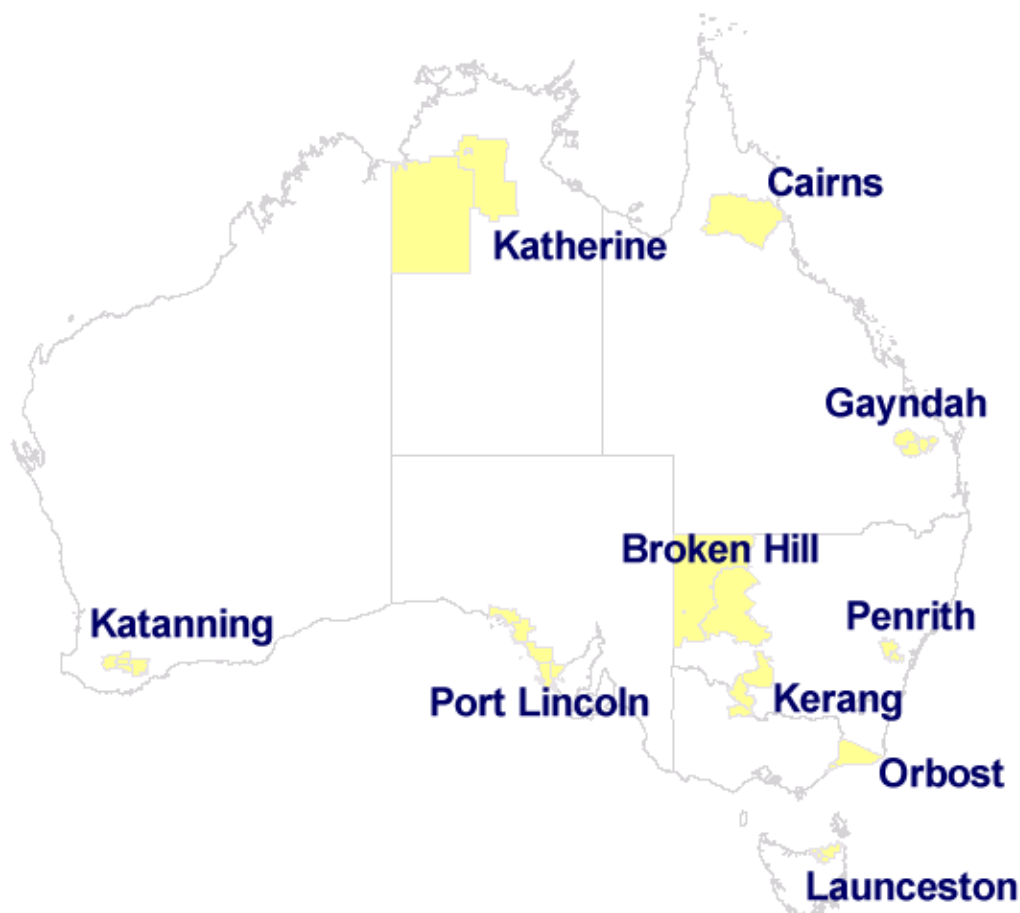

5 Overview of ten sites

5.1 Summary of background data

This section aims to provide a summary of the background data presented in each case study. The purpose here is to show the effect of a number of factors that highlight key differences across the sites. Past reports have highlighted background information on the basis of a whole site (CRLRA, May 2000, and September 2000). The unit of comparison in the following analysis is the SLA contained within the sites shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5- Location of study sites showing SLAs used for background data



5.1.1 Typologies

Consideration was given to the use of National Economics (1998) ‘types’ as a basis for comparison. The problem with relating these regions to the Role of VET in Regional Australia sites (see Table 2) is that within the regions represented by the types, there are smaller sub-regions that do not conform to the characteristics of the region as a whole—the National Economics’ categories do not take into account the significant differences that occur within broad regions. This is particularly noticeable for sites such as Orbost (characterised as ‘resource based’), which would either fit better into the rural-based or lifestyle-based categories. A similar problem arises for Gayndah. Note also that the Role of VET in Regional Australia sites do not include

‘core metro’ or ‘producer zone’ (manufacturing) regions because these regions tend to be located in metropolitan areas.

Table 2 - National Economics (1998) regional types

Type	Regions included
Core metro	Sydney, Inner / Northern Melbourne, Brisbane, Central Adelaide, Northern / Central Perth, Southern Tasmania, Canberra
Dispersed metro	Southern Adelaide, North Brisbane, Moreton-Ipswich, Central Coast NSW, Outer West / South West Sydney
Producer zones	North Adelaide, Westernport, Western Melbourne, Sydney Producer region, Northern Illawarra, Lower Hunter
Resource based	Pilbara, Top End Northern Territory , Mersey Lyell, Gippsland
Rural based	WA: South East, Victoria Central, Great Southern; SA: South-East, Murray Lands, Eyre and York ; VIC: Ovens Hume, Goulburn, Loddon, Mallee-Wimmera , Western Region, Golden Region; TAS: Northern Tas ; NSW: Southern and Central, North and North Western ; NT: Southern NT
Lifestyle based	South-East NSW, Far North Queensland, Wide Bay Burnett , North Coast NSW

Other typologies put forward in the interim report¹ (2000) are even more difficult to relate to ABS statistics. However ABS comparisons can be made between SLAs that can be described as:

- Remote or accessible
- Growing or declining
- Rural or urban and
- Culturally diverse or monocultural

The background data variables considered here include industry of employment, qualifications, attendance at educational institutions and occupations. The comparison factors are rurality, remoteness, cultural diversity and population change.

The data is grouped into two sections. The first analyses the influence of these factors on the proportional mix of the variables at the 1996 Census. The second group reviews the impact of the factors on changes (in the 1986 / 1996 period) for the variables. Tests of statistical significance are based on two tailed t-tests comparing data that belongs to groupings of rural / urban, culturally diverse / mono cultural, growing / declining and remote / accessible. Designations in all cases are based on ABS definitions. Designation of SLAs within sites is shown in Table 24.

5.1.2 Impact of rurality

For the purpose of this discussion, ABS provides a useful distinction between rural and non-rural SLAs.

CDs which are part of an urban centre (1000 persons and over) are designated as 'urban' while those which are either part of a bounded locality (200-999 persons) or part of the rural balance are designated as 'rural'.²

¹ Stimson et al (1999) and Lloyd (2000)

² ABS, IRDB99

The designation allows for a comparison of sites on the basis of rurality, measured as a percentage. The designation of SLAs in Table 24 as rural or urban is based on the ABS definition.

The ABS data shows that rural sites differ significantly from non-rural sites as follows:

- In terms of occupation, rural SLAs are more likely to have a higher proportion of managers / administrators and labourers. Non-rural SLAs are more likely to have a higher proportion of professionals, associate professionals, tradespersons, advanced, intermediate and elementary clerical, sales and service workers. The mix of occupations is also influenced to a lesser extent by remoteness. The proportion of professionals, associate professionals, tradespersons, advanced, intermediate and elementary clerical, sales and service workers is also influenced by population growth.
- In terms of qualifications, rural SLAs are more likely to have higher proportions of persons without qualifications. Non-rural SLAs are more likely to have higher proportions of people with higher degree, bachelor and skilled vocational qualifications. Remoteness and population growth (to a lesser extent) also influence the mix of qualifications.
- In terms of attendance at educational institutions, rural SLAs are likely to have lower proportions of people attending TAFE and tertiary institutions. Attendance at TAFE is also affected by remoteness.
- In terms of industry of employment rural SLAs are more likely to include higher proportions of people employed in agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting. Non-rural sites are more likely to have higher proportions of employees working in construction, wholesale, retail, accommodation / cafes / restaurants, transport and storage, communications, finance / insurance and property / business services. Remoteness also influenced the mix of employment, generally to a lesser extent.

Table 3 demonstrates the combined impact of rurality and remoteness on attendance at TAFE. The table shows that attendance at TAFE in urban accessible areas is double that in rural remote areas. The background data shown here is consistent with the findings of a report for INRULED and the Chinese National Commission for UNESCO (Wyn et al, 2001), which demonstrates similar trends on a national level.

Table 3 – Percent of population attending TAFE by ARIA and rurality

Percent of population in TAFE colleges	Rural/urban		Grand Total
	Rural	Urban	
ARIA			
0-3.5 (Highly accessible, accessible)	1.6%	2.2%	2.1%
>3.5 (moderately accessible to very remote)	1.1%	2.0%	1.3%
Grand Total	1.2%	2.2%	1.7%

5.1.3 Impact of remoteness

The ARIA index provides an objective measure of remoteness and accessibility. An index of 3.51 or less is considered to indicate measures of ‘highly accessible’ or ‘accessible’. ARIA values for site SLAs are shown in Table 24. Remoteness combines

with rurality to influence industry of employment mix, qualification levels and occupational patterns. Qualification levels are also affected by population growth. However, the impact of rurality and remoteness differ for:

- Educational attendance such that attendance at preschools and primary schools is likely to be higher in remote SLAs compared with accessible areas.
- Industry of employment such that employment in manufacturing is likely to be lower in remote regions.

An example of the combined influence of remoteness, rurality and population change is shown in Table 4 which shows that the proportion of the population with vocational skills in urban growing areas is almost double that for rural isolated areas.

Table 4 – Percent of population with skilled vocational qualifications by ARIA, rurality and population growth

Percent with skilled vocational qualifications	Rural/urban	ARIA		Grand Total
		0-3.5	>3.5	
Decline/grow	Rural	11.1%	7.3%	7.7%
Declining	Urban	11.1%	8.5%	10.3%
Declining Total		11.1%	7.5%	8.6%
Growing	Rural	9.8%	8.4%	8.8%
	Urban	12.5%	10.8%	12.2%
Growing Total		11.8%	9.0%	10.6%
Grand Total		11.6%	8.2%	9.8%

5.1.4 Impact of cultural diversity

Cultural diversity has no significant impact on industry of employment, qualifications or occupational mix. It does have a significant impact on participation in secondary institutions, where participation in secondary institutions is likely to be lower where there is greater cultural diversity.

Table 5 – Attendance at secondary school by rurality and cultural diversity

Secondary school attendance	Rural / urban		Grand Total
	Rural	Urban	
Culture	5.9%	6.6%	6.2%
Monocultural	3.7%	5.2%	4.6%
Grand Total	5.3%	6.0%	5.6%

5.1.5 Impact of population change

Analysis of population change across the site SLAs suggests that population change is generally subordinate to rurality as a factor that affects the proportion of the population employed in industries, the occupational mix, and qualifications profile.

The proportion of the population attending educational institutions was not significantly affected by the growth or decline of the population.

The subordinate nature of this factor is demonstrated in Table 6, which shows the greater influence of rurality on qualification levels, ahead of population growth and remoteness. However, the combined impact of these factors can be seen when comparing the percentage with bachelor degrees in urban, growing and accessible regions (7.6%) with rural, remote and declining areas (3.9%).

Table 6 – Percent of population with bachelor qualifications, by rurality, population change and remoteness.

Percent with bachelor degree qualifications	ARIA	Rural/urban		Grand Total
		Rural	Urban	
Declining or growing	ARIA	Rural	Urban	Grand Total
Declining	0-3.5	3.5%	3.8%	3.7%
	>3.5	3.9%	3.9%	3.9%
Declining Total		3.8%	3.8%	3.8%
Growing	0-3.5	3.4%	7.6%	6.5%
	>3.5	3.9%	4.9%	4.1%
Growing Total		3.7%	7.0%	5.5%
Grand Total		3.8%	6.1%	4.8%

5.1.6 Change and rural / urban differences

Analysis of ABS data shown in Table 24 shows that rurality has a significant impact on changes³ that have occurred for:

- Industry of employment for accommodation, cafes and restaurants and cultural and recreational services (tourism related industries) such that with increasing rurality there is an increased probability that employment in these industries will have declined.
- Attendance at tertiary institutions, such that with increasing rurality there is an increased probability that attendance will have declined.
- Higher degree and undergraduate diploma qualifications, such that with increasing rurality there is an increased probability that proportion of population with these qualifications, will have declined.
- Manager / administrator and labourer occupations, such that with increasing rurality there is an increased probability that the proportion of the population with these occupations will have declined.

It should be noted that multiple factors influence these observed trends. For example, accessibility can be shown to play a role in the trends for occupations. Table 7 shows how accessibility influences the change in proportion of managers at the sites.

³ Changes referred to here relate to ABS Census data in the period 1986 to 1996. Significance is based on t-tests where $p < .01$. Correlation co-efficient for these tests generally exceeds 0.4 or -0.4.

Population growth or decline affects this employment trend as well, though statistically, the measure of rurality is more significant.

Table 7 - Changes in the proportion of managers across all sites (1986 to 1996) by ARIA and Rurality

ARIA	Change in proportion of managers		
	Rural	Urban	Grand Total
0-3.5 (Accessible and very accessible)	-3.5%	+87.2%	+64.5%
3.5-7 (Moderately accessible to remote)	-17.5%	+41.5%	-1.8%
7-10.5 (Remote to very remote)	-17.6%		-17.6%
10.5-14 (Very remote)	+3.8%	-14.6%	-5.4%
Grand Total	-13.5%	+73.0%	+26.7%

The declining proportion of managers and labourers is a reflection of the decline of employment in agricultural industries which declined nationally by 11% in the ten years to 1996.

5.1.7 Change and the impact of remoteness and accessibility

Analysis of ABS data shown in Table 24 reveals that accessibility has a significant impact on changes that have occurred for:

- Employment in construction, accommodation / cafes / restaurants and cultural / recreational services, such that with increases in ARIA (remoteness) there is an increased probability of reduced employment.
- Undergraduate / associate diploma qualifications, such that with increasing remoteness there is an increased probability that proportion of population with these qualifications, will have declined.
- Manager / administrator and associate professional occupations, such that with increasing remoteness there is an increased probability that the proportion of the population with these occupations will have declined.

Remoteness is not a factor that affects changes in attendance at educational institutions across the sites.

Other factors contribute to the observed trends. For example, employment in the construction industry is also affected by growth or decline of the population within a site. Table 8 shows how employment growth in the construction industry is affected by both population changes and remoteness.

Table 8 – Influence of population change and remoteness on changes in employment in construction industry

Population growth / decline	ARIA index		Grand Total
	0-3.5	>3.5	
Declining	+13.6%	-43.2%	-26.5%
Growing	+50.1%	-19.5%	+20.6%
Grand Total	+41.0%	-31.9%	+2.0%

5.1.8 Change and cultural diversity

ABS Census data records levels of indigenous and overseas born populations. For the purpose of this discussion, a ‘multicultural’ SLA is one where the combined total of both these groups exceeds 20 percent of the total population in 1996. Table 24 shows site SLAs that meet this criterion. On this basis an analysis of ABS Census data reveals the significant impact of cultural diversity for:

- Employment in government administration and defence, such that with increases in diversity there is an increased probability of increasing employment. No other factor affects this significantly.
- Higher degree and undergraduate diploma qualifications, such that with increasing diversity there is an increased probability that proportion of population with these qualifications, will have increased.

Degree of rurality is a factor that also contributes to the qualification changes, but negatively. Table 9 shows the impact of rurality and diversity on changes in diploma and associate diploma qualification levels.

Table 9 - Impact of cultural diversity and rurality on changes in diploma and associate diploma qualifications

Cultural diversity	Change in undergraduate diploma, associate diploma qualifications		
	Rural	Urban	Grand Total
Monocultural	50.6%	73.6%	59.7%
Multicultural	41.3%	172.1%	119.8%
Grand Total	48.2%	117.9%	80.6%

Cultural diversity is not a factor that affects changes in attendance at educational institutions or occupations across the sites.

5.1.9 Change and population growth

It might be expected that population growth has a direct impact on a number of changes. The ABS data shows for the sites, this is not always the case. In some cases the statistical significance of other factors such as rurality is greater than that of population growth. Table 24 shows the site SLAs that are designated growing or declining on the basis of population changes in the ten years to 1996.

On this basis an analysis of ABS Census data reveals the significant impact of population growth for:

- Employment in construction, accommodation / cafes / restaurants, transport / storage and cultural / recreational services, such that with increases in population there is an increased probability of increasing employment. Accessibility also affects all but the transport / storage category. Rurality also affects the accommodation / cafes and restaurants category.
- Higher degree, bachelor degree and basic vocational qualifications, such that with increasing population there is an increased probability that proportion of population with these qualifications, will have increased. No other factors affect these changes.

- Manager / administrator, associate professional, advanced and intermediate clerical sales and service workers, and intermediate production and transport worker occupations, such that with increasing population there is an increased probability that the proportion of the population with these occupations will have increased. Accessibility also contributes to changes for managers / administrators and associate professionals.
- Attendance at infant / primary, secondary and TAFE institutions, such that with increasing population there is an increased probability that attendance will have increased. No other factors contribute significantly to these changes.

The combined effect of several factors is demonstrated in Table 10, which shows the effect of population growth, rurality and accessibility on growth in employment.

Table 10 - impact of accessibility, population growth and rurality on employment in accommodation, cafes and restaurant industry group

Growth of employment in accommodation, cafes and restaurants		ARIA		Grand Total
		0-3.5	>3.5	
Decline/grow	Rural/urban	0-3.5	>3.5	Grand Total
Declining	Rural	0.0%	-4.3%	-3.9%
	Urban	+33.3%	-2.7%	+21.3%
Declining Total		+26.7%	-4.1%	+5.0%
Growing	Rural	+69.0%	+46.2%	+53.8%
	Urban	+143.9%	+46.0%	+122.9%
Growing Total		+123.9%	+46.1%	+91.0%
Grand Total		+99.6%	+19.9%	+57.0%

5.2 Change drivers

5.2.1 Federal Government policies

Regional Australia policy

Mention has already been made of Federal Government initiatives being implemented as a result of the Regional Australia Summit⁴. These initiatives will undoubtedly affect the case study sites as funding finds its way to the regions. A full list of these of these initiatives is available from the DOTRS website⁵. Those under the heading of education and training are⁶:

- Assistance for Isolated Children
- Country Areas Programme
- Framework for Open Learning Programme
- Green Corps
- Higher Education Research and Research Training
- Higher Education Teaching and Learning
- Indigenous Education Policy
- Job Placement, Employment and Training
- New Apprenticeships
- Rural Youth Information Service
- Skill Development and Transition Support
- Supporting Our Schools
- Vocational Education and Training Funding

Those under the heading of employment are⁷:

- Area Consultative Committees
- Employment Entitlements Support Scheme
- Employment Services - Job Network; Work for the Dole; Return to Work
- Indigenous Employment Policy
- Regional Programmes including the Regional Assistance Programme; Dairy Regional Assistance Programme
- Small Business Enterprise Culture Programme and Small Business Incubator Programme

References to many of these initiatives are made in the case studies. There are several examples in the case studies of organisations gaining access to funds available through these programs.

It is a sign of the importance of regional issues to the Federal Government that the Minister for Transport and Regional Services released the “Stronger Regions –

⁴ <http://www.dotrs.gov.au/regional/summit/index.htm>

⁵ <http://www.dotrs.gov.au/regional/statement/consolidation/initiatives.htm>

⁶ details available from
http://www.dotrs.gov.au/regional/statement/consolidation/education_improving.htm

⁷ http://www.dotrs.gov.au/regional/statement/consolidation/employment_economic.htm

Stronger Australia” statement in August 2001. This statement details the basis for the Federal Government’s response to the Regional Australia Summit⁸. The Minister outlined the Government’s objectives:

The Liberal-National Government has a vision of renewed, strong, positive and respected regional communities. To realise that vision we will work with those communities to:

strengthen regional economic and social opportunities;

sustain our productive natural resources and environment;

deliver better regional services; and

adjust to economic, technological and government induced change.

Competition policy

Whilst competition policy, largely driven by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission⁹ (ACCC), does not specifically target particular rural or regional Australian areas, the impact of competition policy in areas where there are limited markets, cannot be ignored. For example competitive tendering policies in small regional councils may draw resources out of the community for the sake of cost savings.

Mutual obligation

While the principle of mutual obligation is not directed to regional Australia, it does have implications for both delivery of VET and for the acceptance of VET as a valid means of individuals meeting mutual obligation requirements.¹⁰ VET is no longer the sole domain of employers – it now extends to non-profit groups and voluntary groups within communities and this has a significant impact on the types of programs that can be funded and delivered.

New Tax System

The introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and the ‘New Tax System’ has driven change and has affected VET and training in general. It has created a demand for training particularly for computer related accounting and management systems. This is perhaps more noticeable in regional areas that tend to be culturally conservative and less adaptable to this kind of change.

In some instances, the imposition of GST on training services may have a negative impact on demand for training in general, given that it adds cost to the end user. While for many formal education courses run through schools and TAFE, GST is not added, there is a significant administration cost associated with management of the New Tax System, which was previously absent. Therefore it is inevitable that costs for some training services have risen as a result of the GST.

⁸ <http://www.dotrs.gov.au/regional/statement/contents.htm>

⁹ <http://www.accc.gov.au>

¹⁰ <http://www.aph.gov.au/library/intguide/sp/dole.htm>

5.2.2 State Government policies

Cultural diversity

Three sites in particular are affected by cultural diversity. Penrith and Cairns have relatively high proportion of migrants and Katherine has a high proportion of Indigenous people in the population. The following examples illustrate how state governments are responding to the issue of cultural diversity.

In 1998 the NSW State Government release its “Education and training in culturally diverse New South Wales” policy.¹¹ Given the cultural diversity of particularly the Penrith region, this may have some influence on training in the site. Central to the rationale for this policy is the Government’s belief that education and training plays an important part in a multicultural society.

The role of education and training is vital in harnessing and developing the advantages of this cultural diversity. Education must assist students to develop cross-cultural understandings and learn about their civic rights and responsibilities in a pluralist democratic society at the same time as they are acquiring the knowledge and skills needed for their future education and employment. In addition, competency in English, the national language, is essential for effective participation in Australian society.

A key plank of the policy is the development of practices that promote inclusiveness and acceptance of all Australians.

Multicultural education is concerned with developing programs and practices that equip all students with the knowledge, skills and values needed to participate successfully in a culturally diverse society. It also recognises the key role cultural and linguistic diversity plays in shaping the education and training opportunities and outcomes of students from language backgrounds other than English.

Multicultural Affairs Queensland (MAQ) is the State Government body in Queensland that coordinates policy and initiatives as they relate to cultural diversity. A number of activities undertaken by MAQ directly affect VET delivery at the Cairns site:

the Local Area Multicultural Partnership program (LAMP) - a partnership strategy between State and Local Governments to promote positive community relations at the local level;

the Multicultural Assistance Program - a grants program for community projects which support communities and promote understanding and acceptance of multiculturalism, reduce prejudice and foster community participation and which impact across communities;

cross-cultural training to State Government departments and special target groups;

coordination of the Register of Multicultural Advisers (ROMA) aimed at bringing cultural diversity issues into the decisions of Government boards and committees.¹²

In the Northern Territory the Office of Aboriginal Development is responsible for Indigenous affairs. It is responsible for a number of social, economic and legal activities relating to Indigenous people in the Northern Territory.

¹¹ <http://www.det.nsw.gov.au/papers/lcds/>

¹² <http://www.premiers.qld.gov.au/about/maq/html/about/about.htm>

5.2.3 Local / regional policy initiatives

Almost all sites included examples of policy initiatives that were driven by some form of state / regional partnership. The details of these initiatives are included in the case studies.

5.2.4 Global

Globalisation

The impact of globalisation on rural and regional Australia has been discussed in the Literature review (see **Error! Reference source not found.**, page **Error! Bookmark not defined.**). On a site by site basis, the impact is varied, with some sites experiencing growth because of their size and location (eg Penrith and Cairns) and others in decline because of the negative impact of competitive pressures placed on them because of factors directly linked to globalisation.

Commodity prices

It is widely acknowledged that commodity prices have adversely affected rural communities across Australia. Respondents from several case studies commented on the adverse impact of softening commodity prices. This was particularly true of Katanning, Orbost and Kerang. The perception is confirmed by the Chairman of the Productivity Commission¹³:

But if one had to point to a single, summary indicator of the pressures for change in rural Australia, it would surely be the terms of trade. Many rural industries depend on world markets and the prices they bring. Over the last four decades, world prices for many agricultural commodities have declined significantly in real terms, whereas the prices farmers pay for their inputs have been rising. The upshot has been that farmers' terms of trade have declined over this period by more than 60 per cent. And this has been imposed on the usual rural vagaries of weather and pests.

GM Foods

An emerging issue in the agricultural industry is the issue of genetically modified foods. There are signs that many regions are seeking to establish 'GM free' zones despite the obvious pressure to take up the advantages of biotechnological advances, which may result in reduced dependence on chemicals and increased yields. This is a direct concern to wheat growers in the Eyre Peninsula¹⁴.

Tariffs

Global or international changes to the way countries respond to trade issues has a direct effect on rural communities that are primarily based on sale of commodities. A number of the case study sites are directly affected by these changes. Port Lincoln, Katanning, Orbost, Kerang and Gayndah are all significantly affected because of their dependence on rural income. Pressures on successive Australian governments to remove tariffs and import restrictions have opened the way for competition within the Australian market, never previously seen. The direct consequence of this change has been a trend to increase the efficiency of primary production units. This has come about through increasing farm size and investment in capital equipment that reduces

¹³ <http://www.pc.gov.au/research/speeches/cs20001109/cs20001109.pdf>

¹⁴ <http://www.abc.net.au/rural/news/stories/s119565.htm>

labour requirements. The result is reflected in ABS data that clearly demonstrate declines in employment in rural industry.

Increased competitiveness is not all bad news for rural producers because ultimately those that survive will have an advantage over primary producers that are forced to survive on government subsidies in other countries.

Technology and communication

The issue of technology is discussed at length in the Literature Review (see page 31) One of the ways in which regions and localities become integrated in international networks is made possible through the rise in popularity of information networks and the move toward an information economy. Use of information networks to keep up with global trends is also now a key factor in all industries, including those involved with primary production (Kerr, Chaseling & Cowan 1998). Kerr, Chaseling and Cowan (1998), for example, identify the ways in which access to information technology through the use of computers is changing the level of decision-making support available to farmers, because they can use these technologies to assess changes in global trends and their potential impact on their businesses.

The impact of advances in global communication and information technology has both positive and negative effects for small communities like those in the study sites such as Port Lincoln, Orbost, Gayndah, Kerang, Katanning and Katherine. On the one hand it provides access to global information that would previously only have been available in capital cities, yet on the other it radically affects the way people are expected to do business. Information technology and communication technology in this region, like many others throughout Australia has opened up opportunities for online learning and enabled small businesses to market directly to the world. There are several examples of local communities establishing 'portals' that are designed to provide easy access to products and services available in the regional areas. However, many people are rebelling against the changes, preferring to stay with more conventional means of communication and marketing.

5.2.5 Environmental

Environmental issues affect communities in a number of ways. Some would see that they inhibit change and prevent economic development. In some cases environmental issues offer people choices to determine the future shape of their communities. Some of these issues can be divisive. Other issues demand an active response. These issues can bring communities together to produce innovative and creative solutions to problems that affect the economic viability of industries in a region.

Salinity

Salinity is a significant environmental issue at some of the rural sites. It is one of the environmental issues that demands a solution and has resulted in growing concerns about losses in productivity in many rural regions around Australia. The sites affected by salinity were Kerang, Port Lincoln and Katanning. In many cases this issue is seen as a cost issue rather than an environmental issue because of the way that it affects primary producer profitability. There has been much research undertaken to discover the extent of, and to determine the best way of managing the problem. There is also evidence of effective strategies being adopted to address the causes.

Forests

Forestry was identified as an issue of concern to many respondents at the Orbost site. Many of the concerns relate to the Regional Forests agreement, which was designed to provide a balance between environmental concerns and sustainable development, and secure jobs in forestry and related industries. The experience at Orbost suggests that environmental concerns have not been satisfied and jobs continue to be lost in the forestry industries.

Mining

Mining issues were not often raised in relation to environmental concerns in many of the case studies. It was more often raised in relation to job security (Penrith, Broken Hill and Katherine). However, environmental issues associated with mining are a concern nationally and are driving the way the industry operates in many regional areas.

Development – conservation

Development versus conservation issues were raised as issues of concern in Penrith, Orbost and Cairns. The issues generally relate to the development of tourism or other industries that change the heritage or ecological value of the environment, against the innate value of the environment as it is.

Water management

Water management was a significant issue at the Kerang and Orbost sites. The sites compete for the right to access water currently diverted from the Snowy River into the Murray River system.

5.2.6 Work

Casualisation

The impact of casualisation is discussed fully in the Literature Review (see page **Error! Bookmark not defined.**). The trends of casualisation were evident in all the study sites. All sites showed declines in full time work and increases in part time work. These changes were evident in both rural and urban sites.

Outsourcing and contractors

Data about outsourcing and contractors is difficult to obtain because it doesn't relate directly to census information which has been a primary source for this research. However it is likely to be a factor that influences many sites.

Reducing opportunities

While it is true that some sites were experiencing growth (notably Cairns, Katherine, Penrith), most sites were declining. This resulted in reduced employment opportunity and exacerbated the problems of losses in the youth population.

The loss of job opportunities occurred either directly, because people were made redundant and thus unemployed, or indirectly, through families leaving town and/or less income being spent in the town, as the following quote from the Broken Hill site illustrates:

Well I suppose there's, there's been a change of people, the people that have been made redundant, have, some of these people have got up and motivated themselves and got into

business and left town, got actually new—well they've sort of got different lifestyles, now because they haven't got the mines, when they were working in the mines...and you know, excuse the pun, they've got off their bum and sort of had a go. But a lot of other people, virtually just vegetated. So I suppose I've seen a lot of parting of families, a lot of people that have left the [town].

The quote above illustrates the variety of impacts of changes in employment conditions on individuals in a particular town. For some individuals the response to the changing employment environment was involved in a realisation of the need in today's world, for literacy skills, not previously necessary, and for recognised qualifications. The realisation that their years of experience were perceived as inadequate led to disillusionment.

Unfortunately nowadays, you know, unless you've got a thousand pieces of paper, they just don't believe that you can do it. Um, as I said earlier, I've got fifteen years' experience with computers. I'm no slouch when it comes to computers, but because I didn't have the bit of paper that says it. Forget it, you know.

5.2.7 Demographic

Aging population and loss of youth

While in general, across Australia, the population is aging (median ages are rising), the experience of many rural areas is more extreme. There are a few reasons for this.

Young people tend to leave to pursue educational goals (Kilpatrick, Williamson & Thrush 1997). All of the rural sites experienced losses for this reason and to some extent the remote areas of non-rural sites also experienced losses.

Some areas of regional Australia are attractive as retirement centres. Where there is net inward migration among retired age groups the effect will be to increase the median of the population. This phenomenon was evident in parts of the Orbost, Port Lincoln and Broken Hill sites.

Another factor which increases median ages in populations is a decrease in mortality rates among children and increases in longevity. This is particularly evident at the Katherine site.

5.2.8 Cultural

Cultural issues have arisen as issues of significance in recent years. A number of factors have led to this. While there is an apparent fear of invasion through immigration emerging among the general populace of Australia, the rhetoric about multiculturalism from Governments is consistent: multiculturalism is good for Australia and there are benefits for all Australians in a wide acceptance of cultural diversity. The forward to a NSW Department of Education and Training document could well be representative of the prevailing political view¹⁵:

Multiculturalism is vital for Australia; it is what makes our cultural diversity work for all of us. Multiculturalism binds us together because it fosters cultural identity and confidence. It supports social cohesion and unity, upholds social justice and promotes our

¹⁵ NSW Department of Education and Training, 1998. *Learning in a Culturally Diverse Society - The multicultural education and training policy for New South Wales*.

diverse talents and ideas and therefore our productivity. Confidence, unity, fairness and productivity are all essential to the building of a better and prosperous future.

The acceptance of a multicultural society has a big impact for provision of VET. The NSW Department of Education and Training recognises this and neatly summarises the issues:

The role of education and training is vital in harnessing and developing the advantages of this cultural diversity. Education must assist students to develop cross-cultural understandings and learn about their civic rights and responsibilities in a pluralist democratic society at the same time as they are acquiring the knowledge and skills needed for their future education and employment. In addition, competency in English, the national language, is essential for effective participation in Australian society.

These issues were evident at sites where cultural diversity was notable (Cairns, Katherine). In other sites there were pockets of cultural diversity (Penrith, Katanning, and Port Lincoln) that affected VET in one way or another. The Cairns and Katherine sites offer interesting comparisons in that they show the difference between a socially cohesive approach to multiculturalism and a socially divisive approach. The outcomes of VET in Cairns were found to be far more effective across a range of factors and community needs than in Katherine.

5.2.9 Emerging industries

Information Technology

Like all change, changes in technology can have both positive and negative outcomes. On the positive side, communications technologies enable regional Australia to access the world, and for the world beyond the immediate community to access people living in regional Australia. The promise is that, through information technology, regional Australia can become part of a global community. For many residents of regional Australia, this is in fact the case. For example, this change will enable people with access to communications technologies to undertake training.

I: Why do you reckon the future is optimistic there?

R: Well the town is going ahead, we're planning a Tele centre for the area and once that gets here we will be actually be able to have online courses from universities or whatever, so we can access all these sorts of things.

I: So the Tele centre is pretty important for the future?

R: Yes.

The above quotation illustrates how information technology can be used for skills acquisition and to increase knowledge. Technological change will also enable others to live and work where they choose. From this perspective, 'place' is no longer important. This is especially critical when access to information technology enables people to gain employment, as the following respondent comments:

I think regional Australia, one of the main issues is jobs and the creation of jobs and the maintenance of those jobs...we, within current information and new information technology is coming to the ground that country people now are no longer required to travel, that they can actually be working at a remote location from their own home.

While Information Technology offers much for regional Australia the reality for many people living in rural and isolated communities (some of which are represented in this research) is that it is out of reach. There are three reasons for this:

- Information Technology infrastructure in many rural areas is well below the standard required for effective use of the medium.
- Where Internet technology is available, a high proportion of the population don't know how to use it.
- The cost of access for many people in rural Australia acts as a barrier.

Mitigating against this is the push by many state governments to develop community based public access centres. While the name for such centres is different in each state the concept is the same and the funding source (Networking the Nation plus an equivalent pool of State funds) is more or less the same. These centres are playing a role in the development and use of Information Technology in regional areas.

The Launceston site had the most advanced Information Technology infrastructure of all the sites with good support for communication and technology throughout the site. Almost all sites had emerging examples of community based access centres. The worst examples of Information Technology infrastructure were found in rural New South Wales and Queensland.

Tourism

In many of the study sites, tourism was emerging as an important new industry. Penrith, Cairns, Broken Hill, Orbost, Port Lincoln, Katherine and Launceston all boasted attractions that contributed to growth of the local economy.

Viticulture

Viticulture is a relatively small segment within the range of agricultural industries. It emerged as an important industry particularly in Launceston and to a lesser extent in Gayndah.

Aquaculture

Aquaculture incorporates fishing as well as number of new and emerging industries, such as sea-horse farming. Aquaculture was of significance in both Launceston and Port Lincoln.

The significance of emerging industries for VET is that in many cases they require specialist skills. The increasing demand for quality products creates a need for special skills that VET is capable of supplying.

5.3 Summary of research results

This section summarises the main features of configurations observed from the research. For the purpose of analysis the following categorisations will be used (where relevant) to describe the sites: rural or non-rural, multicultural or mono-cultural, growing and declining. These have been described earlier (see Typologies, page 77).

5.3.1 Sample characteristics

Table 11 shows the profile of interviewees used in 1999 and 2000, including those followed up in telephone surveys during 2000. Table 12 shows the profile of respondents for the questionnaire used in 1999 and 2000. Where there are differences it is because not all interviewees completed questionnaires and not all questionnaire respondents completed structured interviews.

Table 11 - Profile of respondents for structured interviews

Structured interviews	1999	2000	Follow-up interviews from 1999
Training provider	102	39	54
Employer	75	35	28
Organisation representative	72	30	38
Community member	139	42	62
Blank tapes	5		
Incorrect / no ID	2		1
Total	395	146	183

Table 12 - Profile of respondents for questionnaire

Questionnaires	1999	2000	Total
Training provider	78	42	120
Employer	58	41	99
Organisation representative	69	34	103
Community member	174	62	236
Not recorded	12		12
Total	391	179	570

5.3.2 Configuration features

Configuration types

Some of the analysis used in the presentation of results in the following sections is based on the division of sites into three categories:

- Rural / non-rural
- Culturally diverse / mainly monocultural
- Declining or growing

The designation of sites into categories is based on the breakdown shown in Table 24, which is in turn based on ABS 1996 Census information. The site information is summarised in Table 13.

Table 13 – Site types

Site name	Rural / Non rural	Cultural diversity	Growing / declining
Cairns	Non rural	Multicultural	Growing
Broken Hill	Rural	Monocultural	Declining
Orbost	Rural	Monocultural	Growing
Gayndah	Rural	Monocultural	Declining
Port Lincoln	Rural	Monocultural	Declining
Katanning	Rural	Monocultural	Declining
Launceston	Non rural	Monocultural	Growing
Katherine	Rural	Multicultural	Growing
Kerang	Rural	Monocultural	Declining
Penrith	Non rural	Monocultural	Growing

Infrastructure

Table 14 summarises educational infrastructure identified at the sites, extracted from the detail of the case studies. This table clearly demonstrates the reducing infrastructure at sites with smaller populations. It also suggests that with increasing rurality, resources become more of an issue. The results shown in Table 19, which shows that in rural sites, respondents are more likely to be dissatisfied with the availability and quality of training in their communities.

Provider types

Table 15 summarises the range of provider types available across all sites. Data is extracted from the case studies. Apart from an obvious trend for reduced availability with increasing rurality, two features stand out from this summary. The table shows a general lack of private providers in rural sites. It also shows the significance of community groups as providers across both mainly rural and mainly urban sites.

In the absence of the full range of provider options in rural communities, the data would suggest that the role of community groups as providers becomes more important. This is confirmed by perception responses shown in Table 19, which indicate that rural respondents are more likely to know their social networks and are more likely to be interested in learning about citizenship issues.

Table 14 – Summary of infrastructure resources identified at the study sites

Infrastructure identified	Mainly urban sites			Mainly rural sites						
	Penrith	Cairns	Launceston	Orbost	Port Lincoln	Broken Hill	Kerang	Katherine	Katanning	Gayndah
High Schools	11	3	7	2	1	2	1	1	1	1
TAFE campuses / annexes	4	2	7	3	2	1	1	2	4	1
Public / Primary Area School / P-12 / District high	55	14	21	4	2	6	4	5	4	1
Non-government schools	22	13	5	2	2	1	2	1	2	0
Universities / annexes	2	1	2	0	1	1	0	2	1	0
Other facilities		Australian College of Tropical Agriculture, Lorraine Martin College, Cairns Business College	Forestry training centre	Forestech, SEAMEC	Environmental Science Centre	School of the air, Community learning centre	Learning Centre	Katherine School of the Air	Agricultural School	
Online Access	0	1	8	3	0	0	0	0	4	1
Separate ACE facilities	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Senior secondary	0	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 15 – Summary of availability of provider types observed at all sites

	Mainly urban sites			Mainly rural sites						
	Penrith	Cairns	Launceston	Orbost	Port Lincoln	Broken Hill	Kerang	Katherine	Katanning	Gayndah
TAFE	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
VET in Schools	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Private providers	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Community groups	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Job Network / NAC / employment service provider	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Community development groups / chambers of commerce	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Employers including councils	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
ACE	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Online learning	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

Key

- All communities of the site have this type of provider
- Half or more communities of the site have this type of provider
- One community of the site has this type of provider
- No communities of the site have this type of provider

Programs

Program content at each site differed significantly. Because of the emphasis on meeting employment and industry needs at each site, programs tended to reflect these needs. The development of programs tended to be influenced by a few key factors:

- The historical development of industry in the area played a major role at a number of sites.(eg Port Lincoln, Kerang)
- The historical development of training providers (private and public) in the area played a role in the type of training provided. (eg Katanning, Orbost, Kerang, Penrith)
- The direction or vision provided by enabling leaders or organisations was evident at a few sites (eg Launceston and Cairns).
- In some sites policy directions at a state or institutional level drove program content (eg Launceston and Katherine).
- Availability of funding for targeted groups was a key issue that allowed the development of program content (eg Broken Hill, Cairns).

All of these factors were evident to some degree across all sites, but the flavour of VET at each site is quite distinct and very much dependent on the local or regional context.

Modes of delivery

Modes of delivery at each site were quite different, consistent with the array of program types described above. However, some observations can be made of the results from all sites:

- Emphasis on certain modes of delivery was to some extent driven by providers and their willingness to experiment with different forms of training.
- Provider preferences were to some extent directed by their perceptions of the learning styles and needs of their clients (employers and trainees).
- Provider preferences were also constrained by their available infrastructure. For example TAFE institutes and campuses with extensive facilities tended to depend on these resources more than Group Training Companies or employment service providers, who tended to rely more on flexible training packages, or who utilised the resources of others.
- Modes of delivery were also directed to some extent by cultural considerations. For example in Indigenous areas, the needs of a particular community often determined how and where a program was delivered.
- Use of Information Technology for flexible delivery was dependent on a number of factors: the availability of infrastructure in a region, the readiness of potential trainees to accept computer technology, and the willingness of the providers to deliver or adapt delivery to use technology for training.
- The term ‘flexible delivery’ was generally well understood by providers, less understood by employers and least understood by trainees or community members.

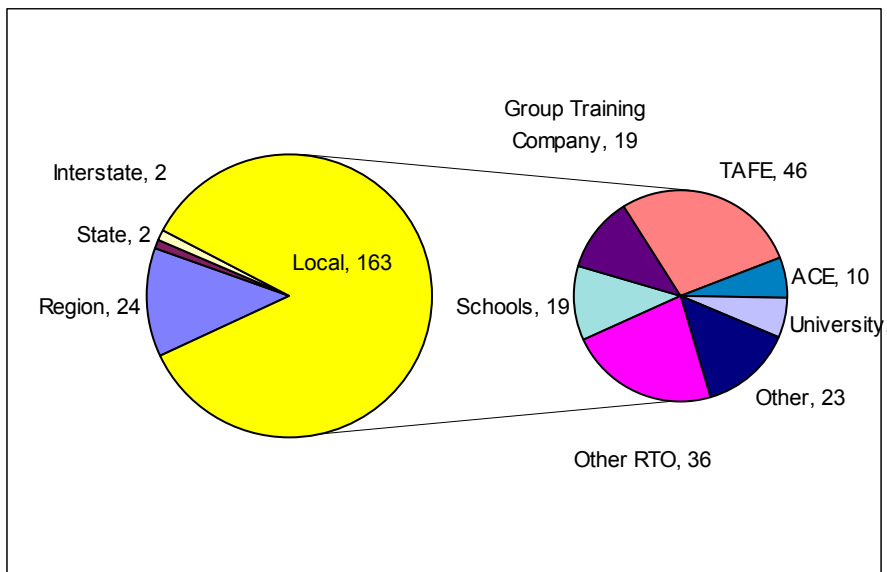
Partnerships and collaboration

The types of partnerships demonstrated at the sites are detailed and discussed at length in the February 2001 report (pp 127-131). Examples were given from all sites. These were summarised as:

- Community collaboratives responding to adversity
- Collaborations based on cultural association
- Enterprise driven partnerships
- Natural resource management and community-led multi-sectoral collaborations
- Policy driven collaborations
- Provider driven collaborations
- Skills development partnerships for industry

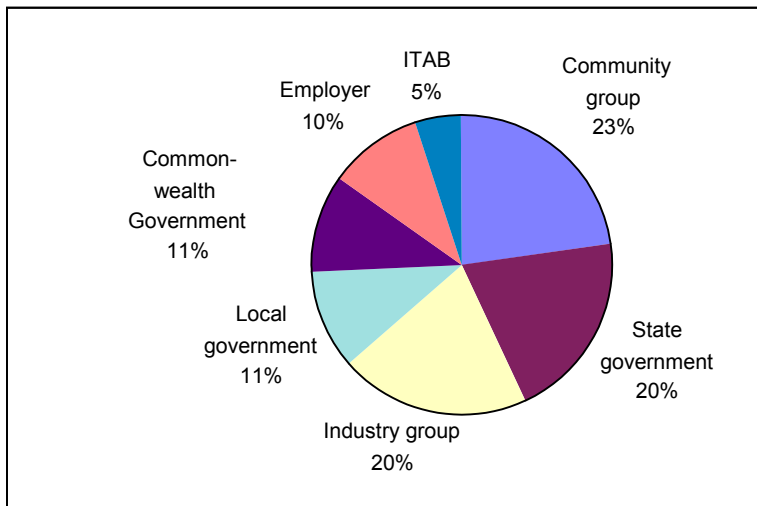
The provider partnerships were predominantly locally based. Figure 6 shows the breakdown of the types of partnerships with details of the providers involved in local partnerships. The data is taken from 2000 telephone survey interviews from the seven 1999 sites. The chart shows that TAFE was the main local provider involved.

Figure 6 - Analysis of provider partnerships (2000 telephone interviews)



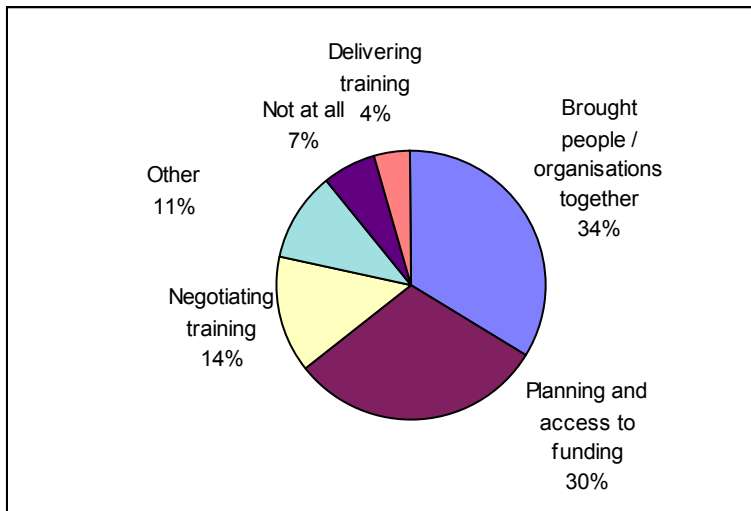
Other partners involved in collaborations were evenly spread between community groups, state government bodies and industry groups. Figure 7 shows that 63% of those organisations involved fell into one of these three categories.

Figure 7 – Analysis of other groups involved in partnerships - 2000 telephone interviews (n=158)



The 2000 telephone interview data shows that partnerships have a role to play in managing change within communities (see Figure 8). While it may be expected that partnerships bring people and organisations together (34% of respondents), of significance is the way that partnerships are used to plan training and gain access to funding (30% of respondents).

Figure 8 – How partnerships help communities manage change - 2000 telephone interviews (n=92)



Given that planning and funding to meet community needs is a factor that contributes to the effectiveness of VET at a site (CRLRA 2001), these data suggest that effective partnerships are integral in the processes required by communities to manage change. The sites where interview data suggested that partnerships were most effective for this purpose were:

- Broken Hill – where high levels of cooperation were achieved between providers to attract funding in the face of population decline and a changing employment environment.
- Cairns – where strategic partnerships between providers and other organisations was effective in facilitating new training initiatives especially among migrants.

- Katanning – where community driven partnerships tightly integrated training and employment outcomes in a thin market.
- Katherine – where providers joined to engage in strategic planning, overcoming in part the difficulties of continual policy and structural changes within the VET sector.

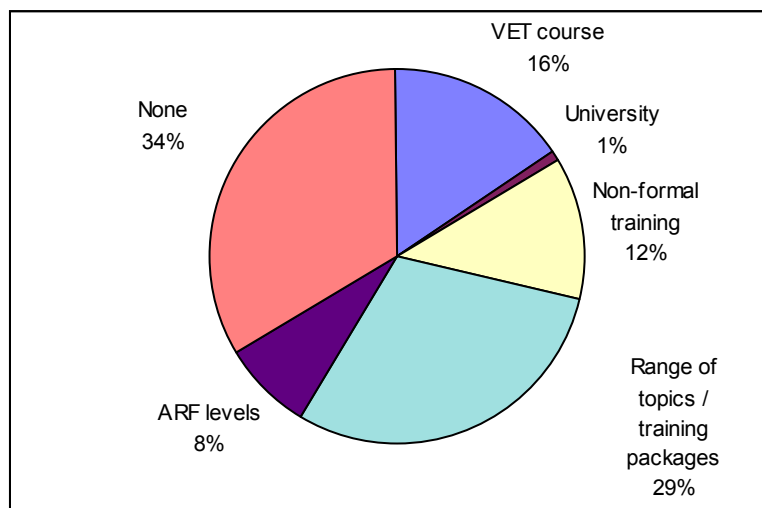
Configurations and change

Change issues affecting each site are detailed in each case study. Change issues confronting rural and regional Australia are outlined in the February 2001 report. A review of literature relating to change issues is provided in the January 2000 report. Changes to VET within the sites are discussed in detail in the September 2000 report.

The results presented in this section draw on the findings of the case studies and use supporting data, particularly from the 2000 telephone interviews.

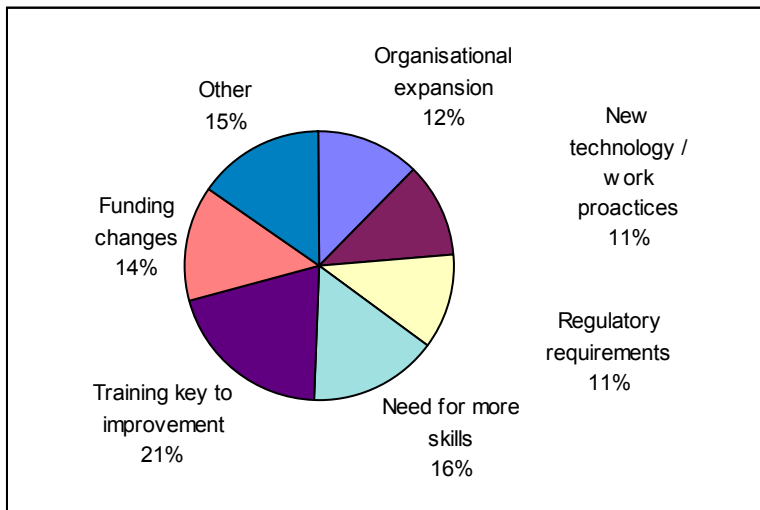
Figure 9 shows that among organisations reporting change, the largest single group reported increases to the range of topics and training packages. Overall 56.2% of respondents reported additions to training.

Figure 9 – Changes to delivery reported by organisations – 2000 telephone survey (n=139)



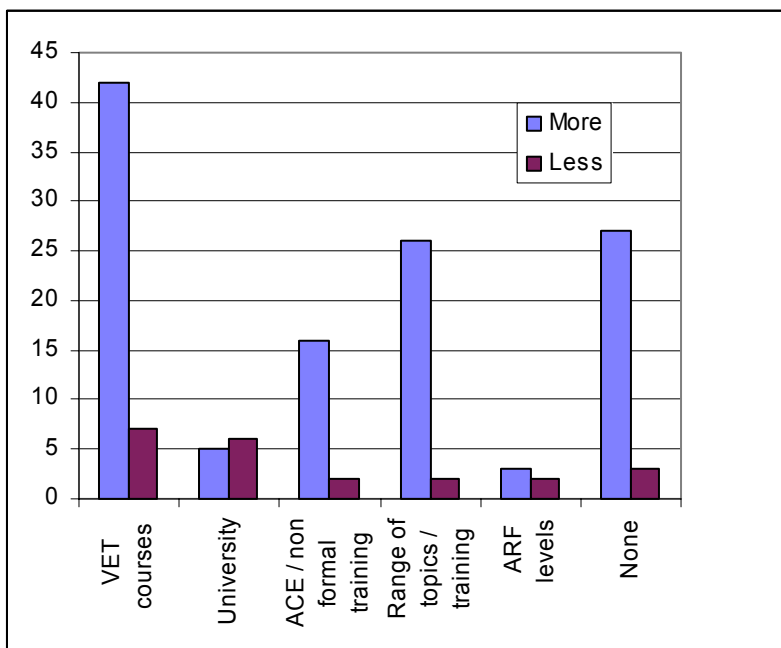
The range of reasons for the changes described is shown in Figure 10. The direct value of training to organisational effectiveness was the main reason given for changes to provision of training. Other reasons given for changes were fairly evenly balanced between funding changes, regulatory requirements, industry demands created by growth, increased skill demands and new technology or work practices.

Figure 10 – Reasons for changes made to training available through organisations (n=105)



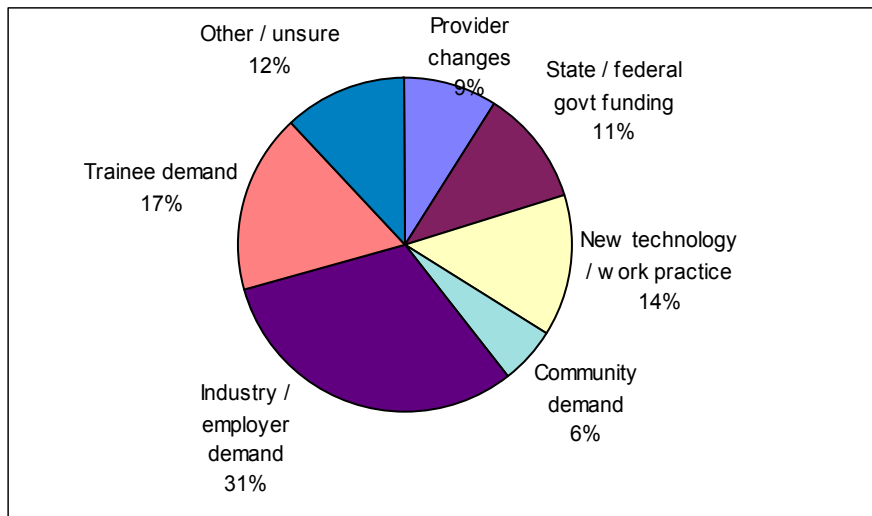
The significant role of VET in providing additional education opportunities in communities is illustrated in Figure 11. By contrast, perceptions of increased opportunities in the tertiary sector are outweighed by reductions.

Figure 11 – Changes in opportunities within communities (n=121)



The drivers for change shown in Figure 12 are consistent with the reasons for change in provision shown in Figure 10. Demand drivers in terms of employer / employee needs made up almost half the reasons given. Interestingly, demand driven by the community made up only 6% of responses, suggesting that the community's influence over training provision is very limited.

Figure 12 - Drivers for changes to training provision available in the community



5.3.3 Community needs

Table 16 summarises priority community needs identified at each of the sites. Plain shading indicates that the needs were identified both in the interview data and through the questionnaire. Additional notations are made where support for a particular need is given by only one of the instruments, or from an external source, such as a State Government report or ABS analysis. The grid shows that generally the priority needs identified by the questionnaire are well triangulated with data from interviews.

Table 16 - Community needs identified in case studies

	Penrith	Cairns	Launceston	Orbost	Port Lincoln	Broken Hill	Kerang	Katherine	Katanning	Gayndah
Health		* ***	**					*		
Education and learning		*								
Employment			*	*					* ***	
Time / leisure										
Command over goods and services			**							
Environment (ecology)		*		*				**		
Physical environment (access)							*			
Social environment			**				*	*		
Personal safety										

* only supported by interviews, ** only supported by questionnaire, *** additional support from external sources

While it is difficult to generalise about these needs because there are specific issues at each site are different, the summary does reveal that most sites had concerns about:

- Physical environment in terms of access to services (9 sites)
- Health (7 sites)
- Employment (6 sites)
- Social environment (6 sites) and
- Command over goods and services (6 sites)

Analysis of the questionnaire data revealed factors that contributed to perceptions of community needs. Table 17 summarises factors that influenced perceptions based on typological groupings (see Table 24) using chi squared tests. Cells marked indicate the group more likely to perceive a need, based on a χ^2 probability of <.01.

The analysis reveals that:

- Rural or remote sites are more likely to report education as a need (compared with urban / accessible sites).
- Sites designated as culturally diverse are more likely to believe that command over goods and services is an issue (compared with largely monocultural sites).
- Sites with low levels of cultural diversity are likely to rate employment and time / leisure needs more highly than those that are culturally diverse.

- Sites that are growing are more likely to believe that command over goods and services is a need (compared to sites with declining population).
- Within sites, youth (under 25) were likely to rate time and leisure needs more highly than older people.
- Older people (over 24) were more likely to believe that employment was an issue compared to youth.
- Respondents in the major centre of a site were more likely to perceive that environmental (ecology), social and personal safety issues were needs compared to respondents in the more remote communities.
- Respondents from the more remote communities were more likely to perceive that issues of time and leisure, education and physical access were important (compared to respondents in the main centre of the site).

Table 17 - Factors influencing perception of community need¹⁶

Community need	Accessibility		Diversity		Population growth		Respondent age		Respondent location ¹⁷	
	Rural / Remote	Non-rural / Accessible	Multi-cultural	Mono-cultural	Growing	Declining	Youth	Older	Centre	Remote
Health										
Education and learning	✓									✓
Employment				✓				✓		
Time / leisure				✓			✓			✓
Command over goods and services			✓		✓					
Environment (ecology)									✓	
Physical environment (access)										✓
Social environment									✓	
Personal safety									✓	

¹⁶ Factors of influence are determined by comparing responses to survey questions used throughout case studies as proxies for community needs, by the factor listed in the table. Significant differences are based on χ^2 tests where $p < .01$. Marked cells indicate which group is more probable to perceive the need. Blank cells indicate no significant difference for that factor.

¹⁷ Respondents in surveys and interviews were assigned a code that related to their location within a site. Location 1 was designated as the site centre (the town used to name the site), location 2 was generally a rural centre (less than 100km from the main centre) and location 3 was generally a more distant and remote centre (greater than 100km from the main centre). In this table, 'remote' refers to locations 2 and 3.

5.3.4 VET and community needs

Table 18 summarises community needs that VET was found to meet at the study sites. The results shown in the table are derived solely from analysis of interviews. Additional shading indicates an overlap between the priorities identified in Table 16 and the needs VET meets. This analysis reveals that:

- Employment needs were addressed at all sites
- Educational needs were found to be met by VET in eight of the sites.
- Social needs (issues of social attachment and cohesion) were addressed in six sites.

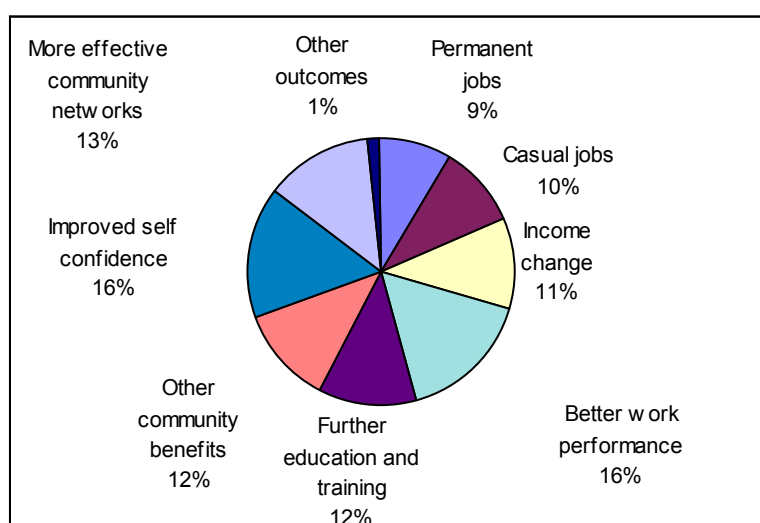
The table shows that the primary focus of VET is (not surprisingly) employment and education. However, the table also shows that VET is capable of meeting an array of other needs in communities and reveals that in almost half of the cases where needs were met, these needs were also identified as priorities by respondents (see Table 16).

Table 18 – Community needs that VET meets

	Penrith	Cairns	Launceston	Orbost	Port Lincoln	Broken Hill	Kerang	Katherine	Katanning	Gayndah
Health										
Education and learning										
Employment										
Time / leisure										
Command over goods and services										
Environment (ecology)										
Physical environment (access)										
Social environment										
Personal safety										

The 2000 telephone surveys of the seven 1999 sites confirms that outcomes of VET are predominantly employment related. Figure 13 shows that 46% of all outcomes identified by respondents were related to employment. Social and education outcomes were ranked second and third respectively.

Figure 13 – Outcomes of VET – 2000 telephone interviews (n=650)



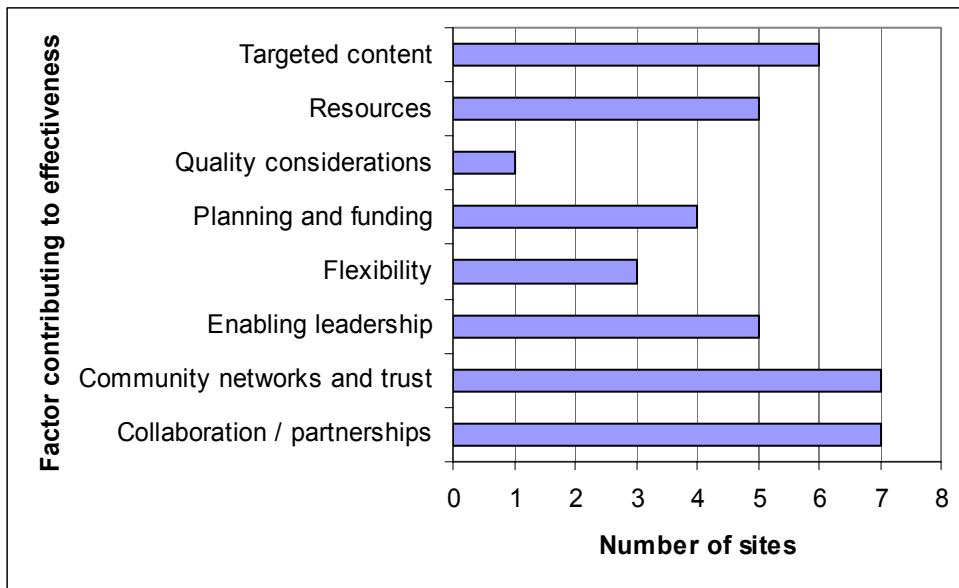
5.3.5 Effectiveness of VET

Each of the case studies showed how a combination of factors contributed to the effectiveness of VET at the site. The factors are distilled from the findings of the 2001 report. These are summarised under headings of:

- Quality considerations – educators, training packages, assessment, access and availability, competition and diversity
- Collaborative relationships and partnerships
- Resources – learner, interactions, human, infrastructure
- Planning and funding to meet local community needs
- Presence of strong community networks and trust
- Content targeted to meet individual needs
- Enabling leadership
- Flexibility

Figure 14 summarises the findings of all the sites, showing the number of sites that demonstrated factors contributing to the effectiveness of VET. The factor described as ‘collaborative relationships and partnerships’ was found to contribute most to effective VET delivery across the sites. Seven of the ten sites were able to show examples of this factor. Seven of the ten sites also demonstrated effectiveness through ‘Presence of strong community networks and trust’ while six sites demonstrated effectiveness through ‘Content targeted to meet individual needs’.

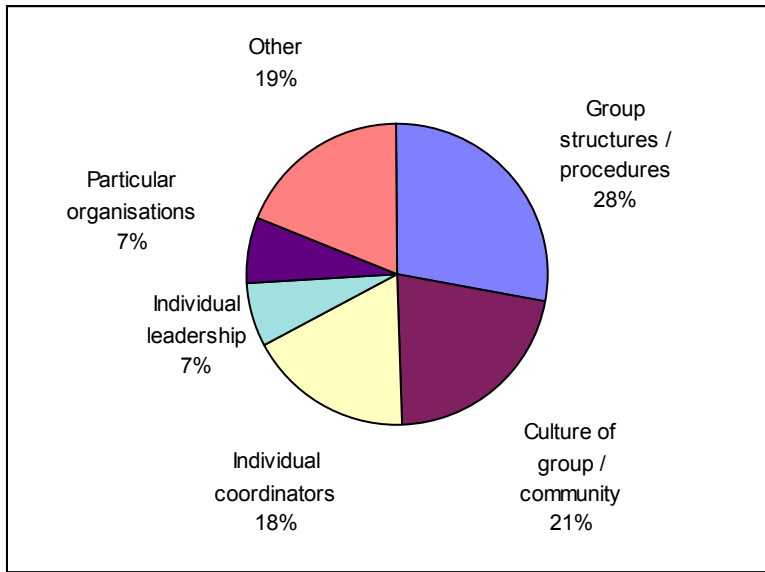
Figure 14 – Summary of factors contributing to effectiveness at all sites



These findings concur with perceptions of providers shown in Figure 15, which shows the importance of group and community culture, structures and procedures as factors that work toward to the success of training arrangements. The data suggests that it is the way that providers work together within the organisation and with the community that contributes most to the organisation's effectiveness in its provision of VET. Partnerships outside the community were also important, contributing to the image of an organisation and by tapping into funding sources not available at a local level. Collaboration and partnerships were expressed in various forms:

- Some partnerships were established at a grass roots level, effecting positive change through new initiatives and by working with local government and community / regional development organisations.
- Other partnerships worked at higher organisational levels. For example peak industry, regional development and state government bodies worked together to effect policy change and to negotiate funding and training at a local or regional level for targeted needs.
- Effectiveness was perceived to be enhanced where providers took an active role in their community, often in fields unrelated to training.
- Established partnerships enable resources, knowledge and ideas to be shared to produce outcomes that would not be possible from an individual stakeholder.
- Partnerships were shown to be useful for planning to meet industry and community needs.
- In remote communities, collaborative networks were useful for overcoming accessibility limitations caused by isolation and remoteness.
- External partnerships (those outside the community) were helpful in gaining recognition for achievements and consequently for attracting additional funding.

Figure 15 – Factors that work toward the success of training arrangements – 2000 telephone interviews (n=154)

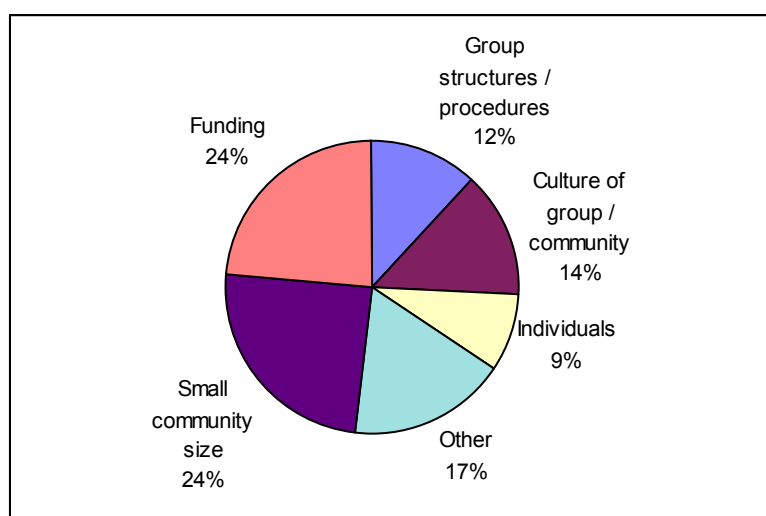


While quality is widely recognised to be a key ingredient for the success of VET, only one site demonstrated a range of quality considerations which could be described as adding to the effectiveness of VET. The range of quality concerns raised by respondents included:

- The educational value of training packages.
- The transportability of training packages.
- The validity of flexible delivery as a means of providing quality training.
- Issues of competition between providers and funding that were tied to competition.
- The lack of range of programs particularly in more remote communities, because of community size.
- The limited opportunity for professional development of training providers because of access and funding restrictions.
- The skill level of trainers and teachers in remote areas because young, inexperienced trainers have to ‘do their time’ in country areas.
- Structural changes at an institutional and policy level which lead to confusion at a local level and reduce morale of staff.

These concerns are reflected in Figure 16, which shows nearly half of the reasons given for failure related to funding and the small size of communities.

Figure 16 – Factors working against success of training arrangements – 2000 telephone interviews (n=93)



In terms of meeting community needs, VET clearly contributes most to the employment and education needs of a community. This is demonstrated in Figure 17, which shows a summary of the needs met by VET across all sites. This is not surprising and reflects the purpose and the primary focus of VET. Employment related outcomes commonly raised by respondents included:

- Increasing employee effectiveness.
- Reducing occupational health and safety risks.
- Helping people make the transition to other industries.
- Enhancing the prospects of employment (especially for youth).
- Providing a pathway for career or professional development.
- Improving quality of service for client groups and customers.
- Improved chances of employment for unemployed people.
- Meeting regulatory obligations.
- Improving participation in workplace decisions.
- Improving competitive edge of enterprises.

Educational outcomes commonly raised by respondents included:

- Improving career path opportunities.
- Personal satisfaction of gaining new skills and knowledge.
- Literacy and numeracy improvements opened up job and further educational opportunities.
- Participation in programs helped people tap into education networks which led to additional educational and career development opportunities.
- VET is seen as a means of keeping youth in remote regions longer, and therefore building the skills base of the community.

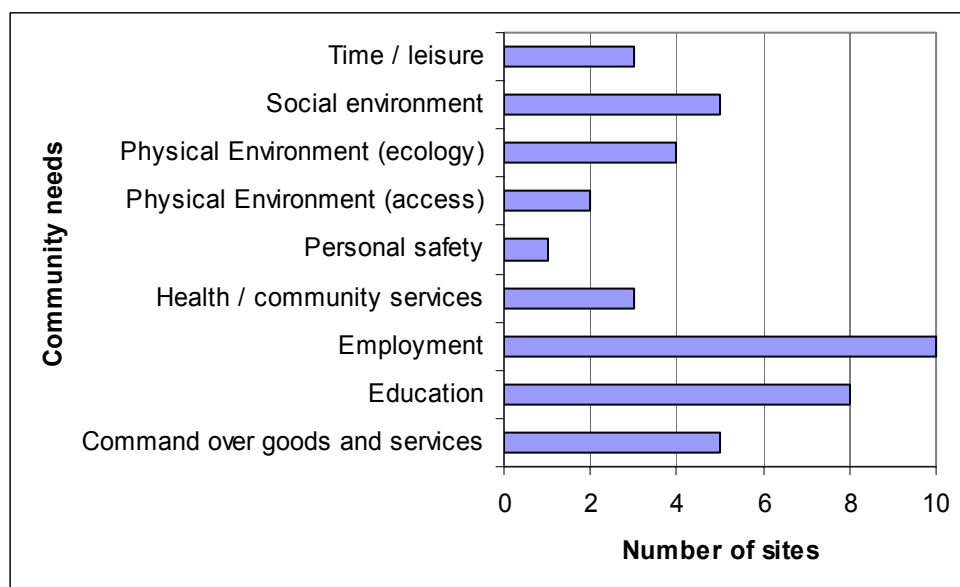
- VET provides valuable infrastructure and learning resources for the communities in which they are based.
- Educational aspirations of participants are increased.
- Participants see value in accreditation.

The third community need met by VET was related to ‘social environment’. This includes issues of social cohesion of groups and social attachment of individuals. Most of the social outcomes described were spin-offs from the educational and employment objectives of the programs. Some of the social outcomes described by respondents included:

- VET programs can be an effective part of a strategy to address social issues such as suicide, domestic violence and racial tension.
- VET programs can form an integral part of community / capacity building projects.
- Participation in programs has the capacity to improve self-esteem, self confidence and consequently improves social attachment.
- Participation in programs was also described as self-empowering and resulted in increasing value in a family and community organisation environment.
- VET has the capacity to break down social divisions that exist in communities because of the bridging links that are built between diverse social groups.

Outcomes of VET were seen to be better where an integrated approach to VET was taken. Community ownership was an important factor that contributed to the success of many programs. Where there was community support, positive social outcomes were almost inevitable.

Figure 17 – Community needs met by VET across all sites.



Employer commitment

Employer commitment emerged from the data as an additional factor that seemed to contribute to the effectiveness of VET at a number of sites (Orbost, Launceston, Gayndah, Katherine). Among the issues raised by respondents were:

- The importance of management commitment to traineeships, not just for the financial incentive, but because of the intrinsic value of workplace training.
- A commitment to training that was driven by recognition of the need to have a customer focussed workforce, determined to deliver quality and service.
- The importance of skilled workplace learning facilitators who could effectively impart their knowledge and skills to trainees.
- The availability of workplace resources so that there are adequate facilities to allow the trainee to learn the skills required.

The role of the employer in the processes of VET are perhaps sometimes underestimated because the employer is seen as a client of the provider and the onus of responsibility falls primarily on the provider to ensure outcomes are met. However, the data here suggests that where employers do have a commitment to training, not just because of the incentives, and do provide appropriate resources, then the outcomes of training will be enhanced.

5.3.6 Perception questions

Table 19 through to Table 23 show detailed results from perception questions used across all sites and divides them into:

- rural / non-rural sites
- central location / remote location with a site
- culturally diverse / monocultural sites
- growing / declining sites
- younger (<25 yrs) / older respondents

Rural / non rural differences

Table 19 shows differences in levels of disagreement to perception questions for rural and non-rural sites. The data reveals that respondents in rural sites were:

- more likely to disagree that quality of vocational education and training is as good as anywhere
- more likely to disagree that there are adequate opportunities for young people in the area
- more likely to disagree that vocational education and training opportunities were adequate
- more likely to want to learn more about safety and citizenship issues
- more likely to know the social networks in their area, and
- more likely to disagree that commercial services were adequate.

In terms of VET, these differences highlight the concern among rural respondents about the availability and quality of training in their areas.

The differences also highlight the concerns of rural respondents about access to services, in this case financial or commercial services.

The data also supports a proposition that social networks in rural communities play a more significant role than in urban areas. This is demonstrated through the perceptions about knowledge of social networks and the desire of rural respondents to learn more about safety and citizenship issues.

Table 19 - Rural / non rural differences in perceptions

No.	Question	Non rural disagree	Rural disagree	P (χ^2)
1	I feel safe both in my home and on the street	12.7%	7.2%	0.039
2	People here look after their environment	33.3%	28.6%	0.267
3	In this community people pull together in difficult times	15.1%	9.8%	0.074
4	Community groups here work well together	15.0%	17.0%	0.560
5	People here usually support activities organised by community groups	14.0%	16.8%	0.410
6	People in this community can get work if they want to	45.8%	40.3%	0.232
7	People in this community can get the sort of work they want	69.7%	79.1%	0.018
8	I think people in this community are accepted regardless of race, age, religion or gender	48.5%	40.9%	0.100
9	You can usually count on government organisations to do the right thing	60.2%	63.2%	0.509
10	In this community there's plenty to get involved in for people my age	33.5%	33.4%	0.979
11	People of my age have the opportunity to get training or further their education	12.3%	20.7%	0.021
12	Most state and federal politicians do their best for the people they represent	50.9%	50.6%	0.954
13	Politicians at a state and federal level listen to our community leaders	58.4%	52.6%	0.205
14	I think that if I had a problem, my views would be listened to by local Government	47.9%	41.9%	0.188
15	Doing training usually gets people into jobs in this community	33.9%	41.3%	0.103
16	The quality of vocational education and training here is as good as anywhere	22.7%	47.3%	<0.001
17	This is a good area to bring up children	11.4%	12.1%	0.824
18	Good opportunities are available for young people in this area	56.0%	69.3%	0.003
19	This is a good area for people to retire to	16.4%	16.8%	0.911
20	Opportunities to learn are important to the quality of life you lead regardless of age	4.3%	6.2%	0.375
21	Vocational education and training services are adequate in this area	32.3%	49.0%	<0.001
22	People make good use of the vocational education and training opportunities available here	32.3%	36.4%	0.354
23	It's who you know not what you know that gets you a job	34.3%	30.2%	0.338
24	I'd like to learn more about health issues concerning my family and me	36.7%	26.0%	0.011
25	I'd like to learn more about safety issues that come up in everyday life	37.3%	26.0%	0.007
26	I'd like to learn more about environmental issues that concern me and the community	25.3%	19.3%	0.115
27	I'd like to learn more about how to deal with government organisations and agencies	33.9%	26.0%	0.057
28	I'd like to learn more about my rights and responsibilities as a citizen/resident of this country	39.6%	28.4%	0.009
29	I know the social networks operating in this area	32.1%	16.8%	<0.001
30	I know the people to talk to if I need information or help with something	12.7%	8.0%	0.085
31	The cost of living is high where I live	43.0%	45.9%	0.535
32	Government services are adequate in this area	52.7%	53.6%	0.849
33	Health services are adequate in this area	47.0%	43.9%	0.507
34	Commercial services (e.g. banks) are adequate in this area	44.2%	31.9%	0.006

Location differences

Table 20 shows differences in perceptions between respondents in the central location of the site and those of the more remote locations. The data reveals that:

- Remote respondents are more likely to agree that people are accepted regardless of age, religion, gender or race.
- Remote respondents are more likely to disagree that there is plenty for them to do in their area.
- Remote respondents are more likely to disagree that there are adequate opportunities for education and training.
- Remote respondents are more likely to disagree that the quality of vocational education and training is as good as anywhere, and that VET services are adequate in their area.
- Remote respondents are more likely to disagree that there are enough opportunities for young people in their area.
- Remote respondents were more likely to want to learn about health and citizenship issues.
- Remote respondents were more likely to disagree that government services were adequate in their area.

Given that the remote centres of the sites are predominantly rural, it is not surprising that there is some agreement between these results and those of Table 19. The implications for VET are the same as for rural areas.

There are some differences between rural sites and remote locations however. For example respondents from remote locations within sites tended to agree more that people would be accepted regardless of gender, race religion or age. The same difference was not observed in rural / urban sites.

Table 20 – Location differences in perceptions

Q	Question	Centre disagree	Remote disagree	P χ^2
1	I feel safe both in my home and on the street	11.4%	4.7%	0.008
2	People here look after their environment	36.5%	19.4%	0.000
3	In this community people pull together in difficult times	12.8%	9.0%	0.169
4	Community groups here work well together	15.7%	17.5%	0.587
5	People here usually support activities organised by community groups	17.3%	13.9%	0.287
6	People in this community can get work if they want to	45.2%	36.8%	0.053
7	People in this community can get the sort of work they want	75.2%	77.9%	0.477
8	I think people in this community are accepted regardless of race, age, religion or gender	50.3%	31.4%	<0.001
9	You can usually count on government organisations to do the right thing	60.7%	64.9%	0.320
10	In this community there's plenty to get involved in for people my age	27.5%	43.1%	<0.001
11	People of my age have the opportunity to get training or further their education	13.9%	25.2%	0.001
12	Most state and federal politicians do their best for the people they represent	49.1%	53.3%	0.339
13	Politicians at a state and federal level listen to our community leaders	52.0%	58.0%	0.170
14	I think that if I had a problem, my views would be listened to by local Government	44.0%	43.2%	0.854
15	Doing training usually gets people into jobs in this community	36.4%	43.6%	0.090
16	The quality of vocational education and training here is as good as anywhere	32.7%	52.2%	<0.001
17	This is a good area to bring up children	9.9%	15.2%	0.059
18	Good opportunities are available for young people in this area	60.5%	73.3%	0.002
19	This is a good area for people to retire to	17.5%	15.2%	0.466
20	Opportunities to learn are important to the quality of life you lead regardless of age	4.9%	6.7%	0.384
21	Vocational education and training services are adequate in this area	37.0%	55.2%	<0.001
22	People make good use of the vocational education and training opportunities available here	33.0%	38.7%	0.177
23	It's who you know not what you know that gets you a job	28.2%	36.6%	0.038
24	I'd like to learn more about health issues concerning my family and me	34.6%	20.7%	<0.001
25	I'd like to learn more about safety issues that come up in everyday life	33.1%	23.5%	0.015
26	I'd like to learn more about environmental issues that concern me and the community	23.7%	17.0%	0.060
27	I'd like to learn more about how to deal with government organisations and agencies	30.1%	25.5%	0.238
28	I'd like to learn more about my rights and responsibilities as a citizen/resident of this country	35.8%	25.1%	0.009
29	I know the social networks operating in this area	24.7%	16.0%	0.016
30	I know the people to talk to if I need information or help with something	9.3%	9.5%	0.931
31	The cost of living is high where I live	47.8%	40.5%	0.091
32	Government services are adequate in this area	47.8%	62.3%	0.001
33	Health services are adequate in this area	41.8%	49.8%	0.068
34	Commercial services (e.g. banks) are adequate in this area	23.7%	55.3%	<0.001

Differences in cultural diversity

Table 21 shows differences in perceptions for respondents in both culturally diverse and essentially monocultural sites. The significant differences are summarised below:

- Respondents from culturally diverse sites were more likely to have higher expectations of employment in terms of availability of employment and the type of employment that was available.
- Respondents from culturally diverse sites were more likely to agree that there was plenty to get involved with and adequate opportunities for training in their community.
- Respondents from monocultural sites were more likely to disagree that there were plenty of opportunities for youth and at the same time more likely to agree that their area was a good place to retire to.
- Respondents from monocultural sites were more likely to be interested in learning about safety issues.
- Respondents from culturally diverse sites were more likely to agree that the cost of living was too high, compared with those from other sites.

Given that there are only two sites designated here as ‘culturally diverse’, a degree of caution should be taken when considering the implications of these findings. The results may say more about the nature of these two sites than it does about cultural diversity in general.

Table 21 – Cultural diversity differences in perceptions

Q	Question	Monocultural	Diverse	P χ^2
1	I feel safe both in my home and on the street	8.5%	10.2%	0.551
2	People here look after their environment	28.1%	36.2%	0.081
3	In this community people pull together in difficult times	11.7%	10.2%	0.621
4	Community groups here work well together	14.8%	21.7%	0.061
5	People here usually support activities organised by community groups	15.1%	19.0%	0.288
6	People in this community can get work if they want to	45.9%	29.2%	0.001
7	People in this community can get the sort of work they want	82.1%	57.0%	<0.001
8	I think people in this community are accepted regardless of race, age, religion or gender	42.0%	46.9%	0.327
9	You can usually count on government organisations to do the right thing	63.7%	57.8%	0.230
10	In this community there's plenty to get involved in for people my age	36.3%	24.0%	0.010
11	People of my age have the opportunity to get training or further their education	21.0%	9.2%	0.002
12	Most state and federal politicians do their best for the people they represent	51.8%	47.3%	0.373
13	Politicians at a state and federal level listen to our community leaders	55.7%	50.0%	0.257
14	I think that if I had a problem, my views would be listened to by local Government	44.2%	41.9%	0.634
15	Doing training usually gets people into jobs in this community	41.4%	31.8%	0.051
16	The quality of vocational education and training here is as good as anywhere	42.0%	33.6%	0.090
17	This is a good area to bring up children	11.8%	12.3%	0.874
18	Good opportunities are available for young people in this area	71.3%	45.7%	<0.001
19	This is a good area for people to retire to	11.3%	34.4%	<0.001
20	Opportunities to learn are important to the quality of life you lead regardless of age	4.7%	8.5%	0.106
21	Vocational education and training services are adequate in this area	44.5%	42.2%	0.648
22	People make good use of the vocational education and training opportunities available here	34.6%	37.2%	0.585
23	It's who you know not what you know that gets you a job	30.4%	34.9%	0.338
24	I'd like to learn more about health issues concerning my family and me	27.5%	34.9%	0.108
25	I'd like to learn more about safety issues that come up in everyday life	26.7%	38.5%	0.010
26	I'd like to learn more about environmental issues that concern me and the community	20.9%	21.7%	0.852
27	I'd like to learn more about how to deal with government organisations and agencies	27.5%	31.0%	0.443
28	I'd like to learn more about my rights and responsibilities as a citizen/resident of this country	29.5%	39.1%	0.041
29	I know the social networks operating in this area	21.5%	21.1%	0.929
30	I know the people to talk to if I need information or help with something	9.9%	7.8%	0.486
31	The cost of living is high where I live	51.5%	23.4%	<0.001
32	Government services are adequate in this area	55.3%	46.9%	0.093
33	Health services are adequate in this area	45.9%	41.4%	0.372
34	Commercial services (e.g. banks) are adequate in this area	35.8%	35.2%	0.897

Declining / growing differences

Table 22 shows differences in perceptions among respondents from declining sites and growing sites. A number of differences in perceptions emerge:

- Respondents from growing sites are more likely to agree that people in their communities can get the sort of work they want (but there was no apparent difference in perceptions about the availability of work generally).
- With regard to training, respondents from growing sites were more likely to agree that the quality and availability of training was adequate in their communities.
- As with cultural diversity, respondents from declining sites were more likely to disagree that there were plenty of opportunities for youth and at the same time more likely to agree that their area was a good place to retire to.
- Again, as with cultural diversity, respondents from growing sites were more likely to agree that the cost of living was too high, compared with those from other sites.

The correspondence with other ‘types’ is effectively due to the fact that all culturally diverse sites are growing and most rural sites are in decline.

Table 22 – Growth differences in perceptions

Q	Question	Declining disagree	Growing disagree	P χ^2
1	I feel safe both in my home and on the street	7.6%	9.9%	0.342
2	People here look after their environment	26.7%	32.9%	0.116
3	In this community people pull together in difficult times	10.3%	12.3%	0.472
4	Community groups here work well together	13.1%	19.3%	0.049
5	People here usually support activities organised by community groups	14.7%	17.2%	0.423
6	People in this community can get work if they want to	42.0%	41.9%	0.975
7	People in this community can get the sort of work they want	82.4%	70.8%	0.001
8	I think people in this community are accepted regardless of race, age, religion or gender	43.6%	42.7%	0.819
9	You can usually count on government organisations to do the right thing	64.5%	60.4%	0.325
10	In this community there's plenty to get involved in for people my age	34.9%	32.2%	0.505
11	People of my age have the opportunity to get training or further their education	22.9%	14.1%	0.008
12	Most state and federal politicians do their best for the people they represent	47.9%	53.2%	0.209
13	Politicians at a state and federal level listen to our community leaders	52.5%	55.9%	0.420
14	I think that if I had a problem, my views would be listened to by local Government	42.2%	44.9%	0.525
15	Doing training usually gets people into jobs in this community	42.1%	36.5%	0.181
16	The quality of vocational education and training here is as good as anywhere	46.2%	34.6%	0.006
17	This is a good area to bring up children	10.9%	12.8%	0.472
18	Good opportunities are available for young people in this area	71.8%	59.7%	0.003
19	This is a good area for people to retire to	9.6%	22.9%	<0.001
20	Opportunities to learn are important to the quality of life you lead regardless of age	3.9%	7.1%	0.094
21	Vocational education and training services are adequate in this area	45.8%	42.3%	0.415
22	People make good use of the vocational education and training opportunities available here	36.7%	33.9%	0.494
23	It's who you know not what you know that gets you a job	29.0%	33.6%	0.253
24	I'd like to learn more about health issues concerning my family and me	24.7%	33.2%	0.028
25	I'd like to learn more about safety issues that come up in everyday life	24.3%	33.9%	0.014
26	I'd like to learn more about environmental issues that concern me and the community	21.3%	20.9%	0.915
27	I'd like to learn more about how to deal with government organisations and agencies	27.4%	29.2%	0.650
28	I'd like to learn more about my rights and responsibilities as a citizen/resident of this country	27.9%	35.0%	0.073
29	I know the social networks operating in this area	18.6%	23.8%	0.137
30	I know the people to talk to if I need information or help with something	8.8%	9.9%	0.662
31	The cost of living is high where I live	58.6%	33.0%	<0.001
32	Government services are adequate in this area	55.0%	51.9%	0.455
33	Health services are adequate in this area	50.0%	40.3%	0.022
34	Commercial services (e.g. banks) are adequate in this area	32.0%	38.8%	0.099

Age differences

Table 23 shows differences in perceptions between those respondents who are categorised as younger (<25) and those who are older. A number of differences between younger and older respondents are evident:

- With regard to work, younger people are more likely to agree that people can get work and the kind of work they want to, compared with older people.
- Older people were more likely to agree that there was plenty to get involved with for people their age, but less likely to agree that there were adequate opportunities for young people in their communities.

These data suggest that younger people are more optimistic about employment opportunities but less likely to feel a social attachment with their community.

Table 23 – Age differences in perceptions

Q	Question	Older Disagree	Younger Disagree	P χ^2
1	I feel safe both in my home and on the street	8.3%	9.5%	0.626
2	People here look after their environment	30.8%	29.1%	0.662
3	In this community people pull together in difficult times	11.0%	11.8%	0.764
4	Community groups here work well together	16.9%	15.7%	0.690
5	People here usually support activities organised by community groups	16.8%	15.1%	0.588
6	People in this community can get work if they want to	49.2%	33.5%	<0.001
7	People in this community can get the sort of work they want	81.5%	70.2%	0.002
8	I think people in this community are accepted regardless of race, age, religion or gender	42.7%	43.6%	0.834
9	You can usually count on government organisations to do the right thing	65.7%	58.4%	0.081
10	In this community there's plenty to get involved in for people my age	27.8%	40.2%	0.002
11	People of my age have the opportunity to get training or further their education	18.4%	18.0%	0.905
12	Most state and federal politicians do their best for the people they represent	54.3%	46.4%	0.065
13	Politicians at a state and federal level listen to our community leaders	55.0%	53.5%	0.732
14	I think that if I had a problem, my views would be listened to by local Government	39.8%	48.2%	0.046
15	Doing training usually gets people into jobs in this community	43.7%	33.7%	0.017
16	The quality of vocational education and training here is as good as anywhere	42.7%	36.8%	0.158
17	This is a good area to bring up children	11.7%	12.2%	0.846
18	Good opportunities are available for young people in this area	71.7%	57.9%	0.001
19	This is a good area for people to retire to	16.7%	16.6%	0.983
20	Opportunities to learn are important to the quality of life you lead regardless of age	5.9%	5.2%	0.706
21	Vocational education and training services are adequate in this area	47.1%	40.2%	0.103
22	People make good use of the vocational education and training opportunities available here	36.2%	34.0%	0.586
23	It's who you know not what you know that gets you a job	29.9%	33.3%	0.383
24	I'd like to learn more about health issues concerning my family and me	30.3%	28.0%	0.539
25	I'd like to learn more about safety issues that come up in everyday life	31.1%	27.5%	0.347
26	I'd like to learn more about environmental issues that concern me and the community	22.3%	19.8%	0.473
27	I'd like to learn more about how to deal with government organisations and agencies	26.6%	30.4%	0.316
28	I'd like to learn more about my rights and responsibilities as a citizen/resident of this country	32.9%	30.3%	0.511
29	I know the social networks operating in this area	17.4%	26.1%	0.013
30	I know the people to talk to if I need information or help with something	7.7%	11.4%	0.139
31	The cost of living is high where I live	43.7%	46.6%	0.489
32	Government services are adequate in this area	55.2%	51.2%	0.347
33	Health services are adequate in this area	44.8%	44.9%	0.988
34	Commercial services (e.g. banks) are adequate in this area	33.7%	38.0%	0.291

Table 24 - Site SLAs and categories for analysis

Site	SLA	NEIR adjusted	Population density (p/km ²)	Total Persons (psns)	Rural / Urban ¹⁸	Growing/declining	Multicultural / Monocultural ¹⁹	ARIA
Broken Hill	Broken Hill (C)	Rural	305.3889	21356	Urban	Declining	Monocultural	3.2651
Broken Hill	Central Darling (A)	Rural	0.04958	2651	Rural	Declining	Multicultural	8.4779
Broken Hill	Unincorp. Far West	Rural	0.011552	1078	Rural	Declining	Monocultural	8.0154
Cairns	Mareeba (S)	Lifestyle	0.340238	18188	Rural	Growing	Multicultural	7.9306
Cairns	Cairns (C) - Barron	Lifestyle	108.6076	16913	Urban	Growing	Multicultural	3.2151
Cairns	Cairns (C) - Central Suburbs	Lifestyle	1258.45	23698	Urban	Growing	Multicultural	3.0046
Cairns	Cairns (C) - City	Lifestyle	2599.455	16035	Urban	Growing	Multicultural	3
Cairns	Cairns (C) - Mt Whitfield	Lifestyle	412.8576	11435	Urban	Growing	Multicultural	3.0189
Cairns	Cairns (C) - Northern Suburbs	Lifestyle	308.4732	15498	Urban	Growing	Multicultural	3.4804
Cairns	Cairns (C) - Trinity	Lifestyle	123.2498	26249	Urban	Growing	Multicultural	3.2616
Cairns	Cairns (C) - Western Suburbs	Lifestyle	700.0668	11208	Urban	Growing	Monocultural	3
Gayndah	Gayndah (S)	Rural	1.078496	2916	Rural	Growing	Monocultural	4.2258
Gayndah	Mundubbera (S)	Rural	0.600708	2514	Rural	Growing	Monocultural	4.9292
Gayndah	Eidsvold (S)	Rural	0.202108	970	Rural	Declining	Multicultural	5.0291
Gayndah	Biggenden (S)	Rural	1.195432	1570	Rural	Growing	Monocultural	3.411
Katanning	Gnowangerup (S)	Rural	0.40405	1724	Rural	Declining	Monocultural	4.8181
Katanning	Tambellup (S)	Rural	0.488182	701	Rural	Declining	Multicultural	4.2573
Katanning	Broomehill (S)	Rural	0.400897	470	Rural	Declining	Monocultural	4.5886
Katanning	Kojonup (S)	Rural	0.755281	2214	Rural	Declining	Monocultural	4.0933
Katanning	Katanning (S)	Rural	2.968591	4506	Urban	Growing	Monocultural	4.8319
Katherine	Elsey - Bal	Rural	0.044448	2813	Rural	Declining	Multicultural	9.7882
Katherine	Katherine (T)	Rural	20.60159	10809	Urban	Growing	Multicultural	6.8922
Katherine	Victoria	Rural	0.016233	2805	Rural	Growing	Multicultural	11.5118
Kerang	Wakool (A)	Rural	0.657955	4941	Rural	Growing	Monocultural	3.8497
Kerang	Hay (A)	Rural	0.337457	3822	Urban	Declining	Monocultural	5.6371

¹⁸ Rural SLAs are here defined as those with greater than 35% of the population living in rural areas.

¹⁹ Multicultural SLAS are here defined as those with a combined Indigenous and overseas born population of greater than 20%.

Site	SLA	NEIR adjusted	Population density (p/km ²)	Total Persons (psns)	Rural / Urban ¹⁸	Growing/declining	Multicultural / Monocultural ¹⁹	ARIA
Kerang	Gannawarra (S)	Rural	3.187158	11922	Rural	Declining	Monocultural	2.8691
Launceston	Dorset (M)	Rural	2.198619	7095	Rural	Growing	Monocultural	3.354
Launceston	George Town (M) - Pt A	Production	54.14609	5654	Urban	Declining	Monocultural	1.9993
Launceston	Launceston (C) - Pt B	Production	250.761	59178	Urban	Declining	Monocultural	1.3937
Launceston	Launceston (C) - Inner	Production	1112.845	428	Urban	Growing	Monocultural	1.21
Launceston	Launceston (C) - Pt C	Rural	2.401413	2825	Rural	Growing	Monocultural	2.0213
Launceston	George Town (M) - Pt B	Rural	1.819398	999	Rural	Growing	Monocultural	2.1459
Orbost	E. Gippsland (S) - Orbost	Rural	0.661172	8281	Rural	Growing	Monocultural	4.7967
Orbost	E. Gippsland (S) - Bairnsdale	Rural	37.22301	23378	Urban	Growing	Monocultural	2.8964
Penrith	Greater Lithgow (C)	Resource	5.474521	19248	Urban	Declining	Monocultural	1.8619
Penrith	Penrith (C)	Dispersed Metro	403.1121	163122	Urban	Growing	Multicultural	0.8396
Penrith	Blue Mountains (C)	Dispersed Metro	50.66395	72506	Urban	Growing	Monocultural	1.3214
Port Lincoln	Port Lincoln (C)	Rural	401.2345	12182	Urban	Growing	Monocultural	6.0845
Port Lincoln	Tumby Bay (DC)	Rural	0.956552	2553	Rural	Declining	Monocultural	6.1294
Port Lincoln	Lower Eyre Peninsula (DC)	Rural	0.817346	3859	Rural	Growing	Monocultural	6.6006
Port Lincoln	Elliston (DC)	Rural	0.179858	1212	Rural	Growing	Monocultural	7.4318
Port Lincoln	Streaky Bay (DC)	Rural	0.308124	1925	Rural	Declining	Monocultural	9.5829
Port Lincoln	Ceduna (DC)	Rural	0.65622	3559	Urban	Declining	Multicultural	10.5234

5.4 Discussion of results

5.4.1 Context

Change factors and VET

Table 25 shows the impact of change factors that directly affect data items usually associated with the VET sector. Numbers shown are probabilities associated with a two tailed student's t-test. Items with of significance with a probability of less than .01 are shaded. The data in the table arises from comparisons of data grouped according to the column headings and relates to the association of change in one group with change in the VET factor over the period from 1986 to 1996.

The shaded cells indicate that:

- Rurality is associated with decreasing levels of associate and undergraduate diploma qualifications from 1986 to 1996.
- Cultural diversity is associated with increasing levels of associate and undergraduate diploma qualifications from 1986 to 1996.
- Remoteness is associated with decreasing levels of associate and undergraduate diploma qualifications from 1986 to 1996.
- Increasing population is associated with increases in basic vocational qualifications from 1986 to 1996.
- Increasing population is associated with increasing attendance at TAFE from 1986 to 1996.
- Increasing population is associated with increasing proportions of intermediate clerical, sales and service workers from 1986 to 1996.

Table 25 – Factors influencing change in the VET sector (probabilities associated with t-test)

		Rurality	Accessibility / remoteness	Cultural diversity	Growth / decline
Qualifications	Associate / undergraduate diploma	.002	.004	.003	.012
	Skilled vocational	.494	.108	.187	.022
	Basic vocational	.514	.880	.189	.005
Attendance	TAFE	.424	.968	.793	.005
Occupations	Tradespersons	.799	.448	.065	.206
	Intermediate clerical, sales and service workers	.241	.042	.032	.001

Within the study sites, changes in levels of skilled vocational qualifications between 1986 and 1996 are not affected by rurality, remoteness, cultural diversity or population growth. The same applies for the proportional make-up of tradespersons in the population. Further, apart from the proportion of associate / undergraduate diploma qualifications in the population, rurality, remoteness and cultural diversity are not associated with significant changes in the proportion of skilled vocational

qualifications, basic vocational qualifications, trades or intermediate, clerical, sales and service occupations or attendance at TAFE.

These data suggest that for most of the ABS measures used here as proxies of VET's influence in the communities of the ten sites, being remote compared to accessible, rural compared to non-rural, or mono compared to multi-cultural made no significant difference to changes from 1986 to 1996 in levels of qualifications, employment or educational attendance associated with VET. Only at higher levels of the qualifications framework is there a difference in qualification and employment profiles and attendance at TAFE between remote compared to accessible, rural compared to non-rural, and mono compared to multi-cultural study sites.

Influence of other change drivers

Generalisations about change drivers are difficult to make across the sites because of the multiplicity of factors that impact on any one configuration. However there are some common threads, which are drawn together here. It should be noted that these change drivers are not universal and should not be extrapolated for all of regional Australia, but they do reflect a wide array of factors that may influence VET configurations throughout regional Australia. They are not presented in any particular order.

- **Population decline.** Many of the rural sites experienced population decline (notably Kerang, Katanning, and Broken Hill). This was associated with loss of Government infrastructure and financial / commercial services. In some cases it was associated with the loss of a key industry. Loss of youth was a major concern for many rural sites. Reduced demand for VET and other post secondary education was one of the consequences of this change.
- **Population growth.** Some sites (notably Penrith and Cairns) experienced population growth which had a positive impact on access to services, employment, infrastructure and opportunities. At these sites demand for VET was increasing and programs were expanding to meet demand.
- **Regional assistance policies and initiatives.** Many sites benefited from state and federal government initiatives that were designed to target the needs of regional and rural Australia (eg Broken Hill, Port Lincoln, Cairns). These initiatives allowed providers and communities to target and fund community needs that would have otherwise been unviable.
- **Structural changes within TAFE.** A few sites were exposed to recent and ongoing changes in TAFE structures (eg Launceston, Port Lincoln, Katherine). These changes tended to have a negative impact in the minds of respondents, because of the uncertainty created and the budgetary constraints that were often imposed by structural change.
- **Regulatory requirements.** A number of changes at a regulatory level were seen to impact on provision of VET. In general, they increased demand because employers needed to ensure that their staff conformed to the new standards. In particular OH&S and GST changes were driving increasing demand. This driver affected all sites in some way or another.
- **Need for accreditation.** Some respondents reported increased demand arising from a perceived need among clients for accredited training (eg Orbost). The push for accreditation was also driven in some cases by changes to funding

arrangements that forced providers to deliver only accredited training (eg Katherine).

- **New Technology.** Almost all sites were influenced in some way by technological changes. In some cases, configurations embraced the possibilities (notably Launceston, Orbost, Katanning) to open new opportunities for training. Other configurations were more reluctant to adopt opportunities made available through Internet and computer technologies because of a lack of infrastructure, a lack of awareness among clients of the opportunities or reluctance on the part of providers to promote technological developments through their organisations. In some cases state governments were actively promoting online initiatives (eg Tasmania, Victoria, Queensland, West Australia) and this was an added incentive for providers and community groups to get acquainted with Information Technology.
- **Competition policy.** Generally competition policy was seen by respondents to be beneficial to the larger configurations and detrimental to the smaller ones. In larger sites, competition was thought to give clients more choice and drive quality improvements and price competitiveness. In many of the smaller sites, where there was competition, it placed pressures on providers to improve quality but had a negative impact on resource utilisation and range of locally offered training. It was also thought to stifle collaborative opportunities. However, it appeared that some configurations managed to ‘work around’ competition and were able to avoid some of the negative consequences.
- **Changing nature of work.** The increasing trend to casualisation had an impact on some sites (eg Launceston, Gayndah). Casualisation was thought to have a negative impact on training because employers were less likely to invest in skill development where the term of work was expected to be short.
- **Environmental issues.** A number of sites experienced environmental issues that had some impact on demand for VET. These issues included the competing demands of tourism and development versus conservation (Orbost, Cairns), salinity and water management (Kerang, Katanning, Orbost, Port Lincoln) and forestry (Orbost).
- **Social changes.** There were some indications that changing social attitudes were driving changes in the configurations. Attitudes to immigration were particularly important in Cairns. Attitudes to Indigenous issues were of significance in Katherine and Port Lincoln.

Impact of regional types

The background data presented previously (see Summary of background data, page 77) suggests that in terms of regional ‘types’ the rural / non-rural differentiation yields more significant differences than other types. Rurality is therefore one of the key factors that influences configurations. The data revealed that rural study sites were different from non-rural study sites in terms of:

- Occupations, with rural areas having fewer professionals, associate professionals and tradespersons;
- Qualifications, with rural areas having more people without qualifications, and fewer people with bachelor or skilled vocational qualifications

- Educational attendance, with rural areas having lower post secondary institution attendance.

These differences suggest a number of possible ways that the configurations are affected:

- The lower qualification levels suggest that rural areas may be suffering skills shortages.
- The attendance differences suggest that rural areas are affected by access disadvantages and may continue to suffer skill shortages unless skilled labour moves in.
- The data may also imply a ‘brain drain’, whereby youth with higher educational aspirations leave rural areas to pursue educational opportunities in regional centres and cities. This implication is supported by perceptions of respondents in many rural areas, who were concerned about the loss of youth from their communities.

In terms of change and rurality, rural areas were more likely to have experienced a decline in attendance at tertiary institutions between 1986 and 1996 than non-rural areas within sites.

While rurality was shown to be the primary factor that contributed to significant differences at sites, when combined with remoteness and population decline the differences in qualifications and employment profiles and educational attendance were exacerbated.

5.4.2 Configurations

Size of configuration

Data presented earlier (see Table 14, Table 15) show that the larger sites, which also are non-rural in nature, have a greater range of available educational infrastructure and a greater range of provider types. One observation of note is the lack of private providers in rural sites. The nature of public VET provision at rural sites is also quite different from that in larger, urban sites. While most of the rural sites have a TAFE or equivalent presence, the status of the facility is often described as ‘annexe’ and there is often a very narrow range of courses on offer through the local campus. However, the presence of infrastructure in a small community is significant for a number of reasons:

- The infrastructure often provides a focal point for education and learning in the community.
- The infrastructure is a point of access to the wider educational opportunities of TAFE or other providers.
- It allows learning resources to be shared by the community.
- Information Technology infrastructure provided at such centres can act as a bridge for community members who don’t have the knowledge or resources to be able to access Internet or computer technology on their own.
- It often allows for cooperative use of facilities by several educational organisations or groups. (eg ACE, tertiary institutions, community oriented learning groups)

Another observation of note from the data is the importance of community groups for VET in smaller areas. While there are just as many examples of community groups in larger configurations, the role of community groups in smaller configurations is broader because of the lack of alternatives in terms of educational infrastructure and provider types (especially private providers). The increased role of community groups in smaller configurations is complemented by increased importance of social networks and increased propensity to be actively involved in civic life (see Table 19). These observations suggest that at least in part, the strength of local community networks have the capacity to offset the negative impact of reduced access to private and public infrastructure.

Respondents from larger configurations tended to believe that competition between providers was healthy and useful in their communities. Competition placed pressure on providers in larger sites to improve quality and to be more competitive in terms of price. Where there was competition in thin training markets, it was seen to have a negative influence on the overall effectiveness of the site.

Location within configuration

Location within a site tended to influence respondents' perceptions about needs and training (see Table 17). Respondents from remote centres were more likely to believe that education, time and leisure and access to services were needs. Time and leisure issues are also important for youth and those in essentially mono-cultural contexts. The role of VET in meeting broader community needs beyond employment therefore becomes increasingly important in remote sites. The data shows that VET can play a part in meeting these three key community needs:

- In many remote communities of the study sites VET was the only accessible post-secondary educational option. The image of VET in a community was enhanced by its integration into the life of the community. Community ownership of programs has also been shown to be a factor that contributes to the way VET meets educational needs at a remote location.
- Time and leisure issues were particularly important for youth in rural communities. Some of the case studies identified ways that VET was able to meet the time / leisure needs of youth through targeted programs. In a more general way, VET was shown to enhance career prospects of trainees and to provide access to social and employment networks that would otherwise not be available to youth. This was particularly true of many VET in schools programs.
- Only two case studies (Broken Hill and Penrith) showed how VET was able to effectively meet the access needs of communities. The data showed that there is potential for VET to be effective in improving access needs of people in the remote areas of configurations. In particular, VET can play a role in the provision of Information Technology infrastructure and training to enable communities to take advantage of the emerging technology. With regard to this, the human support role provided by VET is more significant than the provision of Information Technology infrastructure. There was some evidence that some sites were beginning to explore this role, but there was also evidence that providers were reluctant to promote the use of Information Technology as a means for education and training.

Respondents from the main centre of configurations also tended to hold stronger views about certain community needs. Table 17 identifies these as environmental, social and personal safety. The latter will not be considered in this discussion because of the relatively low priority given to this need across all sites. The data from the case studies provides many examples of ways that VET is generally addressing these needs in the central locations of the sites:

- Because the centres tend to be larger towns there are often sufficient resources to facilitate targeted programs that meet these needs. Issues of environmental sustainability and responsible resource management appear to be embedded in the content of many programs and are underpinning values that contribute to the learning outcomes.
- The data has also shown that social cohesion and attachment is one of the important outcomes of participation in VET. Given that the site main centres are more likely to believe that the social environment is a priority need, higher VET participation rates of non-rural areas suggest that programs are contributing to this perceived need in these centres.

The foregoing discussion suggests that there are unmet opportunities for VET to contribute to the community needs of remote centres of VET configurations. The differences in perceptions of respondents in remote and central locations suggests that a ‘blanket’ approach to VET provision is not likely to be as effective as a more locally focussed, community-needs oriented approach.

Nature of the configuration’s response

The nature of the configuration’s response to changes is varied and is very much dependent on the issues faced by the site. However a few common threads can be found in the data, which show a range of responses.

- **Changing programs to meet industry needs.** There were several examples within the data that demonstrated a response to the changing needs of industry. Changes that providers made included adjustments to the range of programs available, a push towards self-paced, enterprise specific training packages and the development of programs (particularly OH&S) targeted to meet changing regulatory requirements.
- **Development of cooperative networks.** There were some instances where stakeholders of a configuration deliberately sought to form strategic alliances in order to access funding or to develop and implement strategic plans for their region (eg Broken Hill, Launceston, Katherine). The benefits of these networks were evidenced by the sharing of information and resources, improved outcomes for clients and targeted responses to community needs.
- **Emergence of VET in schools.** Most sites were in the process of developing a VET in schools program. The reasons for this included:
 - meeting skills shortages (eg Cairns, Katherine, Launceston)
 - improving employment and educational outcomes for students (eg Katherine) and
 - trying to find ways to reduce the loss of youth (eg Orbost, Katanning).

- **Use of Information Technology.** Several sites embraced the use of Information Technology. The reasons for this included:
 - Overcoming distance and isolation barriers (eg Orbest)
 - Promoting the community's acceptance of Information Technology (eg Kerang)
 - Promoting initiatives for sustainable community development (eg Katanning)
 - Improving the management of VET (eg Katanning).

The outcomes of these initiatives were still in the balance because many of these programs were still in the early stages of development.

A number of barriers to effective responses were also identified from the data. These could be summarised in terms of:

- **Population decline.** Rural configurations were most affected by population decline. The most important issue confronting VET providers in these areas was the loss of youth that occurred. Declining attendance levels meant that range of programs on offer often had to be restricted because of consequent funding cuts.
- **Rapid rate of change.** Several sites appeared to be struggling with the rate of change that was happening. This was just as likely for the urban sites as it was for the rural sites. Many providers were unable to proactively respond to changes simply because so much effort was being directed to reacting to policy, structural and funding changes that were imposed on them.
- **TAFE restructures.** The public provider's ability to respond to change or community needs was often inhibited by structural changes that were occurring within the organisation. This was perhaps most evident in Katherine where major structural changes to VET provision were happening on an almost annual basis. These kind of structural changes made response to change very difficult. Funding constraints invariably accompanied many of these changes and further restricted the organisation's ability to meet new demands.

5.4.3 Effectiveness

VET and community needs

The factors of effectiveness discussed in each site case study are by and large discussed in isolation from each other. However it is apparent that these factors work together to produce effective outcomes. Figure 18 is an attempt to show the processes that are involved to produce outcomes that ultimately satisfy the needs of individual clients. The diagram suggests that:

- **Community networks and trust** underpin a process of VET provision that is based on community ownership. While community ownership is not essential for VET provision, it provides a foundation that ensures high levels of participation, high levels of input and outcomes that benefit the whole community.
- **Enabling leadership** is a factor that may drive processes of collaboration and partnership. . It provides vision, facilitates and draws together partners from

within and outside the community by sharing responsibilities for the operation of the collaboration and provides initial and ongoing stimulus to the process.

- **Collaborative relationships and partnerships** provide a solid framework for the development of strategic planning and release additional knowledge, human and capital **resources** that ultimately feed into the delivery processes. The partnerships typically include local links between providers, community groups, community development groups, industry and local government. An important ingredient that further enhances the collaboration is the presence of external linkages that serve to access funding sources, build recognition and ensure the infusion of fresh ideas.
- **Planning and funding to meet local community needs** is one of the possible direct outcomes of collaboration and partnerships. This factor is evidenced by access to a wide array of funding sources, effective lobbying, well thought-out strategic planning – built on the basis of wide community input and acceptance.
- **Quality factors** can enhance or inhibit the outputs of training. For example the presence of well-trained training staff will enhance the results while competition in thin training markets will tend to stifle the outputs.
- **Employer commitment** adds to effectiveness through effective facilitation of workplace learning and a management approach that values training for its intrinsic benefits.
- **Flexibility** also adds to the effectiveness of delivery by allowing clients to choose the most appropriate and productive form of delivery to meet their needs.
- **Content targeted to meet individual needs** is a factor that is largely dependent on effective planning and collaborative partnerships. Where this factor is present satisfaction with training provision will be high, personal needs will be met and training outcomes will be optimised to suit requirements of clients (employers and trainees).

The schema shown in Figure 18 undoubtedly has exceptions, but a close analysis of the factors that emerge from this research suggest that in most cases, this is how the factors of effectiveness work together to produce effective VET outcomes.

Figure 18 – How factors that contribute to effectiveness of VET work together

