High Level Review of Training Packages

Current Realities of Training Packages

Summary of key themes emerging from Phase Two
# Contents

1. **Introduction** .................................................................................................................. 1
   1.1 Purpose of this report .................................................................................................. 1
   1.2 Background to Training Packages ............................................................................. 1
   1.3 Snapshot of the VET sector and Training Package participation .............................. 2
2. **What Training Packages Offer** ..................................................................................... 4
3. **Key Themes** ................................................................................................................... 6
   3.1 Overview ..................................................................................................................... 6
   3.2 Training Package model ............................................................................................... 7
   3.3 Training Package quality ............................................................................................ 8
   3.3.1 Training Package inconsistencies ........................................................................... 8
   3.3.2 Training Package clarity ....................................................................................... 9
   3.4 Flexibility/inflexibility ................................................................................................. 9
   3.4.1 Where does flexibility reside in Training Packages? ............................................ 10
   3.4.2 How are Training Packages inflexible? ................................................................. 10
   3.5 Units of competency .................................................................................................. 11
   3.5.1 Level of detail and size of units of competency .................................................. 11
   3.5.2 Imported units of competency ............................................................................. 11
   3.5.3 Transfer of competency ...................................................................................... 11
   3.6 Assessment ............................................................................................................... 12
   3.6.1 Quality of assessment ....................................................................................... 12
   3.6.2 Consistency of outcomes ................................................................................... 12
   3.6.3 Recognition of Prior Learning ............................................................................ 13
   3.6.4 Assessment and licensing .................................................................................. 13
   3.7 Training Package qualifications ................................................................................. 14
   3.7.1 Alignment to the Australian Qualifications Framework .................................... 14
   3.7.2 Qualifications packaging ............................................................................... 14
   3.7.3 Qualification titles .............................................................................................. 14
   3.7.4 Demand and supply of AQF qualifications ......................................................... 15
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>Training Package content</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8.1</td>
<td>Employability skills</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8.2</td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8.3</td>
<td>Language, literacy and numeracy</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8.4</td>
<td>Supporting lifelong learning</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>Industry relationships</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9.1</td>
<td>Relevance and responsiveness</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9.2</td>
<td>Adequacy of consultation processes</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9.3</td>
<td>Capacity to incorporate new and emerging skills</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>National recognition</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.10.1</td>
<td>Portability and transferability of skills</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.10.2</td>
<td>Sectoral and career pathways</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>Meeting the diverse needs of industry, cohorts and individuals</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.11.1</td>
<td>Diverse industries and small to medium enterprises</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.11.2</td>
<td>Diverse learner cohorts and places of learning and assessment</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.11.3</td>
<td>Equity groups</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.11.4</td>
<td>Apprentices and trainees</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.11.5</td>
<td>VET in Schools</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.11.6</td>
<td>Overseas and international students</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>Teaching and learning</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.12.1</td>
<td>RTO capabilities and support</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.12.2</td>
<td>Industry partnerships</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Concluding Points</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this report

This report draws together and summarises key themes emerging from Phase 2 of the High Level Review of Training Packages (‘the Review’) being conducted over three phases during 2003 and into early 2004.

The Review will inform the ANTA Ministerial Council about whether, and if so how, Training Packages could better meet current and future skill needs. It will also address the capacity of the vocational education and training (VET) system to deliver outcomes defined in Training Packages, with a particular focus on teaching and learning, and ways this could be strengthened.

ANTA commissioned this report to provide summary information to assist with the Phase 3 work, including providing information for the representative group of stakeholders who will participate in a National Training Quality Council (NTQC)-led forum to be held on 7 November 2003. In addition, this report may assist stakeholders preparing written submissions to the Review.

Phase 2 of the Review concentrated on the realities of implementation of Training Packages, consolidating findings on how they are travelling. It involved an ANTA-commissioned key research project undertaken by Gientzotis Consulting that analysed documented evidence from States/Territories, other key stakeholders and research from over 300 sources.

Phase 2 also involved:

- ANTA-commissioned short papers from two peak organisations representing VET professionals – TAFE Directors Australia and the Australian Council of Private Education and Training – on their members’ experiences with Training Packages
- a number of ‘think pieces’ covering topics such as access and equity; the needs of small business; the needs of mature-aged workers; structural issues around the Training Package model; and language, literacy and numeracy in Training Packages.

The findings of the Phase 2 research have been variously drawn into this summary report; the fact that it is a summary report reflects its lack of citing of references.

Phases 2 and 3 of the Review are partially concurrent. The commissioned research projects of Phase 2 will be considered by Phase 3 which will develop recommendations for possible future responses for Training Packages, to be put to the ANTA Ministerial Council in June 2004.

1.2 Background to Training Packages

In the past decade Australia’s VET system has been transformed, with the most significant change being the development of a truly national VET system underpinned by Training Packages and nationally agreed quality arrangements, the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF).

The Training Package concept was introduced in 1996 along with many concurrent reforms including fundamental system changes that radically altered the VET landscape, its products, processes and relationships with stakeholders. There is a critical nexus between
the AQTF and Training Packages; from 2001, the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations* under the AQTF specified various requirements for Training Package implementation.

Since their introduction, Training Packages have involved unprecedented system effort and have been the subject of lively debate, with a range of positive and negative effects attributed to them. Given the far-reaching nature of the reforms that Training Packages and the associated national quality arrangements involve, such debate is healthy.

Training Packages sit within a complex open training market characterised by wide diversity – in providers, stakeholders, contexts for learning, teaching and learning processes, learner cohorts, industry profiles and other characteristics.

While Training Packages must clearly serve the needs of the range of industries and enterprises for which they are developed, their outcomes must also provide for skills formation and progression across a range of industries nationally, and be relevant to participation in an increasingly globalised, dynamic economy.

1.3 **Snapshot of the VET sector and Training Package participation**

- There are 70 industry Training Packages, 9 enterprise Training Packages (developed privately by enterprises), 20 fully reviewed Training Packages, 36 Training Packages under review and 2 new Training Package under development.¹

- There are 4,110 Registered Training Organisations (RTOs).² These vary widely in their profiles and include public, private, community, enterprise, industry and commercial providers ranging from very large multi-campus organisations to one-person organisations. VET is funded through an equally diverse mix of public and private sources including by industry and individuals.

- The Training Package share of total hours of delivery is also rising steadily and passed 50% in 2002 as shown in the table below.³ In all States and Territories the proportion of Training Package enrolments as a percentage of all public VET enrolments in 1999 and in 2002 has increased significantly, with enrolments in Western Australia climbing from just 2.6 to 56.8%, South Australia from 14.8 to 52.6% and Tasmania from 26.3 to 82.5%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jurisdiction</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2002</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vic</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qld</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tas</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NT</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aus</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: NCVER 1999-2002 national vocational education and training collections*

¹ ANTA, October 2003
² ANTA, October 2003
A wide range of learners across all age groups and backgrounds undertake VET, with an increasing number enrolled while at secondary school. The notion of an academic year does not necessarily apply to VET, with learners continuously entering and exiting programs. Their destinations on completion of VET are equally diverse.4

Proportionally, participation in Training Packages is higher in rural and remote Australia than in capital cities. Participation in VET generally is also higher in rural and remote than metropolitan regions. Participation is low in programs delivered outside Australia.5

Participation of Indigenous people in Training Package programs is lower than for non-Indigenous people because there is a high (18%) Indigenous participation in mixed field programs, which are almost all outside Training Packages. When mixed field programs are excluded, Indigenous people have slightly higher Training Package participation rates than non-Indigenous people.6

People with a disability have a lower participation rate in Training Packages than people with no disability. This is partially due to the fact that Training Packages dominate in Certificates II-IV range but have a lower share of activity at Certificate I where the participation rate of people with a disability is high.7

In 2002 some 95% of apprenticeship and traineeship commencements were in Training Package qualifications.8

---

4 NCVER Students and Courses, 2003
5 NCVER, AVETMISS Provider Collection 2002, unpublished data
6 NCVER, AVETMISS Provider Collection 2002, unpublished data
7 NCVER, AVETMISS Provider Collection 2002, unpublished data
8 NCVER, Annual Apprentice and Trainee statistics 2002: At a Glance
2 What Training Packages Offer

Training Packages offer a range of features that can provide positive outcomes for Australian industry, enterprises and individuals including:

- **Nationally recognised training**: Training Packages provide nationally recognised outcomes through Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualifications and Statements of Attainment. The AQTF ensures national mutual recognition of outcomes through its Standards for Registered Training Organisations.

- **Training opportunities**: Training Packages have provided a basis for structured skills training, including in a range of industries that formerly had limited or no access to nationally recognised training, or the recognition of currently held workplace competencies. This has been particularly important for existing workers with no post-secondary qualifications and in areas of previously unrecognised industry skills.

- **Industry relevance**: Training Packages are genuinely industry led. They are developed by industry bodies and industry is involved at the VET policy level as well as in Training Package development, maintenance, review and endorsement processes to ensure relevant industry outcomes.

- **Competency based workplace relevant training**: Training Packages facilitate relevant workplace skills formation and recognition by focusing on what people actually do in the workplace and by providing training and assessment against industry-defined competencies rather than time served in training.

- **Workplace training**: With Training Packages, competencies can be developed and assessed directly in the workplace, as well as through workplace simulation, for example through Practice Firms. This allows for attainment and recognition of competencies by a broad range of learners including workforce participants, people changing careers, unemployed people, school participants and school leavers.

- **Partnerships with industry**: The Training Package emphasis on workplace relevant competencies has stimulated industry linkages. Real partnerships between training providers and industry have emerged, along with the Training Package encouragement of industry participation. Linkages with industry provide discernible benefits in terms of the industry relevance of training and assessment.

- **Assessment and recognition**: Training Packages encourage holistic assessment, the collection of naturally occurring evidence and recognition of currently held competencies. They allow for the direct assessment of competencies relevant to the workplace.

- **Flexible approaches**: Training Package flexibility includes the capacity for choice in delivery and assessment approaches and contexts, learner-centred approaches, industry involvement and partnerships, mixing and matching to make up nationally recognised qualifications, and allow for contextualising training and assessment.

- **Training and career pathways**: Training Packages offer alternative pathways to qualifications and employment. For example, training and assessment can occur on or off the job; in the workplace or in an institution with simulated or actual workplace experiences; a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) pathway can recognise current competency; or a combination of pathways can be used.
Through these multiple pathways, Training Packages provide opportunities for diverse learners such as people seeking employment, new entrants to the workforce, those already in the workforce, people changing careers and people formerly disadvantaged in access to training. Training Packages have also facilitated better pathways between schools and VET through an increase of VET in Schools programs.

- **Contextualisation:** The capacity of Training Packages for contextualisation to meet enterprise, corporate, regional and individual needs allows for highly relevant training tailored to specific requirements. This is important particularly in areas of rapid technological change and in meeting local and individual circumstances, for example for small businesses and regional and remote learners.

- **Access and equity:** The way training is organised through units of competency in Training Packages, thus allowing for progressive recognition of components of learning, and the availability of Certificate I in some Training Packages, provides access for learners who may have experienced disadvantage in accessing training and employment. In addition, as described above, Training Packages now provide a broader range of industries and individuals with access to nationally recognised training.

- **Competitive training market:** Training Packages contribute to the competitive training market by providing a product capable of meeting the needs of the demand side of training – training that can be customised to meet industry and enterprise needs, matched to workplace competencies, flexibly delivered and assessed in workplaces.

- **National consistency:** Training Packages have had a role in the pursuit of a more nationally consistent approach to VET by providing nationally developed and endorsed benchmarks for training and assessment as well as national qualifications, while simultaneously providing for the capacity to meet local and diverse needs.

It is clear that Training Packages have considerable strengths, and that they are highly valued by a wide range of stakeholders. It is also clear that at this stage in Training Package implementation, stakeholders have a valuable body of knowledge based on their implementation experiences, and that this can contribute to the continuous improvement of Training Packages.

The key themes emerging from Phase 2 include a range of interconnected issues and stakeholder views; they paint a picture of wide engagement with Training Packages and lively debate within the system. These key themes are introduced and explored in the following section.
3 Key Themes

3.1 Overview

In summary, the key themes emerging in Phase 2 of the Review involve:

- the Training Package model, its structure and content as well as its development and review processes
- Training Package quality, including inconsistencies within and between Training Packages, and their clarity
- the flexibility of Training Packages, versus perceived and actual inflexibility
- the size and level of detail in units of competency, imported units and transferability of competency
- assessment, including its consistency and quality, and related matters such as RPL and licensing
- Training Package qualifications, their alignment to the AQF, packaging, titles and the demand and supply of qualifications
- Training Package content including knowledge; language, literacy and numeracy; and balancing employability skills with the need for technical skills and lifelong learning
- industry responsiveness including the relevance of Training Packages to industries, industry sectors and enterprises; adequacy of consultation; and the capacity of Training Packages to capture and incorporate new and emerging skills
- national recognition, portability and transferability of skills, sectoral articulation and learning and career pathways
- suitability of Training Packages for the diversity of learner cohorts and clients including equity groups; small to medium enterprises; international and overseas students; and apprentices and trainees
- pedagogical and related matters including issues around teaching and learning; translating Training Packages into learning and assessment experiences; support materials; professional development; relationships with industry; and meeting the needs of a range of learners.

In considering the key themes identified in Phase 2, we need to take into account the following constraints to the data.

- Issues raised by stakeholders may relate to Training Packages across the board or they may apply to particular Training Packages. However, stakeholders expressing views and researchers recording these opinions do not always clarify this distinction. Moreover, the proportion of stakeholders holding an expressed view is not always clear.
- Individual Training Packages vary considerably depending on the industry, industry sector or enterprise involved; the way they have been developed, maintained and reviewed; and whether they are first or second generation (that is, reviewed Training Packages). Issues ascribed to Training Packages may be more relevant to some than to others.
• It is sometimes unclear whether expressed opinions relate to experiences with implementation of first or second generation Training Packages, and whether issues have been resolved in their subsequent review. Views may linger but be outdated with the current Training Package version.

• In discussing issues raised in research and by stakeholders, it is often difficult to distinguish those that relate to the Training Package model, product and its capacity for implementation, from those relating to the vagaries of that implementation and any extraneous imposts upon it.

• Many issues attributed to Training Packages may be in part a function of the very diversity in which they operate and need to serve.

• While there is a solid body of emerging research about current Training Package implementation, it may be subject to the above constraints, and there are research and data gaps.

The following subsections provide discussion on the key themes identified in Phase 2. Given that the boundaries between the themes are somewhat artificially drawn, similar issues may be raised across themes.

3.2 Training Package model

The Training Package model, and associated processes of Training Package development, is a recurring key theme, often inextricably linked with other issues raised about Training Packages. For this reason, the model is a component of discussion in other key themes in this report.

A decade ago, research identified that the reforms to that date were not meeting industry’s need for flexibility – that the system itself was highly inflexible and did not allow for innovative, ‘just in time’ responses required by restructuring industries to succeed in an increasingly global economy. The Training Package model promised greater flexibility, with an emphasis on industry relevant outcomes of training rather than inputs, to reflect the diversity of industries and to meet the needs of a broad audience.

Training Packages are made up of three nationally endorsed components – competency standards, qualifications and assessment guidelines. These components provide the industry, industry sector or enterprise concerned with nationally agreed benchmarks for training and assessment. Under this model, endorsed Training Packages operate as a platform from which learning and assessment strategies are developed. They do not mandate the delivery and assessment processes, or pathways to qualifications. Given this inherent flexibility in assessment and delivery under Training Packages, learning and assessment strategies are open to choice and teaching and learning resources must be sourced or developed.

Training Package support materials can include a wide range of resources to assist learning and assessment, as well as materials to support VET professionals and are developed by a wide range of organisations, agencies and individuals. Under the AQTF Standards for Registered Training Organisations, training providers must have appropriate delivery and assessment resources before a Training Package qualification or unit of competency can be added to their scope of registration.

While a wide range of stakeholders value and support the flexibility of the Training Package model, it also has its critics. However, these critics generally express views about how to improve the model, and its application in particular Training Packages rather than calling for...
a completely new one. While some stakeholders want change, others stress the need for balancing continuous improvement of the Training Package model and its application, with the risks inherent in any broad scale change at this time.

Some stakeholders seek more specific information in endorsed components of Training Packages, including the sort of information currently provided in implementation guides and user guides, such as nominal hours, entry requirements for qualifications and more comprehensive guidance on delivery and assessment. Others suggest that Training Packages should define the processes for training delivery. In effect, these stakeholders are calling for an amended model. However, the inclusion of nationally consistent implementation advice would need to recognise that States and Territories regulate implementation.

Those who oppose more prescription in Training Packages suggest it would compromise the flexibility required by diverse Training Package users and industries, and change at this stage is not warranted and may be counterproductive. While the extent and pace of VET reforms has offered opportunities and challenges it also brings a risk of change fatigue.

3.3 Training Package quality

3.3.1 Training Package inconsistencies

There are clearly differences between Training Packages – each Training Package must meet the needs of a specific industry, industry sector or enterprise and, given the diversity inherent in these audiences, we can expect some variations in the product. However, some identified issues related to variations beyond these industry differences – the quality and consistency of individual Training Packages.

Inconsistencies between Training Packages and variations in quality may have implications for transferability of skills, portability and recognition of competencies held, and parity of outcomes. Some inconsistencies stakeholders identify are summarised below, and critical aspects of these are discussed as they arise in other parts of this report.

- Training Package components vary in their format, sequence and content. This can make it difficult to navigate across multiple Training Packages, for example when devising training to meet the needs of small businesses.
- There is variation in the use, interpretation and meaning of key terminology in Training Packages and related policies. For example, a national strategic evaluation in 2000 identified 18 terms to describe units of competency.
- There are wide variations in the number, size and complexity of units of competency within and across Training Packages, and in requirements placed on units of competency such as prerequisites and co-requisites.
- There are differences between similar competency standards at the same AQF qualification outcome across Training Packages. Concerns include parity of requirements and outcomes across industries and sectors, issues around imported units of competency, implications for design of qualifications, inflexibility for smaller workplaces, access, and questions around the parity and validity of AQF outcomes.
- There are variations across Training Packages in the design of qualifications and in qualification packaging rules. Particularly, this relates to variations in the use of core and electives, the number and size of units that make up the same AQF qualification,
‘weighting’ of units of competency, and further complexities in qualifications created by prerequisite competencies and nested qualifications.

- There are wide inconsistencies in requirements and training effort for the same AQF qualification outcome between Training Packages (and between RTOs).

- Training Packages are perceived as dealing inconsistently with underpinning skills and knowledge. Some clearly embed underpinning skills and knowledge within evidence guides, others are criticised as not attending to knowledge in sufficient depth.

- Employability skills are dealt with well in some Training Packages and less so in others; there are also variations in the identification of Key Competencies, with the relationship of Key Competencies to the broader concept of employability skills in Training Packages yet to be clarified.

- Training Package flexibility can result in inconsistencies at the point of delivery and assessment with inconsistent inputs to and outcomes from training. While this inconsistency concerns Training Package implementation, also intrinsically it relates to Training Package design.

3.3.2 Training Package clarity

Users of Training Packages are seeking more clarity – arguing for clearer navigation, better and clearer assessment information, plain English and more logical, consistent sequencing. The extent to which this issue has been resolved for users in reviewed Training Packages is not yet clear.

Some find the use of passive language in units of competency confusing and call for more information on the application of the competency, particularly in the range statements and evidence guides to clarify context and assessment, including suggestions for contexts and methods of assessment.

3.4 Flexibility/inflexibility

The Training Package model has inherent flexibility to meet the needs of a wide range of industries and diverse users including small to large businesses, communities and equity groups, varied workplaces, rural communities and learners at various stages of learning.

The flexibility and industry responsiveness of the Training Package model is highly valued. However, some see both the model and individual Training Packages as still too inflexible. This may relate to the differences between individual Training Packages, or it may be that even after five years of implementation some users still do not appreciate how to utilise the flexibility inherent in Training Packages.

There are tensions between calls for more flexibility on the one hand and, on the other, fears of over generalised competencies too narrow to provide the required industry skills and knowledge or support higher AQF qualification outcomes.

Demands for greater flexibility must be balanced with the need for portable, transferable skills and national consistency, as well as the need to provide adequate safeguards to ensure the quality, integrity and industry relevance of qualifications.
3.4.1 Where does flexibility reside in Training Packages?

Flexibility resides in the inherent design of Training Packages in that they:

- provide choice in delivery and assessment mechanisms and support innovative approaches and new training technologies – recognising that people learn in different ways and industries and enterprises have diverse needs and circumstances
- allow for direct assessment of industry defined workplace competencies rather than the outcomes of a training course (but do not mandate workplace delivery)
- allow for contextualisation in meeting enterprise, corporate and individual needs, including the needs of equity groups
- encourage a range of pathways to and through learning, including for individuals disadvantaged in access to training or in industries without a training culture
- encourage partnerships with industry and training to suit enterprise and individual needs
- provide for a range of industry contexts and the incorporation of new and emerging technology through the unit of competency range statement
- allow for the combination of skills and knowledge from a range of industries into a nationally recognised qualification (through the mix and match of units of competency)
- provide clear benchmarks for the outcomes of training, thus facilitating recognition of competencies, including those currently held
- provide for ‘chunks’ of learning that can progressively build to a nationally recognised credential
- support enterprise based training and assessment in workplaces as well as institution based training with workplace simulation, and school based delivery through VET in Schools programs.

3.4.2 How are Training Packages inflexible?

Some stakeholders perceive individual Training Packages as inflexible when they:

- provide overly prescriptive packaging rules for qualifications, including those that limit elective choice and the inclusion of imported units, provide narrow, rigid qualifications or a limited range of qualifications
- include qualifications that include excessively large units of competency
- have limited pathways or there is no Certificate I and/or pre-vocational offerings, or broad enough qualifications to cater, for example, for rural and remote learners, including Indigenous learners and VET in Schools participants
- are presented in such a way that providers and firms find them difficult to understand
- have packaging rules and units that do not acknowledge different learner cohorts, for example a Diploma heavily weighted with management competencies may meet the needs of people in employment but may not meet the needs of younger learners.

Some stakeholders perceive the Training Package model as inflexible because it:

- reserves titles for qualifications at the time of endorsement (with some calling for greater flexibility to tailor qualification titles to meet the needs of the international market and other commercial and niche markets)
provides for recognition at the unit of competency level, not any smaller sub-set, with some calling for this to be amended to meet the needs of small businesses and equity groups

• can be developed using processes that reflect the status quo, not adequately allowing for rapidly changing industries, technology and future trends.

3.5 Units of competency

3.5.1 Level of detail and size of units of competency

While the structure of units of competency is generally unchallenged, inconsistencies between units, and too large and too small units are criticised. Large units are seen to disadvantage small businesses and learners from some equity groups; small units can break up learning into potentially disconnected segments.

In terms of the level of detail within units of competency, some stakeholders describe range statements as too narrow, encompassing insufficient detail to provide for the broad range of workplace environments including small businesses and those in rural and remote locations. Others call for more detail and better information in evidence guides to enhance assessment validity.

Some research suggests that adding more detail to units of competency or Training Packages will make them too bulky; a balance must be struck between giving users enough information and inappropriately bulking out Training Packages in general, and units of competency in particular. Some users already perceive Training Packages as too complex.

There is support for reducing prerequisites and co-requisites to provide greater flexibility in Training Packages, particularly where the Training Package is used extensively across industries.

3.5.2 Imported units of competency

The capacity to import units of competency adds to the flexibility of Training Packages, particularly for small businesses, rural and remote clients and the needs of a range of enterprises and individuals.

However, some stakeholders express concerns that context specific trainer and assessor requirements can be lost in the importation, compromising the portability of skills across industries or industry sectors. In addition, pre-requisites and co-requisites can make importing units, and their implementation, difficult.

The proliferation of similar competencies across Training Packages makes mapping time consuming and confusing when the equivalent unit simply could have been imported. However, this situation may be improving – over three quarters of Training Package reviews have increased the number of units of competency imported from other industries.

3.5.3 Transfer of competency

The transfer of competency across industries has been an issue since the introduction of competency based training, for example, in cross-industry roles such as forklift driving, providing customer service, ensuring environmental protection, leading a team and communicating in the workplace.

There are two dimensions to the issue of transference of competency. Skills are both generic and context specific. While the generic aspects of the competency might be
transferred, the additional and specialised skills and knowledge that apply in particular industries or enterprises may not.

Some stakeholders call for a more systematic approach to the development and use of units of competency with cross-industry application, and question the capacity of cross-industry units to adequately provide for transfer of the full dimensions of competency.

### 3.6 Assessment

#### 3.6.1 Quality of assessment

The quality of assessment is critical in the VET sector as it underpins the integrity of nationally recognised qualifications. Research indicates that measures to improve the quality and consistency of assessment through the AQTF are having an effect, especially with regard to the quality management systems of RTOs and requirements for industry involvement in assessment strategy development. Whether this improvement is attributable to the AQTF alone, or to a combination of other factors, is not yet clear.

Assessment outcomes from Training Packages relate to the appropriate and adequately detailed integration of assessment information into units of competency, as well as the quality of processes. Assessment information within units of competency is contained in the performance criteria, evidence guide and range statements. Insufficient information in these sections will reduce the quality and consistency of assessment. Some units of competency are criticised as being too thin. In addition, the use of highly contextualised performance based assessment tasks may reduce the predictive validity of assessment in terms of transferability of competencies to new or similar situations beyond the assessment event.

Reports from reviews of individual Training Packages show stakeholders consistently sought better assessment guidance and greater direction on assessment requirements in endorsed components and support materials, including equipment, conditions, resources, and in defining what constitutes suitable workplace simulation in assessment. They also sought exemplars of learning and assessment strategies and better advice on how to achieve flexibility in assessment, including more cost effective, holistic assessment practices to meet diverse learner needs. Training Package reviews also identified the need for improved guidance on the role of the enterprise in workplace assessment and collaborative approaches to assessment.

The reviews of Training Packages variously took on board issues identified by stakeholders, and these are reflected in the second generation of Training Packages – the implementation of which is generally not yet at the point where the effect of these improvements can be gauged.

The nature of stakeholder requests for assessment support materials in the review reports suggests they may be unaware of the wide range of support already in the system for assessment, including a full suite of detailed Training Package assessment resources available for purchase and accessible via the Internet.

Equity groups call for clearer articulation of the meaning and application of reasonable adjustment in assessment to enhance the quality of outcomes for people with disabilities.

#### 3.6.2 Consistency of outcomes

There is potential for wide variation in training inputs with Training Packages. This resides in the choice of learning and assessment strategies, variety of pathways, scope for contextualisation, flexible qualification packaging rules, the context and content of learning, and variations possible through the range statement.
Some stakeholders call for greater direction in assessment processes – a call that strikes at the heart of the flexibility of the Training Package model, and the imperatives for industry responsiveness and learner centred approaches. These flexibilities aim to accommodate the full diversity of work environments, equipment and practices, learners and industry while delivering consistent outcomes. However, exact parity of outcomes is not likely and this may well be the case for a range of formal learning approaches in the VET and other education sectors. The trade off from increased prescription of assessment is the inevitable compromise of flexibility.

As an added inconsistency, there is a growing amount of graded assessment in VET. Clients of the system including learners, parents, and employers as well as the higher education sector are driving this trend.

### 3.6.3 Recognition of Prior Learning

Training Packages and the AQTF encourage up-front assessment to reduce duplication of training and to recognise the skills already held by individuals, regardless of where or how they attained these.

RPL is part of the flexibility of Training Packages and underpins a competency based approach. It provides a valuable source of skills recognition for existing workers, leading to nationally recognised qualifications and incentives to further training, especially in industries with little or no history of training and skill recognition. RPL may be occurring more in enterprises than in institutional learning and studies of RPL have focused more on course credit by RTOs.

Some stakeholders are critical of RPL, expressing concerns about the quality and integrity of qualifications awarded on this basis; potentially, cost cutting and other misuse can drive RPL with an adverse impact on quality.

Others see RPL as a valuable tool for bringing people into nationally recognised training and for recognising and codifying current skills and knowledge. Some industry representatives argue that inadequate attention has been given to the linkage between workplace trainers and assessors and RTOs in the RPL process. Workers may need to have the RPL process mediated by skilled workplace trainers to help them make sense of how the detail in units of competency relates to their currently held experience and skills. Industry stakeholders believe that a major obstacle to increased participation in nationally recognised training is the cost of RPL; they say there is little effective funding for this process to encourage effective partnerships between industry and RTOs.

### 3.6.4 Assessment and Licensing

RTO stakeholders express concerns over the costs and duplication of effort in assessment for the purposes of national recognition and award of AQF qualifications and assessment for the purposes of licensing. Occupational licensing requirements cover a range of areas and derive from judgements about public risk and concerns over social and economic occupational outcomes.

Given the wide proliferation of licensing and regulation, its variance across States and Territories and the propensity for rapid change, better integration of licensing and Training Package assessment is complex. However, there is ongoing work at the national and State and Territory level to raise and address licensing issues and work in partnership with industry regulatory bodies. Over the past two years, significant progress has been made through highlighting issues, structuring opportunities for regulators and VET personnel to jointly address problems and publicise the work.
Users of Training Packages agree that, in terms of Training Package development and review, at the very least packaging rules for qualifications should not impede licensing requirements.

3.7 Training Package qualifications

3.7.1 Alignment to the Australian Qualifications Framework

Training Packages are perceived to be variable in their alignment to the AQF. This variation translates into varied skill requirements and wide variations in the time taken to achieve the qualifications across Training Packages at the same AQF level. Notwithstanding that, theoretically, competency based training is not tied to times, these wide discrepancies are perceived as undermining training integrity.

AQF alignment is open to interpretation, and matters such as industrial awards, salary rates, training structures, regulatory frameworks and the views of industry lobby groups may inform alignment decisions. What is not clear is whether this discrepancy is a variation validly arising from the different needs and requirements for workers across industries and enterprises, or one resulting from inadequacies in the AQF descriptors used to align qualifications. Either way stakeholders view it as a concern.

3.7.2 Qualifications packaging

Each Training Package contains a different level of information in the rules for packaging qualifications, and the packaging rules are presented inconsistently across Training Packages. This makes the desktop analysis of qualifications across Training Packages more difficult and there are calls for greater consistency.

There is also support for more flexible design of qualification pathways based on concerns that the inflexible packaging of qualifications may contribute to limited VET options in some contexts and for some client groups, for example, through rigid prerequisites, awkward packaging rules and too many core competency standards.

This is of particular concern to small businesses, rural clients and equity groups such as Indigenous learners in remote communities; for these clients a diverse choice of electives may be required to meet the realities of workplace implementation and local needs and circumstances.

The counter argument proposes that overly flexible qualification packaging rules create problems with consistency and predictability of qualification outcomes and portability of qualification outcomes to a range of contexts. Too much flexibility in packaging may result in qualifications that are too generic to be useful, and too difficult to recognise skill sets by qualification titles.

The first reviews of Training Packages have seen a trend towards more electives; fewer core competencies; greater flexibility in packaging; fewer and less restrictive prerequisite requirements; variations in the number of qualifications at a range of AQF outcomes; and increased importing of units. Considering these continuous improvement measures, the extent of concerns regarding qualifications packaging of reviewed Training Packages is not yet clear.

3.7.3 Qualification titles

Some stakeholders call for more flexibility at the provider level in titling qualifications with a view that current titles do not provide a clear idea of what the qualification involves, particularly where a range of electives are possible.
Private fee for service VET providers call for more flexible qualifications titling, with the capacity to vary nomenclature, and more flexible qualifications packaging rules so they can differentiate their product in the market, particularly to overseas and international students. They hold the view that the reserving of titles at the point of endorsement, and tight packaging rules limit this capacity.

Others express that the balance must be struck between these demands and the need for nationally consistent recognisable qualification titles and valid outcomes for Australian industry operating domestically and in the international marketplace.

### 3.7.4 Demand and supply of AQF qualifications

Support for Certificates I and II varies across industries with some seeing these as largely VET in Schools programs with general workplace training beginning at Certificate III, and others seeing Certificate II as a general employment level. However, in many industries there is work clearly related to training outcomes at Certificate I and II, and some stakeholders see these offerings in Training Packages as inadequate.

Programs providing full or part Certificate I outcomes may provide pathways for people who have been disadvantaged in access to VET, even if work immediate work outcomes are limited. This may assist access for people from remote Indigenous communities, people in rural settings, some people with disabilities, people who are long term unemployed and other equity group members.

Certificates I and II have also been identified as having value in pre-employment, pre-apprenticeship and in transition training from unemployment into work, or in developing employability skills. In some reviewed Training Packages, for example, in CHC02 Community Services Training Package and NWP01 Water Training Package, Certificate I has been introduced. In others, for example, RTE03 Rural Production, the numbers of Certificate I qualification outcomes have been heavily rationalised.

Considerable variation exists in the number of Certificate III and IV qualifications across Training Packages. There is a move to a smaller number of specialist qualifications and a larger number of general qualifications with specialist streams. Some question the appropriateness of this.

### 3.8 Training Package content

#### 3.8.1 Employability skills

Research strongly supports the strengthening and recognition of generic workplace skills, as well as employability skills that can be formally and informally developed in training, in the workplace and in a range of broader life activities.

In terms of Training Package structure, Key Competencies are currently included in Training Packages at the qualification or unit level, and employability skills are embedded within units of competency in various ways and to varying effect.

Increasingly, Training Packages are taking account of employability skills, for example by embedding them within units of competency. However, stakeholders are calling for consistent approaches, resolution of the relationship of Key Competencies and employability skills, and professional development.

While some stakeholders favour considering how attitudes, values and personal attributes can be better dealt with in Training Packages, there is also opposition to the direct
assessment of this aspect of employability skills in Training Packages due to their subjective nature.

### 3.8.2 Knowledge

Concerns around Training Packages adequately incorporating underpinning knowledge have existed for some time, and the issue has been consciously addressed in Training Package development advice and in reviews of Training Packages.

Effective workplace performance requires the application of skills and knowledge in a range of contexts and contingencies; while we all need knowledge to perform, holding knowledge does not imply the capacity to perform. The knowledge required for effective workplace performance is diverse and includes complex dimensions. With Training Packages, knowledge must be developed and assessed during training, though directly related to the required standard of workplace performance as expressed in the unit of competency.

Training Packages need to adequately deal with knowledge because of its critical and intrinsic relationship to workplace performance and it supports application of technical skills. Knowledge also has a key role in workplace innovation, planning and management and skills transfer into other occupations, industries and educational sectors.

Recommendations for the better articulation of knowledge may have implications for Training Package design and include the following (potentially conflicting) suggestions:

- identifying and incorporating skills and knowledge more clearly within the current Training Package model and structure, including strengthening the underpinning knowledge in designated core competencies
- removing knowledge from individual units of competency and separately describing it within the Training Package, to provide a more holistic view of its role in the competency
- linking knowledge and skills to unit of competency requirements in a more explicit manner
- repackaging underpinning skills and knowledge in some way
- developing a knowledge skills specification volume or a discrete knowledge bank
- identifying prerequisite knowledge.

### 3.8.3 Language, literacy and numeracy

Training Packages explicitly consider and incorporate language, literacy and numeracy and a wide range of support resources and tools have been developed. Training Packages have been reviewed to incorporate these skills in units of competency. The approach of ‘building in, not bolting on’ language, literacy and numeracy is widely considered to be good practice.

This approach positions language, literacy and numeracy directly with requirements for workplace competency and across all AQF levels – moving it from an ‘equity’ domain into a mainstream workplace requirement for all learners. It recognises that language, literacy and numeracy requirements in Training Packages should directly relate to required workplace activities and that context free delivery can lead to the imposition of requirements for skills outside workplace relevant contexts, thus reducing access.

While the incorporation of language, literacy and numeracy into Training Packages has been realised, issues remain at the point of implementation. Providers may not have the skills to
deliver the requisite language, literacy and numeracy skills, and there are historic funding issues around language, literacy and numeracy.

### 3.8.4 Supporting lifelong learning

Lifelong learning is associated with pathways through education, training and employment, and the development of a positive learning culture, not only for individuals, but for organisations. In an increasingly globalised economy, industry requires flexible workers who can adapt to change over the course of their lives, picking up skills as work needs change.

Training Packages have a critical role in enhancing lifelong learning. The breaking up of training into ‘chunks’, and flexible qualification packaging rules in Training Packages provide for movement of individuals through occupations and industries at various stages of their lives; Training Packages can also provide the generic underpinning skills that enable individuals to embrace lifelong learning.

To enhance lifelong learning, Training Package implementation must continue to provide: flexible, responsive and transparent learning pathways; clear articulation within and between VET and other education sectors; and the range of competencies required by individuals and industries.

### 3.9 Industry relationships

#### 3.9.1 Relevance and responsiveness

Training Packages are developed by industry bodies to ensure industry relevant skills formation and recognition, and there is extensive industry involvement in their development. They have been responsive to industry needs in providing industry benchmarks that form the basis for industry relevant training.

Training Packages have been successful in improving training participation and recognition, especially in new areas not previously covered by VET qualifications; a success acknowledged by a diverse range of stakeholders. The challenge is to build and improve upon these achievements. Increased partnerships and improved responsiveness between industry, RTOs and governments at all stages of the process will assist, as will the further development of a training culture and awareness.

Some stakeholders question whether Training Packages should more closely specify work placement and whether clearer definition of the parameters of workplace simulation would increase industry relevance.

There is growing recognition of the need for mechanisms to ensure Training Packages are relevant to new, emerging and convergent industries. In addition, more fundamental questions are posed regarding industry relationships, such as whether the concept of ‘an industry’ and the development along ‘silo’ industry lines is at odds with processes, relationships and structures in the new economy and requirements for cross-industry skills and collective competency.

While some stakeholders see the cycle of Training Package review and continuous improvement as a mechanism for maintaining industry relevance, others see it as distracting for providers. They say it causes them unwarranted expense, both in the replacement of the Training Package and support materials, and in mapping of the old to the new.
3.9.2 Adequacy of consultation processes

While industry has been actively involved to date, some stakeholders see this as skewed towards large business rather than small to medium. Steps have been taken to improve consultation processes in Training Package development, maintenance and review processes and at the level of policy formation including involvement by small businesses.

In addition, steps are being taken to incorporate input from the supply side of training in response to concerns about perceived marginalisation of RTOs from Training Package development and review. While some stakeholders have consistently sought greater educational input into Training Packages, other feedback suggests that current demands on VET professionals diminish their capacity for involvement in Training Package development and their awareness of VET sector reforms.

Stakeholders also feel that consultation with and participation of equity groups, individual learners and communities could be further strengthened and integrated.

Industry advisory arrangements at the national level are in transition, with the progressive formation of Industry Skills Councils. This move is designed to provide a future focus reflecting current industry relationships, rather than traditional demarcations. The effects of this change on the rationale and future development of Training Packages and review processes will be informed by this Review.

3.9.3 Capacity to incorporate new and emerging skills

The influence of emerging technologies affects a wide range of industries and workplaces.

Some stakeholders argue that new technology and work organisation do not necessarily require new units of competency, but rather, involve new applications and/or combinations of broadly based competencies and that the Training Package model is already well placed to deal with these. These stakeholders express more doubt about the capacity of the delivery system to effectively respond to such changes and utilise the inherent flexibility of Training Packages.

Others argue that where technology is changing quickly, Training Packages are not sufficiently responsive and the three-year review period does not meet the needs of rapidly changing high technology-dependent industries such as photonics and nanotechnology. The processes by which Training Packages are developed are criticised by some as being too long winded and inevitably linking Training Packages to past practice rather than what may happen in the future.

As part of the continuous improvement process for Training Packages, a number of measures have been introduced to respond to industry change within the period of endorsement, for example by allowing for the inclusion of elective units and for restructuring information within a unit during its endorsement.

It is clear that emerging technology skill sets require a combination of technical, generic, employability, commercial and business skills that may be difficult to access in the required combinations within existing Training Packages, especially by small businesses. Work placement and, to an extent, simulation may be more difficult in new and emerging industries and may be especially so for VET in Schools provision.
3.10 National recognition

Training Packages provide the basis for nationally recognised qualifications across industries allowing for movement of workers and learners and recognition of their skills across Australia. However, national recognition under the more flexible Training Package model brings with it concerns for some stakeholders about the portability of outcomes and integrity of qualifications across diverse providers, the transferability of skills across industries and, in a globalised context, recognition across sectoral pathways.

3.10.1 Portability and transferability of skills

Training Package outcomes are nationally recognised. However, there is no agreed mechanism apart from AQF qualification testamurs and Statements of Attainment to record the attainment of competencies for learners and employers.

Some stakeholders call for an integrated mechanism, such as a skills passport, where all learning can be recorded to enhance portability and recognition across and within industries and enterprises. While this issue sits slightly outside Training Packages, its use could enhance Training Package uptake and has ramifications for policy and implementation.

In terms of skills transference, some stakeholders express concerns about the calls for greater flexibility in packaging, citing the inability to transfer relevant skills to other industries and contexts if qualifications are too narrow or put together in an ad hoc or idiosyncratic way.

3.10.2 Sectoral and career pathways

While some research identifies improvements in articulation between VET and the higher education sector, other research sees this as patchy and cumbersome. Articulation under Training Packages (and accredited courses) usually involves bilateral negotiation between individual RTOs and universities, or departments to departments, rather than centrally agreed and recognised processes. Articulation arrangements between RTOs and universities are more evident with newer universities and dual sector institutions and less frequent with other universities.

Some stakeholders attribute articulation difficulty to various Training Package factors such as their attention to knowledge, the Training Package enunciation of training outcomes rather than inputs and the lack of graded assessment. The issue of whether graded assessment should be incorporated in some way as a supplementary form of assessment reporting and to aid articulation continues to be an issue for some stakeholders.

In terms of sectoral movement, there is more traffic from higher education to VET than the reverse, further increasing the diversity of VET clients.

Some stakeholders express concern that Training Packages are not broad enough at the Certificate I to IV qualification outcomes to allow for career progression and pathways into qualifications at Diploma and Advanced Diploma.

3.11 Meeting the diverse needs of industry, cohorts and individuals

3.11.1 Diverse industries and small to medium enterprises

The concept of Training Packages must work across the full spectrum of Australian industries in a rapidly changing industrial and economic landscape and in the face of highly accelerated global change.
The industries to be served by Training Packages are diverse. They include industries with a strong training culture, industries with little background in training, new and emerging industries and established industries undergoing change. They range from those that deal with fabrication and products to those that provide services and develop concepts.

As part of the Review and other projects, the training needs of small to medium enterprises (SMEs) have been researched. There is feedback that, despite the inherent flexibility of Training Packages in allowing for the contextualisation and ‘chunking’ of learning that SMEs require, their needs at the point of delivery are still not being met. Delivery strategies that suit SMEs include one-on-one mentoring, action learning, and learning activities and assessments related to the needs of the actual business.

There has been little criticism of the content of the Training Packages for small business – the competencies to manage, and work in, a small to medium enterprise are found in Training Packages, although they may have to be drawn from more than one. However, for some small business stakeholders Training Packages are perceived as complicated documents and difficult for small business to work with. Difficulties related to Training Packages for small to medium enterprises include:

- prerequisites and co-requisites that do not suit the business context
- complexities of Training Packages and the difficulty of mapping to business needs
- use of industry specific language, for example trades and service industries understand competencies in terms of a definite task to be undertaken, whereas business competencies may be more conceptual
- perceptions that business skills are specific to their particular industry and an expectation that there should be more selection of materials to suit their different industry sectors
- sourcing training that meets their specific needs

The small business environment is another context in which business, technical and entrepreneurial skills are applied; some stakeholders suggest all Training Packages should provide small business options and improved guidance to assist VET professionals.

### 3.11.2 Diverse learner cohorts and places of learning and assessment

In practice, Training Packages must provide the foundation for learning for a diverse client base, being trained and assessed by a diverse range of providers, in equally diverse settings.

Learners can include people who are: employed; unemployed; secondary school students; early school leavers; tertiary qualified; changing careers; beginning their career training; or from designated equity groups and individuals with low literacy skills.

Their place of learning is also variable. Participating VET learners can be found in high tech designated training facilities; secondary schools; workplaces, across the full range of enterprises from small, medium to large; within TAFE institutes; in small community or industry based training organisations; within a rural or very remote setting (even under the nearest shady tree).

One nationally recognised model within this rich diversity must be capable of providing relatively consistent outcomes for all clients. Stakeholders variously describe Training Packages as providing a sound platform for meeting the diversity of clients, and not delivering on this promise.
3.11.3 Equity groups

ANTA currently manages an Equity Advisory Service which provides a consultancy service to assist Industry Training Advisory Bodies in ensuring Training Packages are non-discriminatory and meet equity requirements. However, Training Packages are criticised as not consistently addressing key equity issues such as flexibility in assessment, reasonable adjustment for people with disabilities, disability awareness, Indigenous cultural integrity and copyright, gender based harassment and cross-cultural awareness and communication.

There is also evidence that Training Package developers do not sufficiently consider equity groups when determining qualifications in some industries, thus restricting access, for example, by not providing qualifications that are broad-based enough, or AQF Certificate I or other entry level options.

A range of issues has been raised relating to enhancing the participation and success of equity groups or individuals disadvantaged in access to training. Summary comments related to some of their identified needs are provided below.

- **Indigenous clients:** Broader skills sets may be required by rural, remote and Indigenous clients and these may not neatly fit into one Training Package unless it is flexible enough to accommodate contextualisation and the importing of units of competency. Broad-based qualifications may also assist access.

- **Cultural diversity:** Questions arise as to whether Training Packages adequately accommodate the cultural diversity of workplaces and, if not, how they could do this better. There is little data on Training Package approaches to cultural diversity in the workplace and the harnessing of language and skills brought into a workplace by culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

- **People with disabilities:** Niche programs for people with disabilities exist, largely driven by RTOs and communities in partnership with industry. Participation in VET, and in mainstream VET training for people with disabilities is still well below the rest of the community. There are calls for Training Packages to enhance opportunities for people with disabilities by offering enhanced pathways from Certificate I and lower levels to cater for the needs of people with certain disabilities. Factors at the point of implementation also impact on the participation of people with disabilities.

- **Rural and remote clients:** Thin markets typify rural and remote areas, and the need for flexible packaging and broad-based qualifications to accommodate them is required to meet regional needs.

3.11.4 Apprentices and trainees

Research into non-completion of New Apprenticeships indicates that dissatisfaction with these programs has more to do with the particular workplace environment and the poor quality of the training program than with the Training Package itself.

3.11.5 VET in Schools

VET in Schools is an area of rapid increase in VET participation with research showing that the majority of clients (63%) are enrolled in Training Packages albeit within a limited Training Package range.

Broad-based Training Package qualifications are sought for VET in Schools learners to retain choice of pathways for a cohort who may still be relatively undecided about career directions.
3.11.6 Overseas and international students

Research shows that what overseas students may be mainly seeking from VET is a pathway into higher education qualifications. However increasingly, developing countries are coming to ANTA for information about the Australian model for VET.

The relevance of Australian industry knowledge to international clients has been questioned, and a freeing up of qualifications packaging rules and titling is sought by some stakeholders.

3.12 Teaching and learning

Training Packages have transformed the tasks involved in teaching and learning, with associated implications for VET pedagogy.

With the advent of Training Packages, RTOs and the trainers and assessors they employed needed to take on new challenges and consider associated pedagogical issues.

These included: developing appropriate delivery and assessment strategies and resources to translate Training Packages into valid learning and assessment experiences; brokering and customising training within complex industry relationships; identifying and meeting individual and industry needs; and developing a learner-centred approach. Since that time, practitioners have also had to deal with changing Training Packages through the cycle of maintenance and review.

To add to these challenges, by mid 2002 RTOs were required to meet the AQTF Standards for Registered Training Organisations which include specific delivery and assessment requirements.

3.12.1 RTO capabilities and support

Irrespective of the quality of a Training Package, outcomes are contingent upon the capabilities of the RTO. As described, Training Packages do not mandate delivery strategies and learning programs, resources or assessment approaches. They assume a level of competency within the RTO to facilitate valid training delivery and assessment, and the AQTF clearly mandates requirements for this. Some stakeholders see the skills of trainers and assessors as variable, with calls for higher levels of competency and higher mandated qualifications. The reviewed Training and Assessment Training Package is currently in its final draft and as it progressively rolls out will provide further qualifications for a range of VET practitioners.

RTO stakeholders and others cite the lack of direction and scarcity of resources as an issue, assuming these should be centrally provided. Many support materials have been developed including suites of innovative on-line and customisable resources.

The research is not clear on whether the problem is that RTOs are not aware of what is available or whether what is available is insufficient, particularly for new and revised Training Packages in the initial delivery period. Because Training Packages provide for nationally endorsed qualifications, there is also scope for developers and users of Training Packages to source and share support materials across jurisdictions.

Training Packages and associated reforms have involved unprecedented and extensive system communication and RTO support.

• State and Territory Authorities, ANTA and the Commonwealth provide support through a range of initiatives such as networking, provision of Training Package advisers, development and dissemination of various documents such as
implementation guides and user guides, comprehensive web sites, conferences, and diverse professional development activities.

- In terms of nationally provided professional development, programs supporting the implementation of Training Packages, such as *Framing the Future* and *Reframing the Future*, have been widespread and involve direct action at the provider level.

- Numerous conferences and related activities have been conducted canvassed emerging issues and developments and have provided learning and networking opportunities around Training Package implementation.

- With the rapid diffusion of electronic communication during recent years, advice and practical support for Training Package users has improved and become more accessible.

- The National Training Information Service (NTIS) that, amongst other things is the national register for information about Training Packages, accredited courses and provider details for the Australian VET system, has been upgraded.

### 3.12.2 Industry partnerships

Some RTO stakeholders see the potential for industry partnerships as a desirable challenge, others see it as a difficult impost. Many RTOs are responding to Training Packages by providing a range of brokerage, analytical and support services to industry. They find these roles enhance their capacity to provide training to industry.

Industry partnerships take time and, in new and emerging industries and thin markets, may be difficult to effect. While Training Packages do not mandate industry partnerships, the AQTF does require involvement with industry in the development of assessment strategies.
4 Concluding Points

The Review has moved into its third phase – a phase that involves wide stakeholder consultation and input, and the consolidation of findings across a body of research conducted in Phases 1 and 2, as well as further research activity.

Phase 2 has involved a body of research including the development of a comprehensive research report and various commissioned small papers from a range of groups and individuals as described in the introduction to this report.

Documents from Phase 2 are being progressively loaded onto the ANTA website in preparation for Phase 3 consultations and to assist with written submissions.

The key themes raised in Phase 2 include wide ranging issues around:

- Training Package model
- Training Package quality
- Training Package flexibility
- units of competency
- assessment
- AQF qualifications
- Training Package content
- industry responsiveness
- national recognition
- suitability of Training Packages for diverse audiences
- VET pedagogy, professional development and support materials.

Phase 3 of the Review will include a reality check of these key themes at the NTQC-led forum to be held in November 2003 and, after the forum, a consultation paper will be developed providing an analysis of key issues and future responses for Training Packages.

The consultation paper will be widely distributed in December 2003. National consultations will be conducted based on the paper, and stakeholders will also be invited to provide written submissions.

Findings from the consultations, research and written submissions will inform a final paper to the NTQC in March 2004. The NTQC in collaboration with the ANTA CEOs’ Committee, through the ANTA Board, will provide a report and series of recommendations to the ANTA Ministerial Council in June 2004.