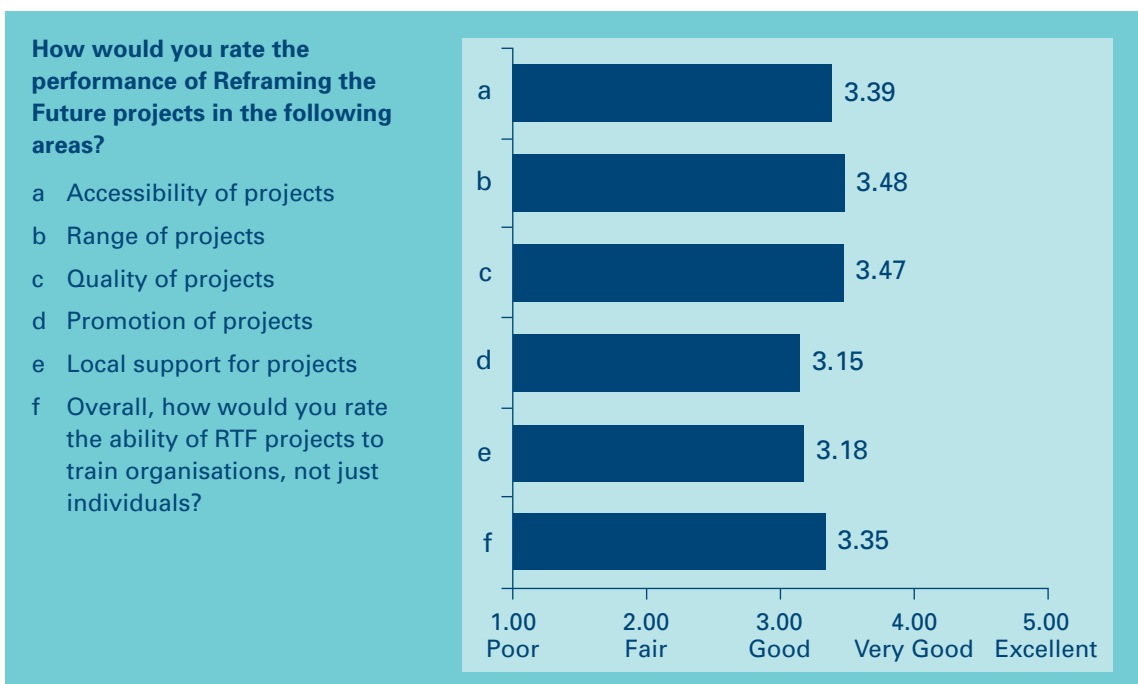


Figure 2: Performance of Projects (average scores)

The accompanying table shows the detailed distribution of scores.

Table 4: Program Performance

	Base	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
Accessibility of projects	(275)	4%	13%	36%	33%	13%
Range of projects	(275)	2%	13%	34%	36%	15%
Quality of projects	(267)	1%	14%	34%	37%	13%
Promotion of projects	(267)	9%	19%	31%	29%	12%
Local support for projects	(253)	8%	19%	35%	24%	14%
Overall, ability of RTF projects to train organisations, not just individuals	(281)	5%	16%	33%	32%	14%

RTF needs to improve the marketing and promotion of funded projects. This will promote both the initiative and the project. The promotion should ensure that a focus is provided on those groups who are under participating in either the acquisition of RTF funding or participation in RTF projects.

2.5 Application Process

Respondents were asked a series of questions about the RTF funding application procedures. These questions were measured using a five point Likert scale.

Figure 3: Application Process (average scores) shows the average (arithmetic mean) response for each question, while Table 5 shows the distribution of responses for each item (as a percentage).

Overall, the administration of the application process was well regarded by respondents with 50% offering a rating of excellent (15%) or very good (35%) and 22 % offering a rating of fair (17%) or poor (5%) (with an average result of 3.38 out of 5).

As shown on the accompanying chart, the areas of the application process receiving the highest ratings out of a possible score of five were:

- Clearly explaining the eligibility criteria (average of 3.68).

Experience in VET was a predictor of the extent to which the eligibility criteria was seen as clear with respondents with less than five years experience offering a significantly lower rating than their more experience colleagues (average of 3.20 compared to 3.90)

- The ease of making an application (average of 3.45)

Respondents who had received funding once offered lower ratings than did respondents who had received funding on more than one occasion (average of 3.40 compared to 3.80)

The areas of the application process receiving the lowest ratings were the:

- Amount of time required to prepare the application (average of 3.02)
- Equity of access to funding (average of 3.17)

Respondents employed by Private RTOs were particularly likely to offer a low rating for the perceived equity in access to funding (average of 2.80)

- Quality of feedback on the outcome of applications (average of 3.07)

Respondents who had received funding once offered lower ratings for the quality of feedback than did respondents who had received funding on more than one occasion (average of 3.20 compared to 3.60)

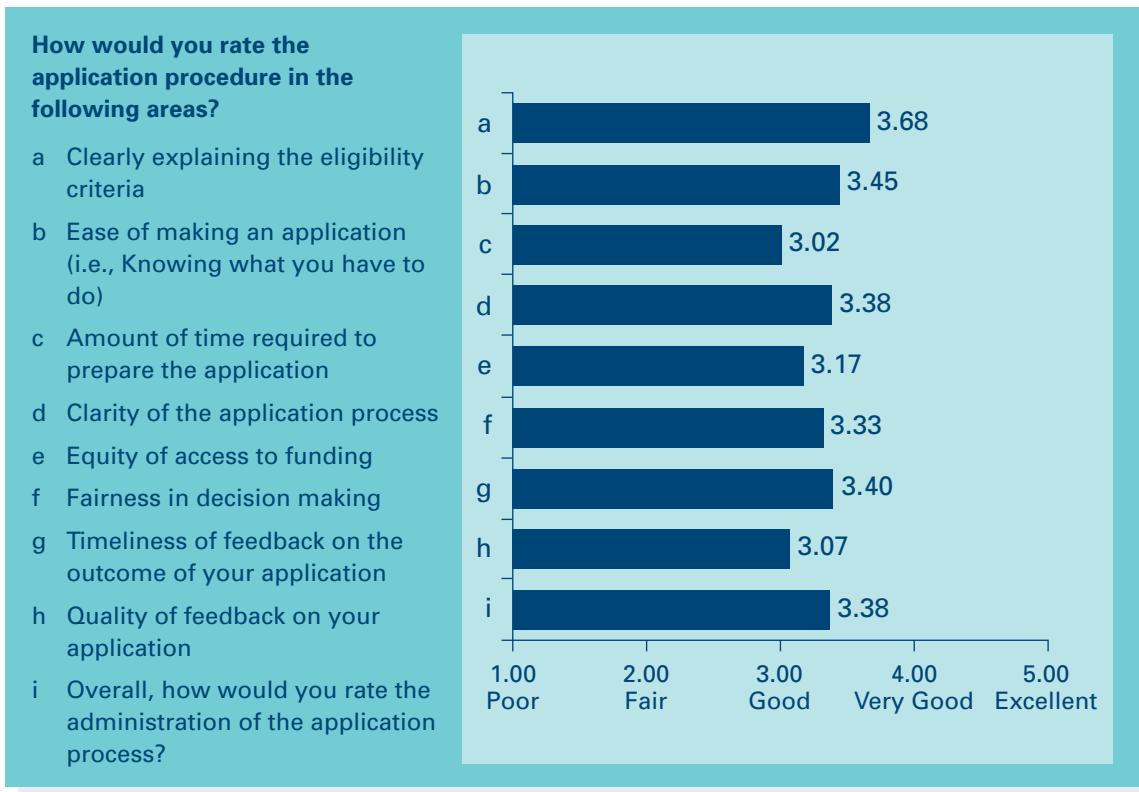


Figure 3: Application Process (average scores)

The table below shows the detailed distribution of scores.

Table 5: Performance of the Application Process

	Base	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
Clearly explaining the eligibility criteria	(228)	3%	11%	21%	46%	19%
Ease of making an application (i.e., Knowing what you have to do)	(226)	4%	14%	27%	42%	13%
Amount of time required to prepare the application	(229)	5%	26%	37%	24%	7%
Clarity of the application process	(228)	3%	16%	33%	36%	12%
Equity of access to funding	(180)	11%	18%	26%	32%	13%
Fairness in decision making	(163)	10%	13%	28%	31%	17%
Timeliness of feedback on the outcome of your application	(227)	5%	16%	31%	29%	19%
Quality of feedback on your application	(220)	15%	20%	25%	26%	15%
Overall, administration of the application process	(226)	5%	17%	28%	35%	15%

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to identify the key drivers of the overall performance of the administration of the application process. This model accounted for a high degree of the variance in the data (adj R2 =.743, p>.000). As shown in the accompanying table four factors were found to be significant drivers of the overall administration of the application process:

- Clearly explaining the eligibility criteria
- Clarity of the application process
- Quality of feedback on your application
- Timeliness of feedback on the outcome of applications

Of these factors, it is an excellent results for RTF that clearly explaining the eligibility criteria was the strongest driver of overall ratings of the administration process and also received the highest performance rating – demonstrating that the expectations of respondents for a clear explanation of the eligibility criteria is matched by the performance of RTF on this attribute.

Conversely, the quality of feedback on the outcome of your application, one of the lowest rated areas of performance in this set, was identified by this model as a secondary driver of satisfaction with the overall application process. The quality of feedback on the outcomes of applications is in need of improvement to ensure that its importance to respondents is matched by its performance.

Table 6: Regression Model for the Administration of the Application Process

(Dependent variable: <i>Overall, administration of the application process</i>)	Standard error	Standardised coefficient (b -Beta)	t-value	Significance
Clearly explaining the eligibility criteria	.064	.486	8.641	.000
Clarity of the application process	.065	.186	3.169	.002
Quality of feedback on your application	.039	.152	3.139	.002
Timeliness of feedback on the outcome of your application	.060	.143	2.36	.016

RTF needs to review the application process to ensure that initial application requirements are streamlined and that applicants are provided with sufficient feedback on their submission to review their own performance.

2.6 Staff Support

Respondents were asked a series of questions about the performance of RTF staff. These questions were measured using a five point Likert scale. Figure 4 shows the average (arithmetic mean) response for each question, while Table 7: Quality of Staff Support shows the distribution of responses for each item (as a percentage). As demonstrated in other sections of this evaluation, RTF staff received high ratings from respondents.

Overall, 64% of respondents rated the quality of staff support as excellent (32%) or very good (32%) and 12% offering a rating of fair (9%) or poor (3%) (with an average result of 3.82 out of 5). This was an excellent result for the staff.

Respondents offered particularly high ratings of performance in relation to the:

- **Ease of contacting staff (average of 3.87)**
 - Respondents who had received funding once offered lower ratings than did respondents who had received funding on more than one occasion (average of 3.90 compared to 4.20)
 - Perception about the ease of contacting RTF staff increased as a result of years of experience in the VET workforce
- **Responsiveness of staff (average of 3.88)**
 - Respondents who had received funding once offered lower ratings for the responsiveness of staff than did respondents who had received funding on more than one occasion (average of 3.90 compared to 4.30)
 - Again, perception of the responsiveness of staff increased as a function of years of experience in the VET workforce
- **Knowledge of staff (average of 3.91)**
 - Respondents who had participated in a RTF project either once or on multiple occasions offered higher ratings than did respondents who had not participated in any projects (3.90, 4.10 and 3.20 respectively).

How would you rate the quality of the support you received from Reframing the Future staff in the following areas?

- a Ease of contacting staff
- b Responsiveness of staff
- c Knowledge of staff
- d Ability of staff to provide practical advice
- e Ability of staff to understand your needs
- f Overall, how would you rate the quality of the support provided by staff?

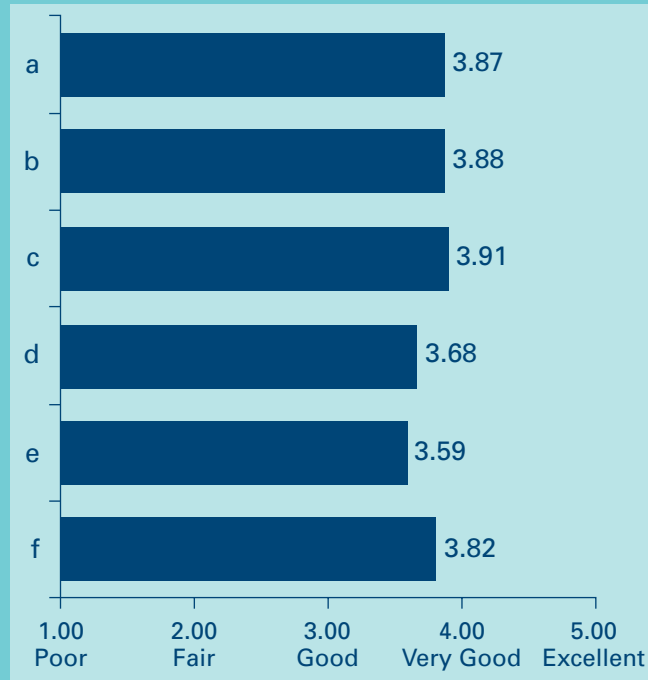


Figure 4: Staff Performance (average scores)

While all areas of staff performance were highly regarded by respondents, as demonstrated both in the rating results and other qualitative feedback, relatively lower performance scores were received for the:

- Ability of staff to provide practical advice (average of 3.68)
Respondents’ perception of the quality of the practical advice offered by RTF staff increased as a function of their years of experience in VET
- Ability of staff to understand your needs (average of 3.59).

The accompanying table shows the detailed distribution of scores.

Table 7: Quality of Staff Support

	Base	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
Ease of contacting staff	(221)	3%	7%	26%	30%	35%
Responsiveness of staff	(222)	3%	7%	23%	32%	35%
Knowledge of staff	(221)	3%	8%	21%	33%	36%
Ability of staff to provide practical advice	(216)	4%	13%	23%	30%	30%
Ability of staff to understand your needs	(217)	5%	14%	26%	26%	29%
Overall, quality of the support provided by staff	(223)	3%	9%	25%	32%	32%

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to identify the key drivers of the overall performance of the quality of support provided by staff. This model accounted for a high degree of the variance in the data (adj R2 =.835, p>.000).

As shown in the accompanying table, four factors were found to be significant drivers of the overall quality of the support provided by staff:

- Ease of contacting staff
- Ability of staff to provide practical advice
- Knowledge of staff
- Ability of staff to understand needs.

It is an excellent result for the program that the ease of contacting staff was both the highest area of staff performance and the highest driver of respondents' overall satisfaction with the quality of support received from RTF staff – demonstrating that respondents' expectations of this item is matched by the ability of staff to deliver the required service.

This same positive result applies to the second strongest driver of respondents' satisfaction with the performance of staff - staff knowledge. Again, this was one of the highest rated areas of staff performance.

Conversely, the two lowest areas of performance for staff, the ability of staff to provide practical advice and the ability of staff to understand needs were both identified as drivers of overall staff performance. This performance/expectation gap strongly recommends these areas for further development.

Table 8: Regression Model for Quality of Support Provided by Staff

(Dependent variable: <i>Overall, administration of the application process</i>)	Standard error	Standardised coefficient (Beta)	t-value	Significance
Ease of contacting staff	.046	.478	10.062	.000
Ability of staff to provide practical advice	.056	.159	2.409	.017
Knowledge of staff	.054	.215	3.893	.000
Ability of staff to understand your needs	.055	.139	2.138	.034

The performance of the RTF staff is a clear strength of this program. To ensure that their high regard is maintained, it is important for RTF to ensure that staff maintain a focus on providing practical advice and are able to understand the needs of a diverse range of stakeholders.

2.7 Reporting Criteria

Respondents were asked a series of questions about the reporting criteria for RTF funded projects. These questions were measured using a five point Likert scale. Figure 5 shows the average (arithmetic mean) response for each question, while Table 9 shows the distribution of responses for each item (as a percentage).

Overall, 50% of respondents rated the performance of the reporting criteria as excellent (14%) or very good (36%) and 15% offering a rating of fair (13%) or poor (2%) (average 3.47 out of 5).

The reporting criteria was most highly rated in relation to the:

- Ease of obtaining reporting templates (average of 3.91)
- Relevancy of report templates to your project (average of 3.54)
Teachers offered lower ratings of the relevance of the reporting template to their project than did managers (average of 3.30 compared to 3.60)
- Ease of completing report templates (average of 3.56)
- Males offered lower ratings for the ease of completing reporting templates than did females (average of 3.30 compared to 3.70)

The performance of the reporting criteria was less favourably regarded in relation to:

- Time frame for reporting (average of 3.44)
- Amount of time taken to complete reporting criteria (average of 3.24)
- Ability of reporting to accommodate changing goals of action learning (average of 3.38)

Teachers were less likely to consider the reporting format able to accommodate changing goals than were managers (average of 3.10 compared to 3.40).

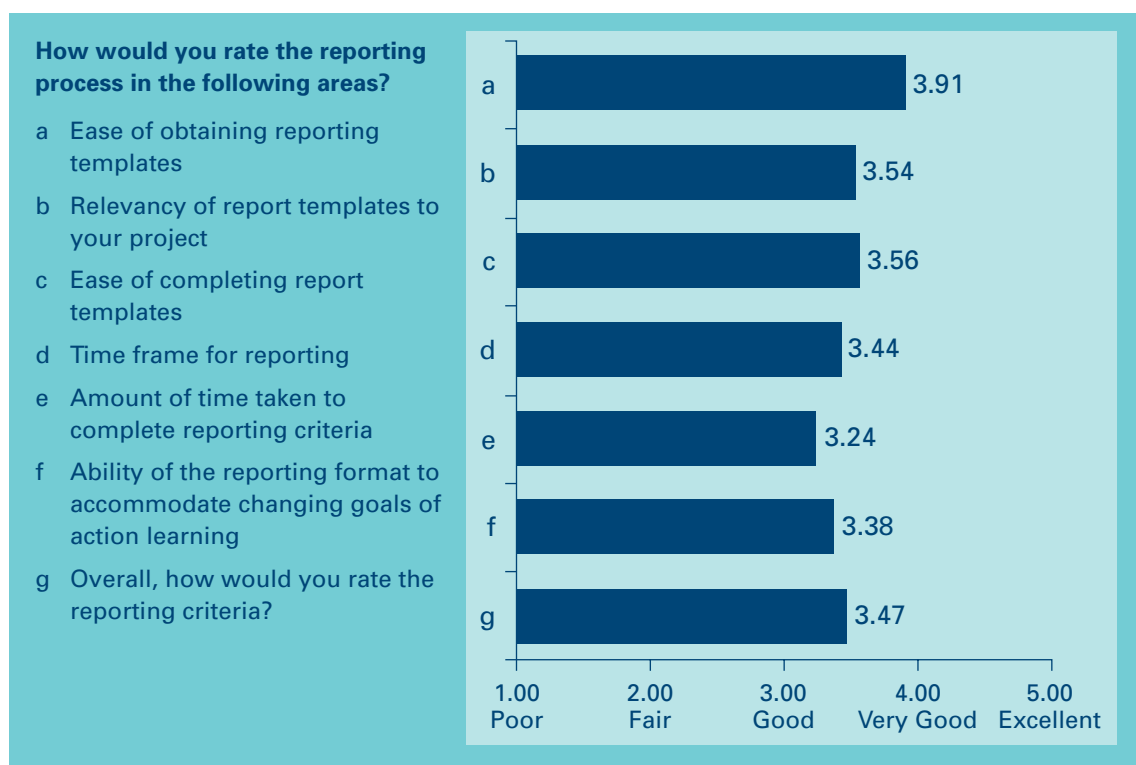


Figure 5: Reporting Criteria (average scores)

The following table shows the detailed distribution of scores.

Table 9: Reporting Process

	Base	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
Ease of obtaining reporting templates	(128)	1%	5%	26%	38%	30%
Relevancy of report templates to your project	(144)	2%	11%	38%	30%	20%
Ease of completing report templates	(413)	2%	11%	37%	30%	20%
Time frame for reporting	(151)	3%	15%	34%	31%	17%
Amount of time taken to complete reporting criteria	(161)	2%	19%	41%	28%	10%
Ability of the reporting format to accommodate changing goals of action learning	(149)	2%	18%	34%	32%	14%
Overall, reporting criteria	(155)	2%	13%	35%	36%	14%

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to identify the key drivers of the overall satisfaction with the reporting criteria. This model accounted for a high degree of the variance in the data

(adj R2 =.965, $p > .000$). As shown in the accompanying table, three factors were found to be significant drivers of the overall performance of the reporting criteria. These were the:

- Time frame for reporting
- Amount of time taken to complete reporting criteria
- Ability of the reporting format to accommodate changing goals of action learning.

In the performance ratings provide by respondents, these areas were the three lowest rated areas for this section. Based on this result it is strongly recommended that these areas are targeted for improvements to ensure that the importance of these areas to funding recipients is match by the performance of RTF.

Table 10: Regression Model for the Reporting Criteria

(Dependent variable: <i>Overall, reporting criteria</i>)	Standard error	Standardise d coefficient (Beta)	t-value	Significance
Time frame for reporting	.038	.488	12.812	.000
Amount of time taken to complete reporting criteria	.037	.395	10.295	.000
Ability of the reporting format to accommodate changing goals of action learning	.029	.210	6.846	.000

The reporting framework for RTF needs to be reviewed to ensure that RTF’s expectations of funding recipients, and the time required to complete the report, is appropriate to the amount of funding provided. It is also important to ensure that the reporting timeframe is appropriate for the length of the project.

2.8 Resourcing

Respondents who were aware of RTF were asked a number of questions related to program resourcing. Figure 6 shows the average (arithmetic mean) response for each aspect of resourcing rated, while Table 11 shows the distribution of responses for each item (as a percentage).

Overall, 51% of respondents rated the resourcing of RTF projects as excellent (14%) or very good (37%) and 15% offering a rating of fair (11%) or poor (1%) (with an average result of 3.51 out of 5).

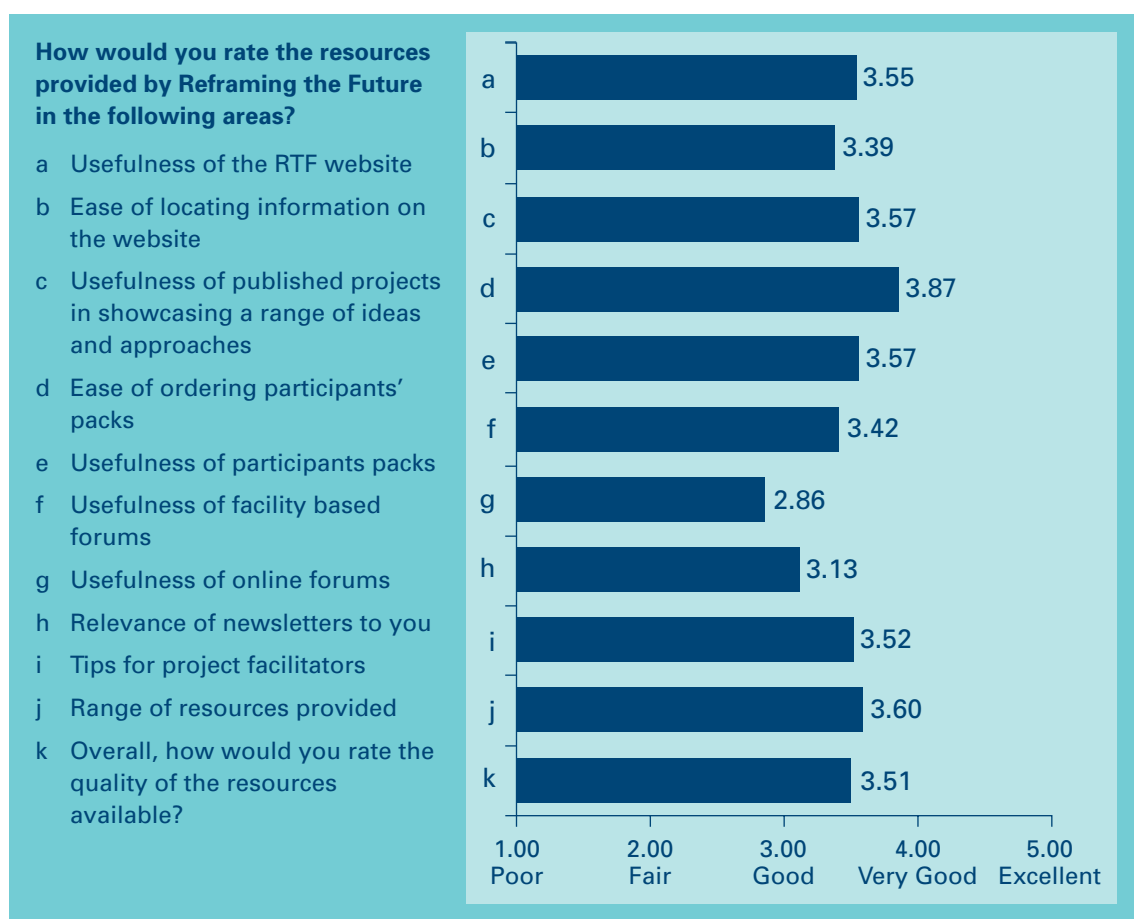


Figure 6: Resourcing (average scores)

The highest performing areas related to resourcing were:

- Ease of ordering participants’ packs (average of 3.87 out of 5)

Teachers rated the ease of ordering packs lower than did managers (Average of 3.60 compared to 3.90)

Respondents who had received funding on just one occasion rated this factor lower than did respondents who had received funding more than once (3.80 compared to 4.10)

- Range of resources provided (average of 3.60 out of 5)
 - Usefulness of published projects in showcasing a range of ideas and approaches (average of 3.57 out of 5)
- Teachers rated this resource lower than did managers (average of 3.30 compared to 3.70)

- Usefulness of participants packs (average of 3.57 out of 5).

The lowest rated areas of performance related to resourcing were:

- Usefulness of online forums (average of 2.86 out of 5)
- (It should be noted that 85% of those people who were aware of RTF had visited the RTF website.)
- Relevance of newsletters to you (average of 3.13 out of 5)

The table below shows the detailed distribution of scores.

Table 11: Resourcing

	Base	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
Usefulness of the RTF website	(298)	2%	10%	37%	34%	17%
Ease of locating information on the website	(295)	3%	12%	40%	33%	12%
Usefulness of published projects in showcasing a range of ideas and approaches	(294)	2%	12%	32%	35%	19%
Ease of ordering participants' packs	(247)	-	8%	27%	35%	30%
Usefulness of participants packs	(258)	2%	13%	33%	32%	20%
Usefulness of facility based forums	(225)	3%	15%	34%	31%	16%
Usefulness of online forums	(215)	9%	28%	36%	23%	4%
Relevance of newsletters to you	(284)	5%	21%	37%	28%	8%
Tips for project facilitators	(262)	2%	12%	36%	35%	16%
Range of resources provided	(283)	2%	11%	34%	32%	21%
Overall, quality of the resources available	(290)	1%	11%	36%	37%	14%

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to identify the key drivers of the overall satisfaction with overall resourcing and funding. This model accounted for a high degree of the variance in the data (adj R2 =.840, p>.000). As shown in the accompanying table, three factors were found to be significant drivers of the overall performance of the reporting criteria. These were the:

- Usefulness of the RTF website
- Range of resources provided
- Usefulness of published projects in showcasing a range of ideas and approaches

- Tips for project facilitators
- Usefulness of participants packs

In the performance ratings provide by respondents, three of these drivers - the range of resources provided, usefulness of published projects in showcasing a range of ideas and approaches and the usefulness of participants' packs - were rated highly by respondents. However, the strongest driver of satisfaction, the usefulness of the RTF website, was an area in need of improvement.

Table 12: Regression Model for the Quality of Resources

(Dependent variable: <i>Overall, quality of resources available</i>)	Standard error	Standardised coefficient (Beta)	t-value	Significance
Usefulness of the RTF website	.065	.284	4.306	.000
Range of resources provided	.064	.272	4.258	.000
Usefulness of published projects in showcasing a range of ideas and approaches	.053	.158	2.785	.006
Tips for project facilitators	.060	.166	2.748	.007
Usefulness of participants packs	.058	.147	2.440	.016

2.9 Meeting the Goals of RTF

Respondents were asked a series of questions about the extent to which RTF was meeting core goals around the NTF. These questions were measured using a five point Likert scale. Figure 7 shows the average (arithmetic mean) response for each question, while Table 13 shows the distribution of responses for each item (as a percentage).

Average responses to this question demonstrate that respondents considered RTF to be performing well in achieving its goals. RTF was particularly seen as:

- Enabling VET practitioners to become highly-skilled in implementing the NTS (average of 3.46)
 - Teachers offered lower ratings for the ability enable VET practitioners to become highly-skilled in implementing the NTS than did managers (average of 3.30 compared to 3.60)
 - Respondents who had not participated in any RTF projects offered lower ratings than did respondents who had participated in one, or more than one, project (average of 2.60 compared to 3.20 and 3.70 respectively)
 - Ratings of this attribute increased with years of experience in the VET system
- Enabling VET practitioners to develop communities of practice - reaching across organisations, industries and borders - to better implement the NTS (average of 3.57)
 - Teachers offered lower ratings for the ability to enable VET managers to develop new skills in strategy-making than did managers (average of 3.30 compared to 3.70)
 - Respondents who had not participated in any RTF projects offered lower ratings than did respondents who had participated in one, or more than one, project (average of 2.70 compared to 3.30 and 3.80 respectively)

- Enabling staff to access information and research in implementing the NTF (average of 3.47)

Respondents who had not participated in any RTF projects offered lower ratings than did respondents who had participated in one, or more than one project (average of 2.80 compared to 3.30 and 3.70 respectively)

Males offered lower ratings on the access to information and research in implementing the NTF than did females (average of 3.20 compared to 3.60)

The performance of RTF was rated slightly lower in relation to:

- Enabling VET managers to develop new skills in strategy-making (average of 3.35)

Teachers offered lower ratings for the ability to enable VET managers to develop new skills in strategy-making than did they managers (average of 3.20 compared to 3.50)

Respondents who had not participated in any RTF projects offered lower ratings than did respondents who had participated in one, or more than one, project (average of 2.60 compared to 3.20 and 3.60 respectively)

- Enabling VET managers to develop new skills in strategy-implementation (average of 3.30)

Teachers offered lower ratings for the ability enable VET managers to develop new skills in strategy-making than did they managers (average of 3.10 compared to 3.50)

Based on your perception, how would you rate the achievements of Reframing the Future in attaining the following goals?

- a Enabling VET practitioners to become highly-skilled in implementing the national training system
- b Enabling VET managers to develop new skills in strategy-making
- c Enabling VET managers to develop new skills in strategy-implementation
- d Enabling VET practitioners to build their capabilities as change agents within the VET sector
- e Enabling VET practitioners to bring about the changes required to implement the national training system
- f Enabling VET personnel and stakeholders to engage in constructive debate about how to continuously improve the National Training Framework based on learning from both practice and theory
- g Enabling VET practitioners to develop communities of practice - reaching across organisations, industries and borders - to better implement the national training system
- h Enabling staff to access information and research in implementing the National Training Framework
- i Enabling VET practitioners to establish innovative and effective networks between industry and providers and other stakeholders
- j Overall, how would you rate the ability of Reframing of the Future to improve the implementation of the national training system?

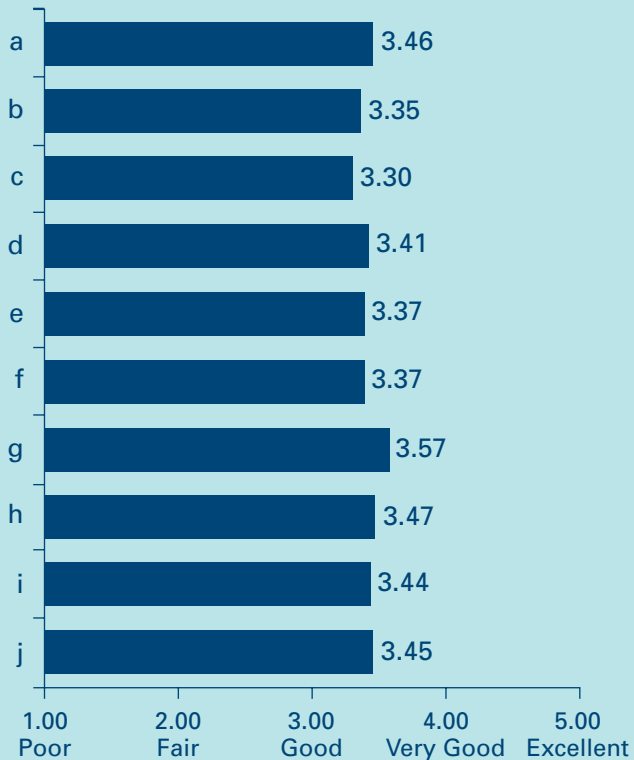


Figure 7: Achievement of RTF in Goal Acquisition (average scores)

The accompanying table shows the detailed distribution of scores.

Table 13: Achieving the Goals of RTF

	Base	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
Enabling VET practitioners to become highly-skilled in implementing the national training system	(290)	4%	16%	29%	34%	17%
Enabling VET managers to develop new skills in <i>strategy-making</i>	(267)	5%	16%	30%	34%	14%
Enabling VET managers to develop new skills in <i>strategy-implementation</i>	(269)	6%	17%	33%	32%	13%
Enabling VET practitioners to build their capabilities as change agents within the VET sector	(278)	5%	15%	29%	32%	18%
Enabling VET practitioners to bring about the changes required to implement the national training system	(284)	6%	17%	26%	35%	15%
Enabling VET personnel and stakeholders to engage in constructive debate about how to continuously improve the National Training Framework based on learning from both practice and theory	(277)	10%	16%	24%	30%	21%
Enabling VET practitioners to develop communities of practice - reaching across organisations, industries and borders - to better implement the national training system	(281)	5%	14%	27%	30%	25%
Enabling staff to access information and research in implementing the National Training Framework	(279)	4%	14%	30%	36%	16%
Enabling VET practitioners to establish innovative and effective networks between industry and providers and other stakeholders	(282)	6%	15%	27%	33%	19%
Overall, ability of Reframing of the Future to improve the implementation of the national training system	(294)	7%	12%	26%	36%	18%

2.10 Outcomes of RTF

Respondents were asked a series of questions about the outcomes of participation in RTF for both individuals and organisations. These questions were measured using a five point Likert scale. Figure 8 and Figure 9 show the average (arithmetic mean) response for each individuals and organisations, while Table 14 shows the distribution of responses for each item (as a percentage).

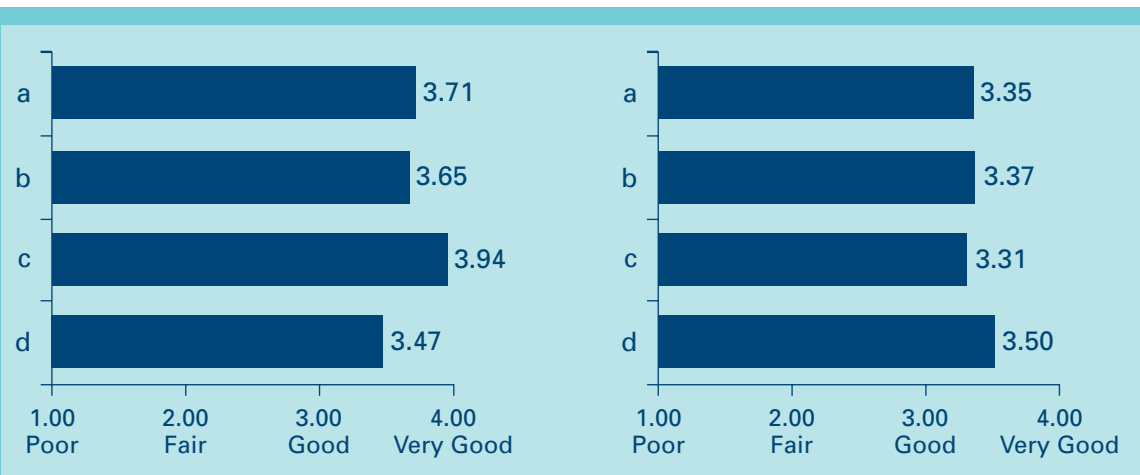
For individuals, the highest rated area of performance was providing staff development opportunities that were otherwise unavailable (average of 3.94).

- Respondents who had participated in one, or more than one project offered higher ratings than did respondents who had not participated in any RTF projects (average of 3.70, 4.30 and 2.80 respectively)
- Managers offered higher ratings than did teachers (average of 4.10 compared to 3.70)
- Respondents employed in TAFE institutes were more likely to agree than were employees of Private RTOs (average of 4.00 compared to 3.60)
- There was also a strong tendency for ratings of this attribute to reflect years of experience in the VET workforce with more favourable results coming from respondents with more VET experience.

The lowest rated area of performance for outcomes affecting individuals was the development of sustainable networks (average of 3.47).

- Respondents who work part-time in VET offered lower ratings for the ability of RTF to maintain professional networks than did their colleagues in full-time employment (average of 3.10 and 3.50 respectively)
- Teachers were more pessimistic about the sustainability of networks than were managers (average 3.30 compared to 3.70)
- Males rated the development of sustainable networks lower than did females (average of 3.20 compared to 3.60)

For organisations, the highest area of performance was the improved skill base of the organisation (average 3.50). There was little variation in other results.



Based on your experience with Reframing the Future, how would you rate the extent to which the following outcomes were achieved?
For individuals

- a Increasing the skills of individuals
- b Increasing awareness of the National Training Framework
- c Providing staff development opportunities that were otherwise unavailable
- d Developing sustainable professional networks

For the organisation

- e Skilling VET providers to become high performing organisations
- f Changing work practices
- g Improving change management practices
- h Improving the skill base of the organisation

Figure 8: Delivering Outcomes for Individuals (average scores)

Figure 9: Delivering Outcomes for Organisations (average scores)

The following table shows the detailed distribution of scores.

Table 14: Program Outcomes

	Base	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
For individuals						
Increasing the skills of individuals	(295)	4%	10%	21%	41%	24%
Increasing awareness of the NTF	(295)	4%	12%	22%	40%	23%
Providing staff development opportunities that were otherwise unavailable	(297)	5%	7%	14%	37%	37%
Developing sustainable professional networks	(288)	8%	10%	29%	31%	21%
For the organisation						
Skilling VET providers to become high performing organisations	(291)	8%	15%	28%	33%	16%
Changing work practices	(290)	7%	17%	25%	34%	17%
Improving change management practices	(280)	10%	13%	29%	33%	15%
Improving the skill base of the organisation	(294)	6%	14%	22%	39%	18%

2.10.1 Future Involvement with RTF

Respondents were asked a series of questions about their likelihood of engaging with RTF in the future or recommending RTF to colleagues. These questions were measured using a five point Likert scale. Figure 10 shows the average (arithmetic mean) response for each item, while Table 15 shows the distribution of responses for each item (as a percentage).

As shown on the accompanying chart, future engagement with RTF was highly likely to occur. Respondents were particularly likely to indicate that they would:

- Visit the RTF website (average of 3.94)

Respondents who had participated in one, or more than one RTF project, were more likely to consider visiting the RTF website in the future than were respondents who had not participated in any projects (average of 3.80, 4.10 and 3.50 respectively).

Managers were more likely to visit the RTF website than were teachers (average of 4.00 compared to 3.50).

Respondents working in metropolitan areas of Australia were more likely to plan to visit the RTF website than were their colleagues working in regional centres or rural area (average of 4.10, compared to 3.80 and 3.60).

- Recommend that a colleague visits the website (average of 3.77)

Teachers reported a particularly low likelihood of referring colleagues to the website (average of 3.20)

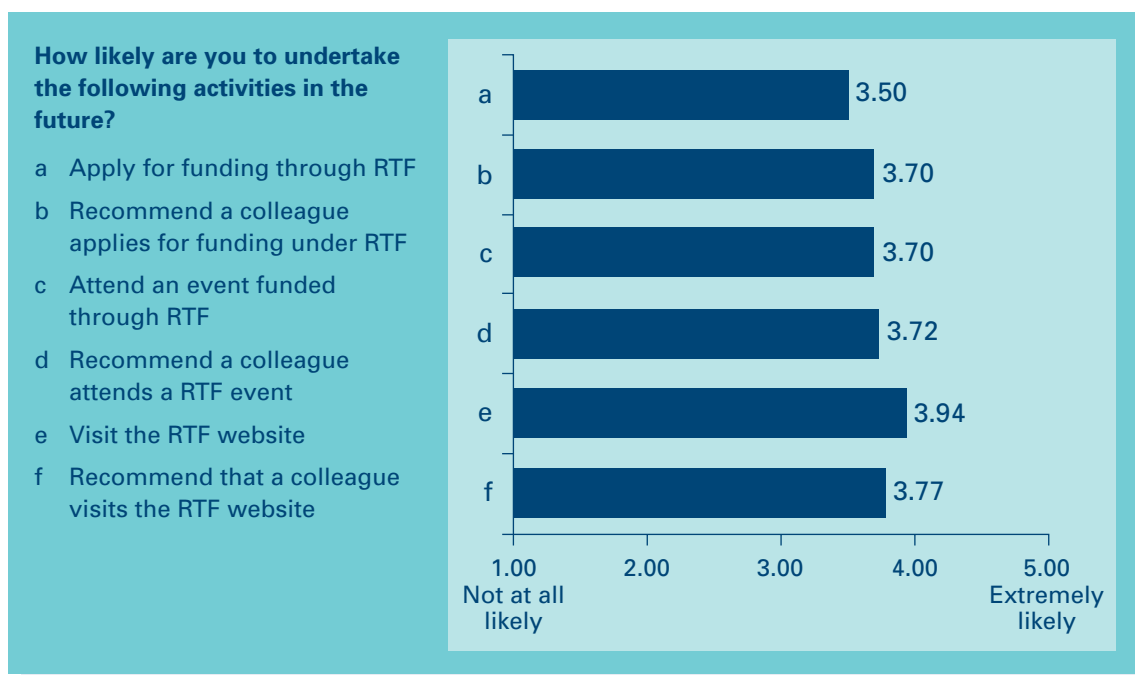


Figure 10: Future Outcomes (average scores)

The table below shows the detailed distribution of scores.

Table 15: Future Activities

	Base	Not at all Likely	Not really Likely	Likely	Very Likely	Extremely Likely
Apply for funding through RTF	(302)	8%	17%	25%	18%	32%
Recommend a colleague applies for funding under RTF	(311)	5%	12%	28%	20%	35%
Attend an event funded through RTF	(307)	2%	12%	32%	22%	32%
Recommend a colleague attends a RTF event	(309)	3%	12%	28%	25%	33%
Visit the RTF website	(311)	1%	7%	28%	24%	40%
Recommend that a colleague visits the RTF website	(309)	4%	9%	28%	25%	35%

2.11 Respondents' Suggestions to Improve RTF

Respondents were offered the opportunity to make suggestions to improve RTF. Most common suggestions related to funding issues, the need for a broader focus of key selection criteria, more effective approaches to information and marketing and administrative issues. A reasonable proportion of respondents made no suggestions to improve RTF, with many stating that the current model and the level of support is excellent.

"I think it does a really good job now and the support provided through people and publications is very strong."

The issue of funding attracted the most suggestions for improvement, with respondents overwhelmingly calling for funding to be expanded. The most common comments were that, there was insufficient funding overall, that more projects should be funded and that larger amounts of funding should be made available to each project. Many comments indicated that respondents saw access to RTF funding as critical to the development of their organisation and the VET sector.

"Provide an opportunity for continued funding of a project for a period of time in the order of 3 years, so that change can occur over an organisation as opposed to small groups within an organisation."

"The current amount of funding available needs to be increased to assist organisations in VET to continue to develop their responsiveness to addressing the changing workplace needs and to develop the skills to continue to become a high performing VET sector."

"Relatively small numbers within the organisation that I work for have had the opportunity of benefiting from actual participation."

Respondents also felt that RTF was a unique program, addressing current needs which were not being addressed via any other funding source.

"I think that the funding needs to be increased so that their work can be continued and extended. It is to my knowledge the only funded PD nationally. It operates on a shoestring at a time when the most concern 'out there' is the lack of knowledge about the system."

There was also a strong feeling that the requirement for organisations to match funding was disadvantageous to smaller RTOs and ACE organisations, that may not have had access to the required funding.

"Provide more funding to allow more projects to be supported. Provide some funding that does not require matching organisational funding."

"Decrease the requirement for ACE providers to match funding."

"Investigate the possibility of offering fully funded projects for 'not-for-profit NGO's'. Our organisation was not in a position to commit dollar for dollar this year for a further project, although we would have liked to, and we had projects in mind that met the (criteria)."

Related to this, a small number of respondents also suggested that certain small RTOs and ACE providers should have a different criteria or pool of funding to larger organisations, in an attempt to provide some equity to their access.

"Have a set allocation for ACE providers as they are chronically under funded."

"Reframing could recognise through specific funding the value of promoting change, development, improvement for the community RTOs who service the disadvantaged. Generally we run on the 'oily rag' and find it beyond our means to provide the staff development necessary to keep up with the dynamic NTF -... To see the funding going to the corporate sector who have the means is frustrating."

Other issues related to funding were raised by a smaller number of respondents. These included the need for; proper reporting and auditing of disbursements; increased amounts of funding to be targeted at rural and remote communities; increased size of grants to recipients in large states - to compensate them for their greater travel costs; funding of individuals; funding to be available to participants as well as facilitators; outputs of RTF to be put online and made accessible to everyone; funding to be directed away from projects to address issues which should be the core responsibility of the organisation.

The next most frequently mentioned area for improvement related to the key selection criteria for projects and the focus of the RTF funding. Respondents mentioning these issues generally felt that the focus was too narrow and, while it addressed ANTA's objectives in relation to implementation of the NTF, it should also better address the needs of providers and the VET sector.

"The eligibility criteria seem rather slippery... There are many staff development needs not met by the program and yet so much money is channelled through it."

"Less driven by imposed guidelines, categorisations, conceptual orthodoxies..."

"Drop the project categories –you are prejudging the real issues facing vocational trainers and forcing them [to] suit your administrative procedures. Let the people who have the problems have their say on what the issues are."

Respondents made suggestions for other areas that they would like to see funded. These included, funding of projects that bring together industry and training providers, use of technology, developing industry partnerships, alternative teaching methodologies, focus on projects which add to VET as a whole, development of teacher networks, focus on issues directly related to teaching and training, greater flexibility in options for project topics and more change agent topics.

"Less sub-programs, more realistic funding of projects, concentrate on work-based training and funding networks of industry associations and have a separate process for teaching RTOs about work-based training."

"Some RTF funds have been wasted on RTO core activities such as projects to develop assessment and training resources...[projects should] add value to the VET system as a whole."

The next most frequently mentioned area for improvement related to information dissemination, marketing and communication. This was mentioned by a reasonable proportion of respondents who felt that awareness and knowledge of the program was inhibited by inadequate provision of information, particularly on the website.

Respondents felt that there should be more information provided in a concise written form about the program and that it should be presented in clear terms using plain English. Several respondents expressed concerns that the prevalence of ANTA/TAFE jargon impedes accessibility to non-TAFE organisations.

"Some attention to language and terminology. It is not easy for organisations...to step into the magical world of ANTA terms and 'in-house' understanding...less jargon would assist organisations in involvement and consequently build the capability of VET."

"Rewrite all of the supporting materials – the program should be about providing practical advice for vocational trainers and not about writing highly academic and incredibly long winded support material..."

The website attracted a large proportion of the comment, with people generally feeling that it was underdeveloped and difficult to navigate. Suggestions to improve the website included comments that that the website should:

- Post online forums
- Be more user-friendly
- Tailor information to participants' level of experience (i.e. sections for newcomers)
- Provide more detailed information
- Provide simplified, clearer information
- Provide information of interest to practitioners
- Provide resources developed through projects (with RTF funding) online in PDF format.

Other suggestions related to marketing and communication included calls for; more opportunities to showcase and market achievements of projects through conferences, regional and metropolitan forums, and project based networks; improved marketing and advertising through a variety of media outlets (not just online); targeted marketing to RTOs; marketing through affiliated websites.

"Do more to promote the outcomes of projects. It's no good to just have them sit there on the RTF website –advertise them on training sites such as training.com and Flexible Learning and the ISC sites."

A slightly smaller proportion of respondents made suggestions for improvement related to the administration of RTF. The most frequently made comments related to timelines and the need to streamline requirements and procedures. Generally the main issue reflected in respondent comments was the need to reduce the time spent on applications and reporting of RTF projects. A number of respondents felt that the timelines for completion of reporting requirements were too short and that this resulted in stress.

"Timelines are sometimes unrealistic and stressful..."

"The only problem I had was the requirement to do things like participate in online forums, make posters for the end of year conference, read and respond to email which really increased the level of work on the project and detracted from the time spent on the actual project."

"More lead time before projects get underway...difficult to obtain all supporting documentation in the current lead time..."

Some respondents made suggestions to improve administration, including the increased use of templates for applications, having a briefer application process with less demanding proposals, a longer funding and reporting cycle, allowing initial submission of an abstract of the project so that time is not wasted if the project is unlikely to receive funding, increased feedback, appointment of regional RTF officers to provide direct assistance to applicants and provision of externally appointed auditors to evaluate projects.

"Make the application process less complicated."

"Clearer and streamlined process for feedback on applications."

Smaller numbers of respondents suggested improvements to other aspects of RTF. One of these areas related to networking. These respondents generally felt that networking opportunities were extremely beneficial to the development of the VET sector and wanted to see RTF provide increased opportunities for networks, between teachers, across projects, industry groups, VET stakeholders and between VET practitioners and broader industry.

"There is a great opportunity for establishing networks and alliances across projects. Although this happens it is informal ...and needs to be strengthened."

"Support more networking on an on-going basis..."

"Links with industry are still too weak – the effort of teaching staff towards making this link needs to be fostered."

Another area for improvement which received mention by a similar number of respondents related to the involvement of RTOs and ACE organisations. There was a feeling that these groups were disadvantaged in comparison to TAFE organisations and that action should be taken to level the playing field and improve the equity of access to RTF funding.

"The majority of funding is allocated to TAFEs. Only a small proportion is allocated to small private RTOs yet the later organisations are most in need of the opportunity to build their capabilities in implementing the NTF."

Some respondents felt that private RTOs should receive preferential treatment with several respondents contending that it is inappropriate to make public funds available to profit driven organisations in a competitive environment.

"They are receiving public money to develop resources that they will use in a competitive, user choice marketplace which are not available to other RTOs."

There was particular concern from a small number of participants that community service oriented ACE and not-for-profit RTOs required additional support to facilitate their participation in the initiative.

"Ensure that the non-government community-based not-for-profit RTOs and their staff/contractors are a key target area."

Respondents also mentioned a number of other suggestions to improve RTF. These included the need for a stronger national focus to stop states from individually interpreting the AQTF, while a small number mentioned the need to include a greater diversity of participants and several others wanted projects with a future orientation to be encouraged.

2.11.1 Suggestions to Improve the Implementation of the NTF

Respondents who were not familiar with RTF were asked to suggest what support they felt was required to better support VET organisations in implementing the NTF. Most suggestions related to training, information dissemination, resources and targeted support to RTOs.

Development of staff skills was the most common suggestion for supporting VET organisations to implement the NTF. A large proportion of respondents felt that staff needed to develop specific skills through PD and other forms of training, to gain the skills and knowledge required to implement the NTF. There was a considerable number of respondents who were concerned that many workplace trainers had very basic qualifications (i.e. Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training) which left them ill-prepared to implement TPs, or to understand the AQTF.

"Higher qualifications than Cert. IV."

"A better spectrum of training in teachers than Cert. IV. In my experience teachers with only Cert VI...can deliver training if they are given every piece of material ...but are unable to develop supplementary material."

"Training so that teachers can update their skills."

"Professional development in interpreting competency standards."

"Professional development in using blended delivery...improving moderation and validation process."

The second most frequently mentioned form of support was information. Respondents felt that clear, detailed, accessible information should be provided. Many respondents asked that information be provided on the ANTA website, through email and in newsletters. They also requested that information be jargon free and use plain English.

"More information (brief and simple as usual) on what is expected."

"Everything should be written in easy to understand jargon free language."

A slightly smaller proportion of respondents suggested that information or briefing sessions be held. These were often described as conferences, workshops or forums. Many respondents emphasised the need for these to be held in regional and rural areas. The main advantages of this approach being that it afforded an opportunity for discussion provided a sense of support, facilitated networking and gave participants an opportunity to ask questions in person.

"Workshops to increase confidence and knowledge."

"Workshops in regional areas."

"I feel more seminars would be of value, also designated contacts within ANTA."

A similar proportion of respondents pointed to the need for readily accessible resources and materials to support implementation of the NTF. The need for human resources in the form of support staff, to assist with advice and guidance, was mentioned as was the need for material resources such as up-to-date templates, audit materials, materials on delivery options and assessment and general information related to the NTF.

"Having material in easy to access form and clear language would assist organisations."

"Strong support in the form of resources, study guides and assessment tools are to be supplied by ANTA."

"Resources, physical and human."

"Provide support and training to staff to help them understand what the process are."

"A consultant, free of charge to travel around and reassure organisations that they are on the right track and if not, where to go or what to do to get support."

A slightly smaller proportion of respondents specifically mentioned RTOs. Generally there was a feeling that RTOs were in the least favourable position to implement the NTF. They were seen as having unsupportive management, less qualified staff and less access to funding and resources to contribute to staff development. Respondents commented that the VET sector is comprised of a hugely diverse range of providers and that approaches which were used to implement the NTF in TAFE organisations were not suited to RTOs. Respondents felt that a customised approach was required when dealing with RTOs, to encourage compliance and to improve standards.

"Encourage RTOs to run more information and training days for their staff."

"I think that there needs to be more accountability for RTOs..."

"Fewer TAFE-designed skilling programs that do not reflect realities of small to medium private RTOs."

"Raising the standard of RTOs especially trainers and managers."

A similar number of respondents requested increased funding to promote the implementation of the NTF. They felt that funding would provide access to time release, staff training, increased staff and increased resources which would assist in implementing the NTF.

"Improved funding of learning materials."

"Funding for schools which enables students to participate in VET."

"Funding of training."

"Funding for regular network meetings...."

Other suggestions to improve the skills required by VET staff to implementation of the NTF included; streamlining of administrative procedures to save time; increased focus on quality throughout the VET sector; monitoring of quality and performance in relation to the NTF; and greater consistency in the messages communicated about the NTF throughout the system, particularly in regards to State and Commonwealth interpretations of the NTF.

"Time, time, time. We don't have time to do anything extra in our already crowded day."

"Less bureaucracy and further reduction in the spread of managerialism."

"A federally interpreted VET system."

"Consistent advice from state authorities."

"Simplification of compliance requirements, whilst maintaining the quality of requirements would be good."

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