
6 Conclusions and implications

6.1 Framework of measurement

This section examines indicators of effectiveness under each of the factor headings. The indicators are drawn directly from the findings of each case study. The indicators under each heading are designed to summarise the issues that were identified by respondents and that contribute to effectiveness of VET outcomes at study sites. While it cannot be concluded that these indicators can be extrapolated to be a general measure of effectiveness, they may serve as benchmarks on which to test future studies about the quality and effectiveness of VET or aspects of VET delivery in Australia.

6.1.1 Quality considerations

Throughout the case studies, there were few examples of ways that quality considerations listed here contributed to the effectiveness of VET at a site. There was just one site (Kerang) where quality considerations contributed to effectiveness; though even in this case it was a narrow influence. The quality issues raised related to training packages, educators and trainers, competition, user choice, program range and some provider issues. Most of these issues were raised in a way that implied they were detracting from the quality of VET in the study sites. Under each heading is a series of statements that reflect positive aspects of quality that improve the effectiveness of VET within a configuration. The concerns that were raised have been turned around to express positively how quality may enhance effectiveness of VET within a configuration.

☐ Training packages

- Educational value of training packages is recognised and accepted.
- Training packages are transportable across enterprises within industries and across regional boundaries.
- There is local provider support for training packages for learners using distance education models.
- Assessment procedures and standards stand up to tests of workplace and industry need.
- Assessment procedures ensure competence beyond the assessment period.
- Employers are aware of their obligations to support training, not just to get funding for employing trainees.

The issues about training packages were widely raised across a number of sites. The above list represents a range of indicators that may be used to assess the quality of VET in a site that contributes to effective outcomes from VET.

☐ Educators and trainers

- Trainers and educators have adequate access to affordable and relevant professional development.
- Strategies are in place to ensure quality of trainers is monitored and improved.

- Providers apply adequate resources to professional development of staff.
- There is sufficient motivation and reward for trainers to do the job expected of them.
- Trainers have adequate access to financial, educational, structural and communication resources.
- Trainers tap into local or regional networks.
- There is an adequate supply of appropriately skilled trainers in the region.

Competition

- Funding arrangements do not cause unnecessary competition for scarce resources.
- Competition leads to better quality, more choice for clients, greater efficiency, better service and reduced cost.
- In the absence of competition, strategies are in place to ensure improvements in efficiency and client service.

There were examples given by respondents in a few case studies that suggest that competition can have a positive impact in some circumstances. This was particularly noted in the urban sites (Launceston, Penrith, Cairns). Even in smaller sites such as Kerang it was conceded that competition drove providers to give better service and value for clients. However, where competition was forced on thin markets there tended to be inefficient use of scarce resources, and collaborative efforts were stifled.

User Choice

- Principles of User Choice are applied by providers.
- There is awareness of the principles of User Choice among all stakeholders.

User Choice was raised as a point of concern in only a few sites.

Program range

- Programs meet demands of local industry and the community.
- Programs offered are accessible and affordable to the local community.
- Programs meet needs of people seeking to enter the workforce and the social needs of the community

Program range was not raised as an issue of concern in the urban sites. However in almost cases for the rural sites, the range of programs was considered to be inadequate.

Provider issues

- Provider structures support trainers and clients.
- Quality systems are in place to ensure quality delivery, not just quality management.
- Primary and secondary school structures allow for effective linkages to the VET system.
- Prevocational literacy and numeracy standards are adequate.

- VET literacy issues are addressed to ensure literacy and numeracy does not restrict participation.
- There is articulation and cooperation with local universities.
- Providers coordinate with other providers to meet local / industry needs.

Provider issues tended to be site specific. The quality assurance issue however, was more general.

6.1.2 Collaborative relationships and partnerships

Collaborative relationships and partnerships were found to be a significant factor at seven sites (Penrith, Launceston, Katanning, Cairns, Orbost, Broken Hill, Port Lincoln), which contributed to the effectiveness of VET. The following indicators are arranged into groupings of provider networks, community linkages, industry networks and external networks. In practice there is a lot of overlap between these types of networks and the indicators shown may well apply to many types of partnerships.

Provider networks

- Information about local needs, training provisions is shared.
- Strategic plans for training are developed and implemented.
- Community and industry needs are identified.
- Provider resources are shared.
- Providers engage in cooperative initiatives with each other and the communities.
- Availability of programs is extended.
- Improved trainee outcomes are targeted.

Community networks

- Community groups are involved in cooperative community developments.
- Community members are aware of range of services available.
- Community members and groups support local training providers.

External networks

- New ideas are accessed.
- Resources outside the region are accessed.
- Funding sources are identified and accessed.
- Effective programs are recognised and publicised outside the region.

Industry networks

- Industry groups and / or local enterprises are consulted and involved in strategic planning processes to ensure that industry skill needs are met.

Cross-sectoral networks

- Local partnerships bridge social and sectoral boundaries within a community.

- Partnerships have an external component that links with organisations outside the community.

Within these indicators, the depth of collaborative partnerships also influences their effectiveness. This is dependent on the level of trust that exists between stakeholders in partnerships, which in turn is dependent on the history and longevity of the partnerships.

6.1.3 Resources – learner, interactions, human, infrastructure

Five of the case studies (Penrith, Launceston, Orbst, Broken Hill, and Port Lincoln) concluded that the availability of resources contributed to effectiveness of VET within the configuration. The indicators of effectiveness in terms of resources are here divided into provider, learner and community resources. The nature of the site determined which resources were significant. For example issues of cultural barriers were only relevant to sites with significant cultural diversity. Within sites, access to resources was frequently determined by remoteness.

☐ Provider resources

- Education and training facilities are adequate to meet community and industry needs in the region.
- Remote areas are provided with alternative forms of delivery to enable access to training.
- Providers have qualified trainers available to meet training demands.
- Community members volunteer services for informal training delivery.
- Providers offer adequate support for learners, including support for those learning via electronic and other self-paced delivery.
- Providers have access to financial resources to enable them to meet training needs.
- Providers have access to and make available training materials for learners.

☐ Learner resources

- Learners and potential learners have adequate literacy and numeracy skills that enable them to participate effectively in VET.
- A learning culture prevails in the community, such that training and education is valued by community members.
- Learners are aware of the potential of Information Technology and have adequate skills to take advantage of it.
- Providers are aware of and work to overcome cultural barriers.

☐ Community resources

- Information Technology infrastructure is adequate in the community.
- Libraries and other learning resources are available and accessible.

At each site where resources were considered to enhance the effectiveness of VET collaborative relationships and partnerships were also present. This is because

collaboration tends to result in sharing of resources and therefore maximises their effective use.

6.1.4 Planning and funding to meet local community needs

Four sites (Broken Hill, Cairns, Katanning, and Katherine) demonstrated effective use of planning that resulted in funding, which in turn met community needs. The indicators of effectiveness identified from the case studies are here arranged under headings of planning and funding.

□ Planning to meet community needs

- Communities are consulted and participate in planning processes.
- Training programs are broadly owned and accepted.
- Providers are involved with the community.
- Community needs and trends are identified and assessed.

□ Access to funding

- Strategic planning forms the basis of funding applications.
- Government funding allows for regional differences.
- Funding addresses issues of remoteness and isolation.
- All available funding sources are identified and accessed.
- Local providers have control over funds for their community.
- Funding is attracted to meet targeted needs of individuals and minority groups.

Not all these indicators are relevant to all sites. In general a strategic planning process that involved some form of collaboration was found to be important for those sites that were successful in gaining access to funding.

In sites where planning and funding was effective there was generally also collaboration between providers, external partnerships and strong community networks and trust. These things combined to allow a configuration to draw together, share available information and plan in a well coordinated manner to argue for funding that met their community needs.

6.1.5 Presence of strong community networks and trust

The presence of strong community networks and trust was foundational for effective VET delivery in six case study sites (Penrith, Launceston, Kerang, Katherine, Katanning, Cairns, and Broken Hill).

□ Community networks and trust

- Values of inclusiveness and acceptance of diversity prevail in the communities.
- Strong links between community groups have been built up over a long period of time.
- Community groups engage in cooperative initiatives.
- Individuals and community groups are active in civic life.
- There is evidence of cultural sensitivity to the needs of diverse cultural groups.

- Residents have a sense of belonging and community identity.
- Community groups engage in community development activities.

The case studies noted that issues of community networks and trust were particularly significant for the smaller isolated sites. Where distrust was evident, it acted as a major barrier to effective VET delivery, especially where a provider was involved.

6.1.6 Content targeted to meet individual needs

Six of the ten case study sites (Port Lincoln, Broken Hill, Cairns, Gayndah, Launceston, and Penrith) exhibited characteristics demonstrating that targeted content contributed to the effectiveness of VET at the site. Targeting content to meet individual needs means ensuring that courses are relevant to individuals and take into account a range of personal, cultural and employment issues specific to individuals.

☐ Targeting content to meet individual needs

- Needs of individuals and client groups are known by providers.
- Training packages are customised to meet client needs.
- Employment service providers that manage the needs of minority groups or special cases are present in the community.
- Programs are tailored to take into account cultural and employment needs.

The case studies suggest that there are a number of precursors to this factor. Leadership, planning and funding are all important co-contributors to this factor. It is also evident that targeting content to meet individual needs is not so much of an issue in larger urban areas where there is an array of providers and programs for clients to choose from.

Where there is tension between community groups or there were divisions along cultural lines, these acted as barriers to targeting content to meet individual needs. Another barrier to meeting individual needs was the presence of a poor learning culture within a site.

6.1.7 Enabling leadership

Enabling leadership was a factor that contributed to effectiveness at five case study sites (Penrith, Launceston, Gayndah, Cairns, and Port Lincoln). Indicators of leadership are difficult to differentiate from indicators of collaboration and planning because leadership often drives these processes. However the following indicators reflect the role of leadership with these factors.

☐ Leadership

- Development of targeted programs that address priority employment or community needs.
- Ability of a configuration to draw resources together for coordinated collaborative efforts.
- Ability of a configuration to access funding and resources from external sources.
- Presence of innovative and visionary initiatives that garner wide community support.

6.1.8 Flexibility

Flexibility was found to be a key to effectiveness at only three sites (Port Lincoln, Orbst, and Launceston). Indicators of flexibility that contributed to effectiveness are outlined below.

□ Flexibility

- Ability of a configuration to adapt in a rapidly changing environment.
- Presence of effective competition between providers.
- Funding constraints in thin markets.
- Adequate support resources for trainees.

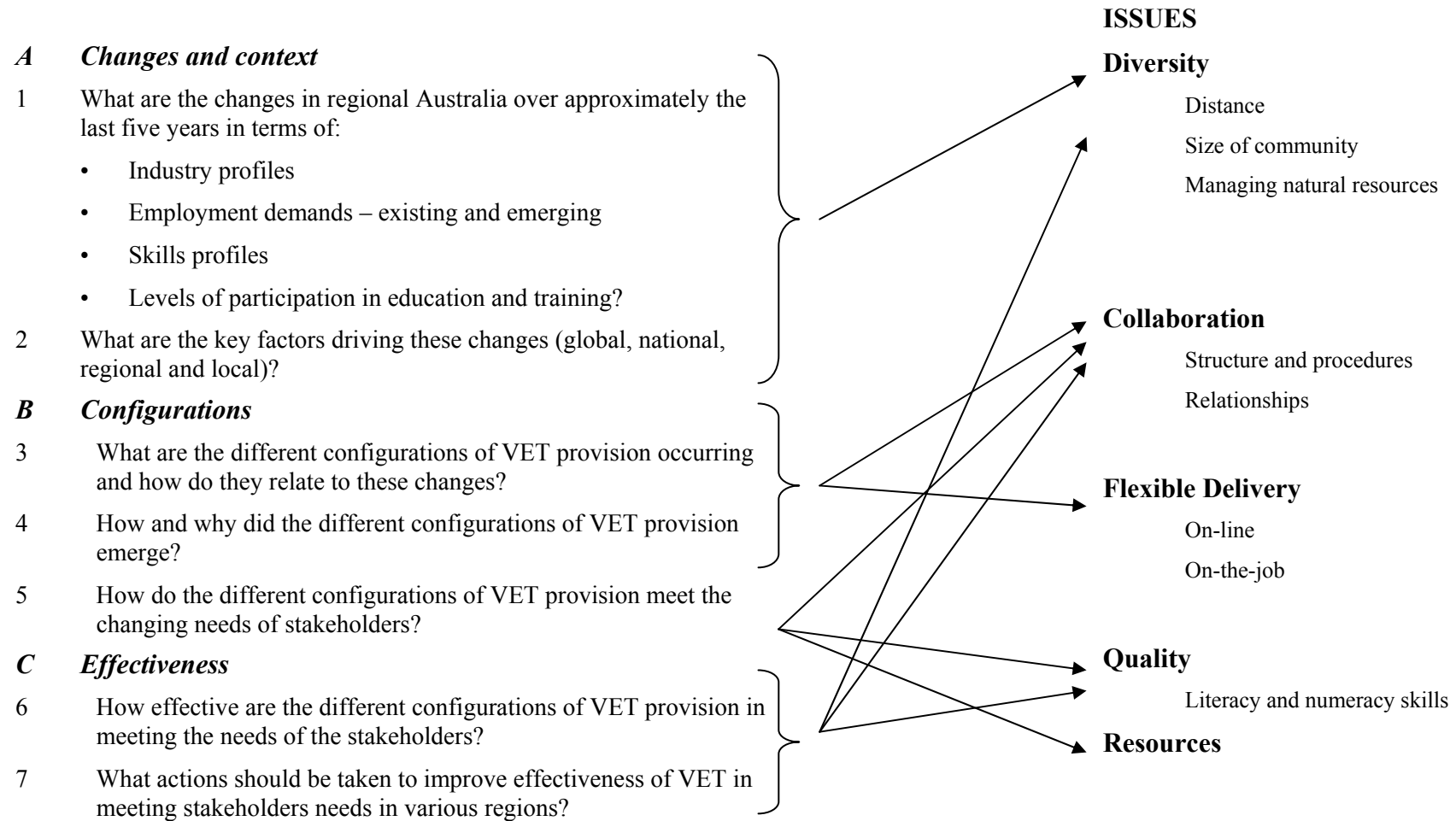
The relative absence of flexibility at most sites does not necessarily mean that it is not an important factor for effectiveness. A number of barriers to flexibility were identified in the case studies. These include:

- Reluctance of providers to consider alternative forms of delivery.
- A community's learning culture, which adapts to change with some reluctance.
- Low literacy levels.
- Lack of Information Technology infrastructure.
- Learning style preferences of trainees.

6.2 Implications

This section concludes the report with implications of the research in terms of issues that have arisen out of the research. Previous reports have shown the relationship between research questions and issues. These are reproduced in Figure 19.

Figure 19 – Relationship between research questions and issues



6.2.1 Diversity

Local needs

The ten case studies demonstrate the diverse nature of VET across regional Australia. While some generalisations can be made about the differences in terms of ‘types’ (see *Typologies*, page 77), particularly rural / non-rural, the data shows that each site is unique in its own way and is very much dependent on local history, industry, needs, social setting and demographics.

The data supports a view that effectiveness of VET is enhanced where local needs are given priority (Kilpatrick 1997a; Butler & Lawrence 1996; Rodwell et al 1996). For example, at Broken Hill a number of programs were developed through cooperative local initiatives that targeted the needs of the local community – one illustration of many was the role that VET played in the ‘Line of Lode’ project. The outcomes of these targeted initiatives included increased participation, improved career opportunities, employment and improved social attachment. The data also suggests that where local communities don’t have control of VET effectiveness is reduced. For example, at Gayndah where the campus was effectively managed from Maryborough, the local TAFE was not well supported by the local community.

While the research has shown that VET is primarily concerned with meeting employment and education needs, the case studies also highlight the importance of VET in local communities for meeting needs beyond purely vocational skills. One aspect of this is the acquisition of ‘soft skills’ of communication, problem solving etc. as opposed to purely technical ‘hard skills’ (Owen & Williamson 1998; Hobart 1999). There were several illustrations of the significance of this kind of VET outcome in the data. In Cairns for example, a number of respondents spoke of the importance of VET in improving communication skills, self confidence, self motivation and participation in the workforce. In practical terms for at least two employers mentioned in the Cairns case study, this meant that employees were able to participate more effectively in meetings, they were able to make decisions more effectively and in one case the higher skill levels directly affected staff morale.

At another level, VET goes beyond the provision of education and training for the workplace and has a significant role to play in providing skills for community members (Johns et al. 1999; Falk 2000; Allison & Keane 1999). Again there were several illustrations of the way that this works in several sites, but an interesting illustration of this comes from the Orbost site where a community project (creating a community mosaic), facilitated by TAFE was seen to be a catalyst for improved social integration and further community involvement by participants. Another illustration from Orbost showed how an ACE course resulted in an economic benefit to participants. In this example a folk art course resulted in participants going on to sell products they had made in a local shop.

The literature review highlights the need for VET to be both equitable (Butler & Lawrence 1996) and take into account the needs of cultural diversity within Australia (Partington & McCudden 1992; Fifth International Conference on Adult Education 1997; Djama and VET 1998). The results from this research suggest that where VET does take these issues of cultural diversity into account it is more effective. For example respondents from Northern Territory University indicated how they integrated training in cultural awareness into their professional development programs for VET trainers because of the importance of understand cultural issues for delivery.

In Cairns, literacy needs of migrants were a high priority and were shown to be essential prerequisites for effective participation in further education and training. The difficulties associated with culturally diverse communities were highlighted in Katanning where tensions between the Malay community and the European community, and tensions between tribal groups of Indigenous communities inhibited the effectiveness of VET.

The needs of small, isolated and remote communities were also highlighted by the research. The issues relate to the size and capacity of these communities (Deavers 1992). The perceptions of respondents in remote communities of sites reflect a belief that training and education services are inadequate in these areas and that quality was not up to the standard of other areas. Consistent with literature (Johns et al. 2000; Lincoln 2000, Dusseldorp 1999), VET was often perceived to be a vehicle that would help stem the loss of youth from a region. A number of VET in schools programs at sites were established with this goal clearly in mind (eg Orbost, Kerang, Gayndah).

The research suggests that where local needs are integrated into the objectives of VET then it is likely to be more effective. The effectiveness is enhanced through community ownership and participation. The research also highlights the importance of a broad approach to VET that incorporates industry needs in terms of hard and soft skills, community needs and the needs of culturally diverse communities. Where local needs are given priority outcomes of VET are perceived to be more beneficial.

The role of VET in community development

In some sites the role of VET was expanded beyond education and training to meet skill needs of local industry and other local community needs. In some case studies VET played an integral part in processes of community development. For example in Cairns, the West Cairns Primary School initiative involved VET in processes that ultimately improved the school's reputation and attracted people back to the community. Key factors that contributed to the success of the program include the development of networks and trust between the organisation and the community and the use of the school as a focus for the community. The illustration highlights the underpinning principles of social trust in the use of VET as a tool for community development (Rifkin 1999) and the building of community identity (Falk, Balatti & Golding 2000).

Leadership also plays an integral role in the use of VET for community development. Case studies highlighted several initiatives that were instigated through enabling leadership. In many cases the leadership came from grass-roots initiatives consistent with models of *situated* leadership proposed by Falk (1999). An example of this comes from the Port Lincoln site where the Women's Tourist Information Group was established with VET as a key to the development. In many cases the actual individuals involved were not identified because the drive for development came from a group or collaborative effort. This was the case in a Cairns example of VET in schools programs where an organisation took a leading role in pulling together resources and stakeholders to successfully drive a program. This dispersed model of leadership is supported by several examples from the literature (Falk & Kilpatrick 2000; Falk & Smith 2001; Senge 1999; Flora et al, 1997).

The case studies point to several examples where VET is integrated into community development models. Leadership is an important driver of processes that build community capacity and ultimately produce economic benefits. Where VET was

integrated in community development projects reported in case studies, collaboration and partnerships were always present. Within the scope of this research it can therefore be concluded that VET will be an effective vehicle for community change where collaborative partnerships and networks are present.

6.2.2 Collaboration

The case studies demonstrated unambiguously that where providers collaborated with each other, with their community and with external partners, VET was found to be more effective. The results of collaboration included information sharing, resource sharing, development of strategic plans, and access to funding. This was particularly true for the sites that included areas of 'thin markets' where resources were scarce. Consistent with Dickie and Weeks (1999) and Kearns (1999) the data showed that networking acted as an enabler of VET provision. The best illustrations come from Broken Hill where a local VET network was responsible for coordinating and planning several local initiatives, which attracted funding for several community learning and development projects. The Broken Hill case study shows how collaboration and partnerships can be used to effectively overcome barriers of isolation and distance. In Katanning the community management of the local training / Job Network provider together with the resulting interagency cooperation meant that the negative effects of thin markets could be effectively negated.

Underpinning the successful collaborative partnerships was a foundation of social cohesion and trust that allowed partners to work together. This combination of social cohesion coming out of community networks and trust often referred to as social capital, has been shown to be an important precursor to successful education and development programs (OECD 2001a; Jenson 2000; Willms 2000). Again, in the case of Broken Hill the network was established in the context of community crisis (with the closure of the major employer) that resulted in a sense of common purpose. The trust that was evident in the network was the result of years of cooperation.

The outcomes of collaboration include social and economic benefits (Allen 1999; Carlin & St Leger 1999). A good example of these outcomes is included in the Cairns case study where a migrant resource service attributed the success of its programs to strong community and employer networks developed over a long period of time.

The examples from case studies demonstrate the importance of strong social networks and trust as a foundation on which effective collaborative partnerships can be built. In this context measures of effectiveness can be based on personal, social and economic outcomes.

6.2.3 Flexible delivery

Use of flexible delivery is seen as an enabler for VET in rural and isolated regions (Butler & Lawrence 1996; Kilpatrick & Bell 1998; NCVER 1998). To some extent the data supports this view. For example in many of the rural sites such as Kerang and Orbost, flexible delivery through Group Training Companies was thriving and providing opportunities that would otherwise not have existed. Flexible delivery was also found to be thriving in other non-rural sites such as Launceston and Cairns.

While providers were generally well aware of and understood concepts of flexible delivery employers were less aware and trainees were largely unaware of the term and did not understand what it meant. This suggests that learners in particular are dependent on providers to help them make choices about training (Collis 1996) and

also suggests that the assumption that in flexible delivery students understand all the implications of learning (Boote 1997) is flawed. A number of providers suggested that their clients were not ready for flexible delivery (eg Cairns, Gayndah, Katherine) as defined by ANTA (1997) partly because it assumes a level of self-directedness and motivation (Twyford 1999) and high literacy levels that were not evident in many rural sites. This was particularly the case in Katherine where literacy among Indigenous communities was considered to be poor. In Kerang for example, particularly in the rural NSW sections of the site, comments by respondents suggested that the learning culture of people in remote and isolated areas is such that their isolation is perceived to be an insurmountable barrier to effective participation, and that the lack of human resources readily available to participants was a real barrier to adoption of flexible modes of delivery.

Flexible delivery also assumes availability of a range of technologies to support learner oriented training (McNickle & Pogliani 1998). In many sites the infrastructure and resources (especially Information Technology) did not allow participants of VET to fully exploit the range of options available to non-rural participants using flexible modes of delivery. Furthermore, the lack of computer skills means that even where infrastructure is adequate, the broader community cannot take advantage of it. Several providers in the Penrith site, particularly in the non-metropolitan areas of the site, made comment about this.

It can be concluded from the case studies that while flexible delivery is potentially an enabler of VET, there are several barriers that need to be overcome in order to maximise the perceived benefits. The case studies showed that trainees were largely unaware of what flexible delivery meant. One reason for this may be that providers are reluctant to advocate flexibility because they perceive that it doesn't suit the learning style of participants, or because it presupposes standards of literacy that have not been attained. A lack of Information Technology infrastructure in rural areas may also contribute to this reluctance.

6.2.4 Quality

The research has highlighted a number of quality issues related to VET (see Quality considerations, page 135). By and large, quality issues were seen to detract from the effectiveness of VET. Concerns about the quality of training packages were high on the list of issues raised in the case studies. Among the concerns was the perception by some providers that training packages were a 'short, sharp and cheap' (McIntyre et al 1996) substitute for quality training. Problems with educational value, industry transportability, employer obligations and quality of assessment were raised, particularly among providers who were more inclined to stay with traditional teacher / student oriented approaches to learning. Smith (2000) outlines some of these concerns in his report on quality aspects of assessment in Queensland's VET system:

The pervasive view among the trainers interviewed was that Training Packages are, in fact, Assessment Packages in that their focus generally is not on how to structure and deliver training but rather on what, how and where to assess. The deep concern expressed was that these "Assessment Packages" are then used by many providers as 'the syllabus', such that they teach nothing more or less than what is needed to meet the assessment requirements in the Training Packages. Consequently, in the view of many, training is simply becoming the imparting of 'just sufficient' knowledge and skill to meet the assessment requirements of the Training Packages.

The concerns are echoed in Schofield's (2000b) reviews which state that:

For the majority of trainees, the traineeship program does contribute directly to the acquisition of valued skills. However, for many trainees, possibly around 20%, the traineeship program is simply reinforcing existing skills and knowledge rather than extending them.

A good example of the issue of transportability was given by an Indigenous respondent in Katherine, who suggested that it would be unreasonable to expect an employer in metropolitan Sydney to treat a retail Certificate III obtained through a traineeship at the Kalkaringi store as equivalent to one obtained through employment at a Grace Brothers store in Sydney. The reasons for this are simply that even though competencies are achieved equally by both employees, they are specific to the enterprise in which they are gained. Similarly, an employer in Cairns commented that when he employs Certificate qualified tradespersons, he has to expend additional resources retraining them so they have the skills to meet the requirements of his enterprise.

While there was little dispute about the vocational value of traineeships, there was wide criticism of their educational value. In Cairns for example, an agricultural college representative commented on the pressure on his institution to provide shorter courses presumably to improve the cost effectiveness of them. He believed that working on a purely competency-based model would compromise the educational and vocational value of his programs and that often traineeships did not provide sufficient time for skills and knowledge to sink in. Similarly a rural ITAB representative in Katherine was dismissive of suggestions that a traineeship qualification could be achieved within three months.

It is apparent from the case studies that the reason for the willingness to compromise on educational quality is because of funding arrangements, which favour both employers and providers that assess and accredit trainees in the shortest possible time frame. Once the allocated funds for the training are used up, the obligation for additional training to meet the assessment criteria of the trainee falls on the employer, who is not surprisingly reluctant to allocate additional funds. These problems were described widely in the data but are illustrated well by comments from a Gayndah provider who spoke of pressure on him to get trainees accredited as quickly as possible – in less time than was reasonably possible for the kinds of skills demanded by the assessment criteria.

Other issues relating to quality raised in case studies include concerns about providers and about competition. Competition was seen both negatively and positively. In the larger training markets competition was seen to drive improvements in quality, increase levels of service and improve cost effectiveness. In the smaller markets competition was also seen to drive quality improvements, but was seen as a negative influence over collaborative and cooperative initiatives (Kilpatrick & Bell 1998). This was the case in Kerang where a training provider suggested that competition restricted the ability of providers to effectively share resources, but at the same time sharpened his organisation's focus on customers' needs. Many respondents in rural sites spoke of ways they tried to 'get around' competition issues. These strategies were particularly noticeable in Broken Hill where providers collaborated to ensure that services did not directly overlap and so that access to funding was not threatened by 'fights' over available funds.

Among the provider issues was that of quality assurance. These were highlighted by a Kerang provider who suggested that quality assurance within the TAFE system needed to extend beyond monitoring management and administration to training

itself. Many rural respondents spoke of the problems associated with inadequate provider resources which in turn affected the learning experience of trainees.

The range of quality issues raised by providers in particular, suggests that within the research sites quality concerns must be addressed before effectiveness of VET will be maximised. Many of the issues relating to training packages and provider resources are beyond individual providers' control and are therefore difficult to address at a local level. The data suggests that cost constraints caused by competition, particularly in thin markets, and funding restrictions, limit the ability of providers to pursue quality outcomes ahead of cost outcomes.

6.2.5 Resources

Given that access to services and incomes tend to reduce with distance from urban centres (DETYA 1999; Wahlquist 1999) it comes as no surprise that among the priority issues raised by respondents in the case studies were those of access and command over goods and services. Nine of the ten sites indicated that access was a priority need (see Table 16) The data also showed that this perception of need increased with remoteness within a site. Cost of living issues were also a concern to many (six sites).

Concurring with Cooke and Morgan (1998), the research supports a view that adaptation to change is more effective in regions that are undergoing industrial restructuring where there are productive learning processes and networking of resources. An example of this kind of region is the Broken Hill site which has already been cited as an example where networking and learning has been used effectively for community development. The development of VET in schools programs in Launceston is another example of this kind of networking and resource sharing. It is possible that these sites demonstrate effective use and building of social capital where knowledge and identity resources which reside in individuals and communities are activated and shared through social interaction (Falk & Kilpatrick 2000). Figure 18, discussed earlier demonstrates how resources are shared and released through collaborative partnerships.

Overcoming the limitations of isolation and remoteness remains a primary concern within most of the study sites. The research supports a proposition that scarce resources (human, capital, educational) can be more effectively used where there are collaborative structures in place.