



Developing Australia's VET workforce to
implement the national training system

Reframing the Future – 2008 Program Overview

Context

Reframing the Future is a major workforce development initiative of the Australian and State and Territory Governments. It assists in building the capacity of the Australian vocational education and training (VET) system to support the implementation of the national training system and the aims of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) and its national reform agenda.

The *national training system* provides the skilled people required by industry and business to keep Australia's economic growth strong. The training system aims to be a world class, forward-looking system responsive to the ever-changing needs of industry.

For current information on the *national training system* please see: the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) website
www.dest.gov.au/sectors/training_skills

The new Australian government's 'Skilling Australia for the future' Policy Document at:
www.alp.org.au/download/campaign_launch_skills_policy.pdf

The *national reform agenda* promoted by COAG is aimed at further raising living standards and improving services by lifting the nation's human capital levels, productivity and workforce participation over the next decade. Reframing the Future is one of the national mechanisms for assisting the achievement of the *national reform agenda* in the field of vocational education and training.

For more information on the *national reform agenda* please see the COAG website:
www.coag.gov.au/meetings/100206/index.htm

The National Quality Council (NQC) through one of its standing committees will provide strategic advice on national priorities to the program, ensuring that the Reframing the Future program is aligned with the plans of the NQC. The NQC is a committee of the Ministerial Council for Vocational and Technical Education (MCVTE) which oversees and supports the current and future quality of vocational and technical education across Australia. The NQC is critical to ensuring the successful operation of the national training system. Two key elements of the national system that are NQC responsibilities are the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF 2007) and Training Packages.

For more information on the NQC please visit the website
www.nqc.tvetaustralia.com.au

Reframing the Future's Mission

To assist VET practitioners to become highly skilled and VET organisations to become high performing in order to enable Australian industry and communities to thrive in the local and global economy.

Reframing the Future's Vision

The responsive national VET system will be acknowledged worldwide as a key contributor to Australia's economic growth and social well-being and will be a major factor in achieving COAG and NQC priorities.

The Reframing the Future 2008 Program

The 2008 program is linked to the mission of Reframing the Future and has three components:

1. **Funded Projects.** Around 200 professional development and change management projects will be funded. A call for submissions will be advertised in mid-February 2008 and applications will be due in mid-March. Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) and other VET related organisations in Australia may apply for funding,
2. **Engaging VET Practitioners Forums.** These are held in August and November and all VET providers and practitioners can register an interest in participating.
3. **Publications and Resources.** Current and new publications and resources in a range of formats are available free through the Reframing the Future website.

1. Funded projects

The design of Reframing the Future's funded projects program in 2008 is new.

This new program takes into account findings from two external impact studies on Reframing the Future undertaken in 2004 and 2006, both of which encouraged it to leverage off previous successes and seek to achieve even more impact on the national training system.

To increase its impact on the national training system, in 2008 the program is organised around **seven national priority areas** which will enable VET organisations undertaking a project to achieve at least one of the **three goals** of the Reframing the Future program. Each of these goals and priority areas support the implementation of the national training system.

Projects will use one of the **methodologies** which the program supports. These methodologies are based on proven theory and extensive practice, and have been continuously evaluated and improved by the Reframing the Future program for the Australian VET sector, particularly since 2000.

The national priority areas, goals and methodologies are set out below.

Organisations making an application to Reframing the Future for funding in 2008 will need to:

- explain how the project will meet at least one of the three goals of the program
- indicate which one of seven priority areas their proposed project addresses, and why it is important to their organisation's strategic directions
- identify which project methodology will be used from the eight methodologies supported by the program, and how it will be used
- indicate how they will evaluate project processes and outputs as well as staff learning and organisational outcomes.

As an example, a project might:

<i>aim to meet the following program goal:</i>	develop staff capabilities to continuously improve the quality of competency based training and assessment
<i>be directed at the following priority area:</i>	developing the quality and consistency of competency based assessment practices
<i>use the following methodology:</i>	action learning

Set out below is information on the overall goals for projects funded in 2008, the national priority areas that projects may address, and the methodologies they can use.

Goals

In keeping with our mission, the Reframing the Future program of professional development and change management in 2008 will enable VET providers to achieve at least one of the following goals:

- To develop staff capabilities to continuously improve the quality of competency based training and assessment
- To be innovative in responding to the needs of students, and the emerging skill needs and workforce development requirements of industry and communities
- To increase the productivity of the VET workforce and contribute to the productivity of the Australian workforce

Priority areas

Reframing the Future will provide funding and methodological support for projects that focus on one of the following **priority areas**:

1. **Quality:** using effective approaches to implement the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF 2007) essential quality standards and indicators
2. **Training Packages:** innovatively and flexibly implementing a new, recently revised or rationalised Training Package
3. **Assessment:** developing the quality and consistency of competency based assessment practices
4. **Employability skills:** strengthening provider capability in teaching, learning, assessing and reporting in relation to employability skills
5. **Skills shortages:** increasing the responsiveness, quality and quantity of training in skills shortage areas, particularly for trades occupations
6. **Partnerships:** developing partnerships or new ways of working between RTOs, industry, enterprises and/or communities to develop more responsive approaches to training
7. **Diversity:** enhancing practitioners' capabilities to work with an increasingly diverse client base, in particular with aboriginal, disability and other equity groups.

Methodologies

A breadth of methodologies is required to accommodate the variety of challenges faced by VET providers and practitioners and to improve their capabilities to implement the national training system and respond to COAG's national reform agenda.

The predominant learning approach used by Reframing the Future project teams is workbased learning. Workbased learning describes a range of different staff development methodologies and techniques, from action learning to the use of appreciative inquiry, knowledge management, communities of practice and networking, mentoring and coaching.

In the Australian VET sector, workbased learning is an umbrella term that refers to structured learning that is managed by the organisation. The focus of workbased learning is learning through work. Given this broad definition of workbased learning, it could be said that those personnel involved in change agency, change management and strategic management are simultaneously engaged in workbased learning.

For further descriptions of workbased learning see: *A new model of workbased learning in the VET sector*

The eight methodologies listed below are supported by Reframing the Future and are described in detail in various Reframing the Future publications. They are:

Methodology 1 – Action Learning. Action learning is a professional development technique for learning from current activities and involves the use of the cycle of experiencing, reviewing, concluding and planning. See *Action learning in the VET sector: core ideas*.

Methodology 2 – Appreciative inquiry. Appreciative inquiry is a methodology for influencing change that concentrates on the positives within an organisation and on a vision of what is possible rather than an analysis of what is not. It is based on asking questions at four stages of inquiry: the discovery stage, the dream stage, the design stage and the destiny stage. See *Appreciative inquiry in the VET sector: core ideas*.

Methodology 3 – Communities of practice. Communities of practice are groups of people bound by a shared experience and a common sense of purpose, such as the pursuit of a solution to a problem. Sometimes communities are formed within the one organisation or group, and sometimes they stretch across organisational boundaries. See *Communities of practice and the national training framework: core ideas*.

Methodology 4 – Networking. Membership of a network implies a commitment to a group and its work and to cooperation. Networking implies a group connection, based around trust, understanding, and mutuality, that supports collaborative action. A network often takes a member beyond his or her own workplace, and involves interacting with members from other organisations. See *Networking and the national training system: core ideas*.

Methodology 5 – Knowledge management. Knowledge management focuses on processes such as acquiring, creating and sharing knowledge. A key aspect of knowledge management in the VET context is knowledge transformation, which includes the process of internalising information and research and then applying the new knowledge to practice. See *Knowledge management and the national training system: core ideas*.

Methodology 6 – Strategic management. Strategic management is the process of identifying, choosing and implementing activities that will enhance the long-term performance of an organisation. See *Strategic management and change management and the national training system: core ideas*.

Methodology 7 – Change management. Change management is the process of modifying or transforming organisations in order to maintain or improve their effectiveness. See *Strategic management and change management and the national training system: core ideas*.

Methodology 8 – Change agency. The term change agent refers to anyone involved in initiating or implementing change. Change agency refers to the ability of an agent of change to affect the way an organisation responds to change. See *Change Agents and the national training system: core ideas*.

The Reframing the Future publications referred to above are available at:
www.reframingthefuture.net/publications

2. Engaging VET Practitioners Forums

In August 2008, Reframing the Future will facilitate a series of interactive national professional development forums for VET practitioners and stakeholders about responding innovatively to a current and crucial issue or trend in Australian VET teaching, learning or assessment practice. The topics for the previous three annual series of forums were professional judgment, RPL and continuous improvement.

The forums will be held in at least four different locations around Australia. Potential participants will be invited to submit an expression of interest to be selected to attend a forum and to undertake some follow up activities within their organisation.

Another single forum showcasing innovative strategies, practices and the emerging outcomes of the 2008 Reframing the Future funded projects will be held in Melbourne in mid-November. The forum will also feature inspiring keynote speakers on topics relevant to the goals of the program. This forum is open to all VET practitioners.

3. Publications and resources

Four new publications will be available by May 2008. The first publication will detail how Reframing the Future 2007 projects contributed to the productivity of the Australian workforce and also increased the productivity of the VET workforce.

The second publication will provide insights into how providers in 2007 became more responsive to customers and clients and more flexible internally, through their use of strategic management, change management and change agency.

The third publication, *Appreciative inquiry in the VET sector: core ideas*, will provide readily accessible information about how to use and facilitate appreciative inquiry methodology to support capability development to implement the national training system.

The fourth publication, *Action learning in the VET sector: core ideas*, will explain the transformative power of this methodology and how it can be used by project teams to increase organisational capacity and individual capability.

The 2008 edition of the Reframing the Future Publications and Resources CD ROM will also be available in May.

All Reframing the Future publications and resources are available free in a range of formats through the Reframing the Future website www.reframingthefuture.net

Reframing the Future's 2008 program is the result of data received from many sources including the following: feedback and insights from program participants and from evaluations of its activities; advice from the NCQ, the Reframing the Future National Reference Group, the State and Territory contacts group, the National VET Advisory Alliance and NCVET, as well as insights informed by other relevant national and international research.