Useful Knowledge

A BRIEF HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION OF ADULT COMMUNITY AND FURTHER EDUCATION IN VICTORIA
USEFUL KNOWLEDGE

A Brief History and Description of Adult, Community and Further Education in Victoria
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1. SUMMARY

Adult, community and further education has a long history in Victoria, starting with the early attempts of Mechanics' Institutes to provide general education for working men over 150 years ago. Today the diverse range of providers includes the Council of Adult Education, Adult Migrant Education Services, neighbourhood houses, community based learning centres, universities and TAFE colleges. Collectively organisations providing adult, community and further education utilise about 700 venues across the state and have a unique level of understanding of what is involved for adults of all circumstances who participate in lifelong learning.

Adult, community and further education provides and promotes community based direction and management of a range of quality programs which are responsive to individual and community needs. These include literacy and basic education, participation in the final years of secondary education, English as a second language, liberal arts programs, programs directed towards the development of self expression and creativity, personal development programs, and general educational programs for adults. Equitable access, a variety of methods and locations, cross-crediting and linking of courses to other educational systems and recognition of prior learning are all seen as important in the realisation of the goal of appropriate provision for adult learning.

Adult, community and further education is also noted for its diversity of subject matter and for its independent curriculum development. The close interaction between providers and students and the contribution of volunteers are thought to have led to more student involvement in curriculum development than exists in other education sectors. In addition over 75% of participants in adult, community and further education are women.

A number of important values and characteristics have developed as hallmarks of the approach to the education of adults. These include the community base and innovation in response to socio-economic change within the constraints of limited financial resources. One of the reasons advanced for the innovative quality of adult, community and further education is the flexibility generated by responsive curriculum and relative freedom from the requirements of formal accreditation.

The strong community base of adult, community and further education acts in partnership with the Government. This partnership aims to ensure that learning opportunities for adults are provided in a manner and setting appropriate to their needs. It also aims to strengthen and support the capacity of local communities to respond to the educational needs of their communities, and provides opportunities for adults to prepare for and undertake formal education.
In the context of this partnership both parties take a degree of independent action. Autonomous providers of adult, community and further education often generate a substantial part of their revenue from sources other than the Victorian Government and are accountable to these other sources for the expenditure of that revenue.

Victorian Government funds are frequently used to provide co-ordination infrastructure which contributes significantly to the generation of additional revenue. The Government is more directive about the use of funds it provides specifically for programs, seeing for example adult literacy and basic education and return to study programs as key priorities.

The Victorian Government's involvement in adult, community and further education has increased in a series of clearly defined steps which included grants of land to Mechanics' Institutes, legislation for the Council of Adult Education and funding for TAFE colleges and community providers. In 1989 the Government publicly recognised the need for legislation which would give greater status and more security for administration and planning within adult, community and further education. Therefore in 1991 the Government, in consultation with the community and other interested groups, developed legislation to establish a statewide Adult, Community and Further Education Board and eleven Regional Councils of Adult, Community and Further Education.

The task of developing legislation was complex due to the broad scope of adult, community and further education and the difficulty of defining it in the context of post-secondary education. The legislation incorporates a provider based definition which gives the Board and Regional Councils responsibility for provision in organisations whose primary function is community based adult, community and further education. However the legislation also recognises that a range of programs is identified as adult, community and further education, and that a substantial number of them are conducted through TAFE colleges. Consequently the State Training Board is responsible for the provision of adult, community and further education in TAFE colleges. The State Training Board and Adult, Community and Further Education Board are required to prepare a joint three year plan for the development of adult, community and further education in Victoria.

Members of the Adult, Community and Further Education Board, Regional Councils of Adult, Community and Further Education, and the various boards and committees of management of providers will all have a role in decision making processes to implement the legislation. This history has been written to provide them with a common understanding of the origins and achievements of adult, community and further education as they embark on a new era.
2. HISTORY OF ADULT, COMMUNITY AND FURTHER EDUCATION

2.1 Beginnings

Adult, community and further education in Victoria had its genesis in the Mechanics' Institutes established in the 1840s to provide working men with general and specific knowledge useful to their occupations. In the last quarter of the 19th century these institutes lost any significant teaching function to the Schools of Mines and the Working Men's Colleges, and most commonly became civic centres which provided meeting spaces and library facilities. By 1940 there were well over 500 institutes providing these community resources.

Between 1892 and 1946 university extension provided the main impetus for the development of non-formal adult education. This effectively shifted the focus from vocationally related improvement for working men to the development of individuals as citizens and inheritors of western culture. The desire to draw working men into substantial and sustained general educational programs was still strong and led to the creation of a Victorian branch of the Workers' Education Association (WEA) in 1914 with the support of twenty-eight unions and the University of Melbourne. By 1919 the WEA had nationally broadened its charter to the whole community and union involvement rapidly waned.

The end of the Second World War marked a watershed in the development of adult, community and further education in Victoria. Post-war events have led to the development of several major characteristics which are outlined below.

2.2 Significant Educational Organisations

After the Second World War, a number of significant educational organisations emerged, whose primary function is the delivery of adult, community and further education programs.

Council of Adult Education

Starting in 1944 there was a trend, both in Australia and Great Britain, towards establishing statutory boards to plan and supervise adult education. In Victoria the Council of Adult Education (CAE) was created in 1947 when the Adult Education Act was proclaimed on 21 May. Through establishment of the CAE, adult education was removed from its restricted university environment. It now had ministerial oversight, recurrent government funding, and a base in the community where it sought to address the actual needs of people in their society and their daily lives, rather than a superimposed idea of what these needs ought to
be. The rapid and sustained growth of the CAE demonstrated the importance of this development.

The WEA had meanwhile quickly disbanded and transferred its assets to the Adult Education Association (AEA). The AEA provided an independent forum for all those who wanted to express a variety of adult education interests including advocacy. As it exists now, the AEA is a student body, independent of but closely associated with the CAE.

**Adult Migrant Education Services**

The Adult Migrant Education Services (AMES) emerged in 1947 in response to post war immigration. In 1951 the Victorian Government formalised an agreement with the Commonwealth committing the Department of Education to full administrative responsibility for Commonwealth funded English as a second language (ESL) education which would continue to be provided according to Commonwealth policy directions. The name AMES was adopted in 1975 and the program was transferred from the school sector to the newly created Division of Further Education in 1988.
Rural centres of adult, community and further education

When the Council of Public Education (a watchdog body established by the Education Act) recommended the establishment of the CAE in 1945, it also recommended 'the development of strong local adult education centres based on state primary and secondary schools.' Local adult education centres did not, however, emerge for a number of years and when they did they chose not to share primary or secondary school facilities. The first centre of this kind opened in 1962. The Centre' Wangaratta was in possession of a vacant secondary school in good condition, a local teacher to organise the program, and the support of the local community.

What evolved in Wangaratta became a model for other rural centres of adult, community and further education, each with a local committee of management responsible to the Education Department through the local High School Advisory Council. The development of these centres was strongly supported by the Council of Adult Education and during the 1980s they transferred to the Council of Adult Education by means of a provision in the Council of Adult Education Act 1981. By 1991, 52 rural centres had opted for a formal relationship with the CAE by taking on the legislative status of Local Advisory Committees (LACs). In the mid-1970s rural centres formed an association which ultimately incorporated in 1988 as the Association of Further Education Centre Committees (AFECC).

Locally based metropolitan centres

Diamond Valley Learning Centre (DVLC) in Greensborough was the first locally based metropolitan centre to have adult, community and further education as its main focus. DVLC was established in 1973 with a Schools Commission grant administered by La Trobe University and a co-ordinator on secondment from the Education Department.

At the start of 1974 DVLC transferred to a vacant Diamond Valley Shire Council property and immediately asserted an overt though not exclusive orientation towards meeting the expressed needs of women in that outer urban 'dormitory' area.

There are now about forty learning centres in metropolitan Melbourne. As is the case with the rural centres, over 75% of their committee members, students, teachers, and paid organisers are women. Like the rural centres, they formed an organisation to pursue common interests, known throughout the 1980s as the Association of Neighbourhood Learning Centres (ANLC).
2.3 Dual Purpose Providers

Neighbourhood houses

The neighbourhood house movement began in the early 1970s and grew rapidly throughout the 1970s and 1980s. The two main purposes of neighbourhood houses are to provide community development and educational opportunities. Initially the limited funding available came through local governments and the Community Services Victoria (CSV) Family and Community Support program.

In 1986 CSV established the Neighbourhood House Co-ordination Program (NHCP) to provide secure triennial funding to eligible neighbourhood houses which offer a range of community support and development services. In 1990 the NHCP funded one hundred and ninety neighbourhood houses, most of which also provide adult, community and further education.

Government funding for these educational activities comes from the Board of Adult, Community and Further Education, which also provides funding for activities held in one hundred other houses. The Association of Neighbourhood Learning Centres (ANLC) changed its name to the Association of Neighbourhood Houses and Learning Centres (ANHLC) in 1990 to reflect the neighbourhood house component of its membership.
Victoria has over three hundred neighbourhood houses and numbers are growing in other states as well.

**TAFE colleges**

The release of the Kangan Report in 1974 revealed an urgent need to reorganise and build an effective system providing both technical and further education, henceforth to be known as TAFE. Considerable Commonwealth funding for capital works assisted the emergence of TAFE colleges as the dominant providers of Australia's newest post-secondary sector.

A range of women's access programs, literacy and basic education, ESL courses and tertiary orientation and pre-vocational education programs became widely available and attracted substantial Government funding. These programs now form a significant and much valued component of the TAFE system.

Those who founded the Mechanics' Institutes and established vocational education in the late 19th century had a largely unfulfilled vision of an integrated vocational and general education. This vision has not yet been realised through TAFE because the TAFE curriculum has not yet significantly integrated vocational education with the general transferable education provided by a number of further education programs. However,
the report of the Australian Education Council Review Committee (Finn Review) notes in its opening sentence that 'both individual and industry needs are leading towards a convergence of general and vocational education.'

Most TAFE colleges also provide general adult education and extension programs. For example weekend extension programs such as textiles, computers and horticulture are offered by colleges with particular expertise in those areas.

As in other key sections of provision, further education in TAFE colleges has led to the emergence of an advocacy group - the Common Interest Group of TAFE Teachers in Further Education.

2.4 Other Providers

There is a wide range of important providers of adult, community and further education whose primary function is clearly other than adult, community and further education. This group of providers includes universities which provide extension programs and a wide variety of government departments, including local government. Health Department Victoria and the Department of Agriculture, to name only two, provide substantial education programs for adults in areas such as drug and alcohol education and agricultural extension respectively. Professional associations, unions, churches, ethnic associations, libraries, prisons, schools, art galleries and museums are other examples of organisations which provide adult, community and further education as a secondary function.

The existence in Victoria of such a vast array of organisations providing adult, community and further education as a secondary function contributes to a mosaic of adult learning which extends the flexibility and diversity of educational opportunities for Victorians. These organisations are administered by a range of agencies including local management committees, government departments and statutory authorities.

Given their autonomy of operation and the close connection between their education function and primary focus, it is appropriate that these providers administer their own adult, community and further education program. It would however be valuable for this adult, community and further education effort to be linked more closely with the policy development and planning of other providers.

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1 Australian Education Council Review Committee, July 1991, 'Young People's Participation in Post-Compulsory Education and Training', (Finn Review), page ix, AGPS
2.5 Development of Community Base for Education Initiatives

Community based adult, community and further education is predominantly an accessible response to the needs and aspirations of local community groups. Its content, method and location are generally determined by members of these community groups.

During the 1970s and early 1980s, the community education movement gained support from the Victorian Government through the creation of many school based community education officer positions. This gave impetus to the provision of adult, community and further education through primary and secondary schools. The Australian Association for Community Education (AACE) was established in connection with the movement and had a strong Victorian branch. This Association subsequently amalgamated with the Australian Association for Adult Education, now known as the Australian Association for Adult and Community Education (AAACE).

Throughout this period (until 1990) Commonwealth funding, originally known in Victoria as Voluntary Adult Learning Group (VALG) funding, gave further impetus to hundreds of locally based projects by providing seeding grants. Most of the grants were relatively small but paid large dividends in the establishment of many programs which have continued to be viable into the 1990s.
The development of innovative educational projects and materials for adults in Victoria has been assisted and strengthened by the independence and autonomy of local committees of management. In particular, thousands of volunteers give their time, vision and skills as committee members, teachers, and organisers. Together with the contribution of paid workers, this level of local community involvement has ensured that adult, community and further education identifies closely with people in their community setting. Their initiative and effort demonstrates that Victorian communities have a great capacity to generate and maintain educational programs which contribute significantly to personal and community development.

Finally it should be noted that TAFE colleges, the Council of Adult Education, and Adult Migrant Education Services make a major contribution to community development in a broad social, cultural and economic sense. They also negotiate many aspects of their course offerings with specific community groups and provide these programs in a variety of localities.

2.6 Broadening the Compass

Until the end of the 1960s the curriculum of adult, community and further education focused mainly on cultural and social content. Then, in the same year which saw the opening of the Diamond Valley Learning Centre (1973), adult literacy classes began in three metropolitan centres. In 1973, there were perhaps only 100 places available on a two hour per week basis. Now there are 17,000 adult literacy and basic education students and a growing number who attend for twelve or more hours each week.

By 1973 day and evening classes for adults wanting a Higher School Certificate (Year 12) were also well established. Basic education and returning to study classes which filled the gap between literacy and Year 12 were part of the expansion after 1974. This was particularly so from 1978 to 1982 because the TAFE system used Particular Purpose Grants to encourage the development of adult literacy and access programs.

Following a campaign by the Victorian Adult Literacy and Basic Education Council (VALBEC), the Victorian Government introduced a major adult literacy and basic education initiative in 1988 which consolidated and expanded statewide provision through TAFE colleges and community based providers.

The adult equivalent of a primary and secondary school education has become a key component of adult, community and further education in the last two decades and is set to be a cornerstone of provision for years to come. It arose because adults demanded that their literacy and basic education needs be met and because the community came to understand
that universal equality of educational opportunity and universal literacy in Australia were myths. Many adults want to complete unfinished schooling which they were forced to abandon for economic or social reasons. A Year 12 credential is now a benchmark for many jobs and an important gateway to other educational opportunities. The development of the Year 12 credential has been strengthened by the work of the Adult Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) Network.

2.7 Increasing Professionalism during the 1980s

The increase in provision has led inevitably to an increase in the number of people for whom adult, community and further education is a full- or part-time paid occupation. This in turn has led to pressure for appropriate award coverage for all paid workers. One of the strongest arguments for professionalisation through the development of awards has been the way in which women who predominate as workers are exploited by informal employment arrangements.

There are several major groupings of staff employed in adult, community and further education:

**Professional, Administrative, Clerical, Computer and Technical (PACCT) staff** employed by the Council of Adult Education and community providers under the Adult Education PACCT Staff Award. The relevant union is the Australian Colleges and Universities Staff Association (ACUSA).

**Adult Migrant Education Services teachers** employed under the School Support Teaching Service Award.

**TAFE college further education teachers**, including sessional teachers employed under the TAFE Teaching Service Agreement. AMES and TAFE college teachers are covered by the Federated Teachers Union of Victoria.

**Sessional teachers** employed by the Council of Adult Education and community providers. CAE tutors have interim salary award coverage and through the Adult Education Tutors’ Association (AETA) are negotiating a conditions of service award. The AETA is a CAE based association.

**Social, community development and youth workers** employed under the Social and Community Services (SACS) Award. The relevant union is the Australian Social Welfare Union (ASWU).

**Public servants** employed by the Office of the Adult, Community and Further Education Board and Adult Migrant Education Services under the Public Service Act. Public servants are covered by the State Public Services Federation of Victoria (SPSFV), formerly the Victorian Public Service Association (VPSA).
Adult Education PACCT Staff Award

The Adult Education PACCT Staff Award is the only award specifically developed for the adult, community and further education sector thus far. A branch of the Victorian Colleges Staff Association (now ACUSA) was formed at CAE in 1984 and negotiations to develop this award for adult education PACCT staff commenced shortly after. The Industrial Relations Working Group first met in November 1984 and comprised representatives from the Department of Labour, the CAE, AFECC and VCSA. AETA had observer status and the VPSA joined later.

The parties signed the Draft Adult Education Services Award on March 1987, after negotiations which took 2000 pages to record. Between March 1988 and March 1989 four salaries awards were approved by the Industrial Relations Commission of Victoria (IRCV). The Adult Education PACCT Staff Conciliation and Arbitration Board of the IRCV was established in June 1987. At that stage it covered only CAE and LAC staff; jurisdiction was extended to cover all community based providers in March 1990. The conditions of employment section of the now renamed Adult Education PACCT Staff Award was ratified by the IRCV in August 1990. New single stream classifications under the Structural Efficiency Principle were incorporated into the award in February 1991 and finally, seven years after negotiations commenced, the award was extended to cover all PACCT staff in community based providers in March 1991.

Draft tutors award

Since 1982 the CAE has negotiated an annual Schedule of Existing Fees for Tutors similar to that which is negotiated as part of the TAFE Teaching Service Agreement. In June 1987 the IRCV established an Adult Education Tutors Conciliation and Arbitration Board. There is a draft adult education tutors award under discussion between the Council of Adult Education, the Adult Education Tutors Association and the Department of Labour. Unlike PACCT staff, sessional tutors in the community based sector have no formally negotiated and approved award coverage. Sessional tutors in TAFE colleges are covered by the TAFE Teaching Service Agreement.

Consequences of professionalism for the community based sector

The benefits of developing awards to meet the special needs of adult, community and further education include classifications for positions based on the work actually done, career paths, specified hours of work, leave entitlements, superannuation coverage, negotiated grievance procedures and specified rates of pay for workers.
Alongside this development, the contribution of volunteers and sessional tutors continues to be valued, maintained and supported. This is a significant factor in the continued flexibility and responsiveness of adult, community and further education, which takes pride in its capacity to put funding dollars to their best possible use. Voluntarism and professionalism will continue to co-exist and it is essential that both receive adequate support. Adult, community and further education seeks to ensure that the special skills and qualities needed to work in the community are developed.

Development of award terms and conditions has been accompanied by greater concentration on staff training and development which is specific to adult, community and further education. For a sector in transition towards clearer delineation between paid and unpaid workers, specialised staff training and development for both categories is a high priority.

The additional costs arising from the introduction of industrial awards threaten the capacity to maintain current levels of provision. Consequently, considerable care has to be taken to ensure that shifts in terms and conditions can be appropriately funded.
3. VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT IN ADULT, COMMUNITY AND FURTHER EDUCATION

The Victorian Government’s role in strengthening and supporting community initiatives in adult, community and further education has progressed in a series of clearly identified stages.

3.1 Early Precedents

Victorian Government involvement in adult, community and further education began in the 1850s when buildings were subsidised and land was granted free to the local and community based Mechanics' Institutes. In 1916 the Government began to provide funding for the Workers' Education Association (WEA). However the close relationship between the WEA and the University Extension Board maintained university based provision until 1947 and the Government kept at a distance.

3.2 Council of Adult Education (CAE)

The situation changed dramatically with the 1945 recommendation by the Council of Public Education to establish a statutory adult education board. This assumption of direct legislative responsibility by the Victorian Government included provision of a city centre, specialist staff, and relatively substantial recurrent public funding. From 1947 the CAE, as an independent statutory authority with management autonomy and employing staff directly, has pursued the development of adult education while reporting annually to Parliament.

The development of locally based learning centres during the 1960s and 1970s was encouraged and supported by the CAE which had legislative responsibility to plan, develop and supervise adult education. The Government's contribution to salaries and premises of such centres was administered by the Education Department. In 1981 the Government amended the CAE Act to create a statutory relationship between the CAE and those learning centres which opted to become Local Advisory Committees (LACs) to the CAE. LACs retained autonomy of management.

3.3 TAFE Board

From 1974 considerable Victorian Government funding went towards the provision of adult, community and further education through TAFE colleges. Colleges made an important contribution to the professional development of adult, community and further education staff generally and supported and strengthened community based initiatives.
Central and regional TAFE Boards were established in February 1980 to set policy and determine the distribution of funds for all technical and further education. Regional TAFE Boards undertook regional policy development and planning. They also provided advice and support and allocated and distributed funds to community based providers in their regions. Thus they laid the foundation for the regional work being done today.

While the Council of Adult Education retained its statutory responsibility to advise the Minister on adult education, the TAFE Board's jurisdiction extended to the Council of Adult Education and community based providers, both of which had representation on the Board. The CAE thus became a 'major TAFE provider'.

3.4 Edgar Review

By 1986, when the Minister for Education authorised a Ministerial Review of Adult Education, adult, community and further education was far more complex and diverse than forty years earlier when the CAE was established. Most providers were not directly covered by the CAE's legislation, which meant that no effective mechanism existed with the authority to ensure co-ordinated policy development, planning and resource allocation. The terms of reference for the review's Panel, chaired
by Dr Don Edgar, specifically required wide consultation about existing and future 'objectives, structures, resources, programs, and participation in adult education in Victoria.'

The Ministerial Review reported to the Minister for Education in July 1987. The report, entitled 'Focus on Adults: Towards a Productive Learning Culture' was published in 1988 but is more commonly referred to as 'The Edgar Report'.

The report highlighted two fundamental concepts which derived from the Panel’s findings and which shaped its recommendations: first that adult, community and further education makes an essential contribution to the economic and social well-being of individuals and the community as a whole which this state cannot afford to lose; and second that the Government must 'affirm the important role played by a wide variety of adult education services . . .'.

Almost two-thirds of the report consisted of a comprehensive description of providers and provision (Appendix D). In addition the Panel identified a number of key issues, six of which were: future structural options, data collection, definition of scope and purpose, access, accreditation, and industrial awards.

In an order which was deliberately chosen by the Panel, the Edgar Report recommended that:

- the Victorian Government recognise and extend local networks;
- the Victorian Government acknowledge that a regional framework is essential for appropriate provision;
- Parliament create a new central Board to report directly to the Minister for Education; and
- the Board and Regional Councils administer all adult education funds.

The report also recommended that the proposed Board be supported by a full-time Executive Director and small secretariat which should be located in the Ministry of Education. Thus placed, adult education would have appropriate status and recognition, a more central place in the education sector and authoritative advocates within the bureaucracy.

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3 Edgar, p 6
Through the Executive Director's membership on the senior executive group of the Ministry, it would be positioned to influence all educational policy decisions and resource allocation. It would also be well placed to develop and enhance links with other Government agencies involved in the delivery of educational programs to adults.

3.5 Division of Further Education

In November 1987 the Victorian Government announced its intention to abolish the TAFE Board which was responsible for all vocational and further education and to create separate identities for vocational education and training and further education. The Government would replace the TAFE Board with the Division of Further Education (DFE) located in the Ministry of Education and the State Training Board (STB). The STB also had an Office located in the Ministry of Education.

The STB was given responsibility for administering adult, community and further education delivered by TAFE colleges. Regional Councils of Further Education were established in the existing eleven TAFE regions. Policy responsibility for adult, community and further education delivered by Adult Migrant Education Services (AMES) and community based providers was allocated to the Division of Further Education. DFE was also allocated policy responsibility for specific programs irrespective of their provider. These programs were adult literacy and basic education and the Victorian Certificate of Education for adults, with others to be jointly agreed.

The new arrangements were 'based on the recommendations of the Edgar Report' (Ministerial Statement, November 1987) as they allocated specific responsibility for adult, community and further education to an agency within the Ministry. The Division of Further Education had its own budget which was significantly expanded by the Government in 1988. It also had access to all levels of educational policy formulation and resource allocation through the General Manager. As such, the arrangements were a significant step in the nature and degree of government involvement. They also marked a new phase in the Government's understanding and recognition of the growing importance of adult, community and further education.

3.6 Towards an Adult, Community and Further Education Board

A Ministerial Advisory Committee on Further Education (MACFE) with an independent chair and twenty-one members drawn from a wide cross-section of relevant interest groups was established in August 1989.
Interest in the possibility of implementing the Edgar Report’s recommendations for the creation of a new statutory board continued. In late 1989 the Minister announced that the Government would conduct a public consultation about the most appropriate legislative structure to support development into the 1990s and beyond.

3.7 Adult, Community and Further Education Act (1991)

A statement and discussion paper on the development of legislation for adult, community and further education were released in late 1990. Extensive local, regional and statewide consultations explored options for an appropriate framework, resulting in the receipt of over two hundred written submissions. Analysis of these revealed that, while there were differing views on the best structure, there was overwhelming support for the creation of a Board to be responsible for adult, community and further education.

Following additional consultations early in 1991, options for administrative arrangements were canvassed in greater detail. The Adult, Community and Further Education Bill was then drafted with the advice of a Drafting Reference Group comprising individuals from regional Councils of Further Education, the Council of Adult Education, the State Training Board, unions and peak bodies.
The Bill was introduced into Parliament in May 1991 and lay over between sessions while consultations occurred in all eleven regions of adult, community and further education, and with all interested peak bodies including unions and employers. The broad elements of the Bill were unchanged as a result of the consultations but the large number of amendments agreed to meant that a new Bill was required.

The main purposes of the Adult, Community and Further Education Bill (No. 2), which was introduced into Parliament in August 1991, are:

- to establish a Board, regions and Regional Councils of Adult, Community and Further Education;
- to establish systems so that government can be advised about adult, community and further education needs and appropriate action; and
- to ensure that effective co-ordination and planning of adult, community and further education takes place.

The Adult, Community and Further Education Act was passed by both Houses of Parliament in November 1991.

The decision by the Government to give statutory recognition to adult, community and further education gives formal recognition to the co-operative partnership between community and government in this area. It builds on the acknowledged role of the Government to support community initiative in adult, community and further education and will provide more certainty in planning, policy development, co-ordination and promotion.

The legislation uses the terms 'adult, community and further' in recognition of the importance all three terms have to various interest groups.
4. SCOPE OF ADULT, COMMUNITY AND FURTHER EDUCATION

Adult, community and further education, with its great diversity of providers, programs, and advocacy groups, has always found it difficult to reach consensus about scope and definitions. The Edgar Report noted, for example, that its discussion about the scope and definition of adult, community and further education would certainly not settle definitional issues once and for all.4

4.1 Scope and Definition

Adult, community and further education is one of three broad areas of educational provision for adults in Victoria. The other two are vocational education and training and higher education. All three are collectively known as post secondary education or post-compulsory education. It should also be noted however that the term 'fourth sector' is sometimes used for adult, community and further education to distinguish it from the other three sectors: schooling, higher education, and vocational education. These others are closely identified with accreditation and certification of specific levels of achievement whereas adult, community and further education has been generally informal with the notable exception of the VCE for adults.

In this context, the main ways of approaching a more detailed definition of adult, community and further education can be summarised as the process approach, the program approach and the provider approach. Each has its own intrinsic validity but many find that any one approach on its own does not do sufficient justice to adult, community and further education as a whole, or is inappropriate for specific purposes such as legislation.

The process approach is the broadest of these as it seeks to include the planned learning of all adults wherever it occurs and puts strong emphasis on how and why adults learn. For example, the motivation of adult learners often means that a single course can be used to meet a variety of vocational, personal and recreational needs. This is one reason why many courses are hard to categorise. The process approach was favoured by the Edgar Report: 'In our view, adult education is the education of persons who are beyond the age of compulsory school attendance, with special characteristics when it takes place outside of award courses'.5

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4 (Edgar: 19 - 24)
5 Edgar, p 20
The program approach formed the basis of the working definition given to the Edgar Review panel. The scope of the review was to be planned provision of learning opportunities in the areas of:

- **Adult basic education** which for the purposes of the review covered literacy, basic education, ESL, returning to study, and VCE;

- **Continuing education** which was vocational education for the purpose of updating skills or acquiring new skills but excluding formally accredited courses in post-secondary institutions; and

- **General adult education** which was all non-award educational activities for adults in all fields of study. This included arts, crafts, textiles, photography, film, video, dance, drama, music, family history, fine arts, food, history, literature, languages, politics, philosophy, religion, science, psychology, recreation, travel, health, well-being, movement, personal development, creative writing, and many others.

A similar definition with some differences in terminology was used in the statement and discussion paper on the development of further education issued by the Government in November 1990.
The provider approach distinguishes between providers whose primary function is the provision of the three types of programs outlined in the previous paragraph, and those providers whose involvement in adult, community and further education is a secondary function. This approach underlies the wording of the Adult, Community and Further Education Act 1991 which gives the proposed Board responsibility for provision in organisations whose primary function is adult, community and further education.

The Act does however have one important programmatic qualification. It recognises that provision by TAFE Colleges constitutes such a significant proportion of programs that a joint Three Year Plan for program delivery has to be developed and maintained by the responsible agencies: the State Training Board and the Adult, Community and Further Education Board. The two boards must jointly establish mechanisms to support educational programs. Thus the Act blends a provider and a program approach in its understanding of the scope of adult, community and further education.

4.2 Size

Given the number and variety of providers, it is difficult to cite precise statistics of participation in adult, community and further education. Conservative estimates indicate that each year more than 200,000 people participate. Their enrolments in adult, community and further education courses total more than 350,000. In 1990 there were:

- 27,000 enrolments in VCE subjects
- 17,000 people in literacy and basic education courses
- 24,000 people in ESL courses offered through Adult Migrant Education Services
- 60,000 enrolments in CAE courses

The largest numbers of all attend the wide range of general adult, community and further education courses in community providers and TAFE colleges. Adult, community and further education students attend for at least 15.5 million student contact hours which equates with the total student contact hours of 25,000 full-time university students. The University of Melbourne has approximately 21,000 equivalent full-time students.

Commonwealth Government statistics regarding participation rates in adult, community and further education show that Victoria, with 25% of the total Australian population has 35% of the total national enrolments. The estimated total student contact hours works out at an average of 4.5 hours per year for every Victorian over the age of 15.
**1990 statistical profile**

The following statistical profile represents Victorian participation in adult, community and further education during 1990 excluding programs offered by TAFE colleges.

Access programs include adult literacy and basic education, English as a second language, VCE for adults, returning to study and other preparatory courses. General programs include courses such as history, literature, languages, politics, philosophy, science, arts, crafts, health and personal development. Vocational programs are those specifically related to occupations, where provided by community based organisations and the Council of Adult Education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Access Programs</th>
<th>Access Programs</th>
<th>General Programs</th>
<th>Vocational Programs</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Contact Hours</strong></td>
<td>4,246,547</td>
<td>881,651</td>
<td>3,069,036</td>
<td>213,547</td>
<td>8,410,781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(50.5%)</td>
<td>(10.5%)</td>
<td>(36.5%)</td>
<td>(2.5%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Female Course Enrolments</strong></td>
<td>23,520</td>
<td>21,508</td>
<td>160,501</td>
<td>9,655</td>
<td>215,184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(77%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Male Course Enrolments</strong></td>
<td>19,243</td>
<td>8,472</td>
<td>33,276</td>
<td>3,783</td>
<td>64,774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Course Enrolments</strong></td>
<td>42,763</td>
<td>29,980</td>
<td>193,777</td>
<td>13,438</td>
<td>279,958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Enrolments</strong></td>
<td>20,106</td>
<td>22,779</td>
<td>129,830</td>
<td>10,879</td>
<td>183,614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(11%)</td>
<td>(12.5%)</td>
<td>(70.5%)</td>
<td>(6%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Net enrolments refers to the number of individuals participating

**4.3 Response to Socio-Economic Changes**

Adult, community and further education has shown great capacity to adapt and innovate in response to socio-economic changes which have emerged in Australia over the past two decades. The following account...
draws on the full range of providers to illustrate the kinds of responses made to socio-economic change.

A greater proportion of older people in Australian society

The University of the Third Age (U3A) is a collective term used to describe groups of older people who join together to generate their own learning activities. The 'third age' is a term used for the period of active retirement which follows the first age of childhood and the second age of working life (paid or unpaid). A range of adult, community further education agencies has assisted, mainly by providing rent-free accommodation. There are now over 8,000 students and twenty-eight campuses.

Greater awareness of the need for women to participate in all aspects of community life, including the paid workforce

Adult, community and further education, with its predominance of women participants, has introduced a range of programs developed specifically for women conducted by community providers. These include areas such as basic education, personal development, returning to study, and bridging into vocational education. The Network of Women in Further Education (NOW in FE), a national advocacy organisation formed in 1985, has its strongest and most active branch in Victoria.

Koorie participation in decision making about the social and economic development of their communities

The Koorie Education Strategy for all Koorie education in Victoria is a partnership between Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI) and the Ministry of Education. Adult, community and further education is a significant component, and includes the appointment of seven regional Koorie officers to develop adult, community and further education in conjunction with the Koorie community. These officers are funded by the Commonwealth’s Aboriginal Education Strategy Initiatives Program (AESIP).

Population growth in outer urban areas

Metropolitan community based learning centres and neighbourhood houses have made, and continue to make, a major contribution to community development in many outer urban areas. In addition to their adult, community and further education function, they provide information and support to individuals, families, households, and local networks. They are a focus for local community action and provide meeting space for many community organisations.
Increased use of technology, especially in communication and information

The diversity in the flexibility and needs of the adult and community education client group challenges educational providers to consider learner centred, rather than system or teacher centred, service delivery. Flexible learning strategies are therefore well suited to meeting the needs of this client group.

Flexible learning strategies are based on the adaptation of existing courses and programs and use familiar technology, such as telephone and facsimile machines. With this equipment, it is possible to establish simultaneous links between various learning venues and thereby provide an educational program to a group of students unable to attend a central location. The delivery of curriculum is likely to be through sets of learning materials which may include videotapes, audio cassettes, computer assisted learning modules and case studies. It provides students with choice and control of content, sequence, time, place, pace and means of learning.

Flexible learning strategies using new technology have been widely applied throughout Victoria to expand curriculum options to primary and secondary students in isolated rural schools. Within adult community and further education, these strategies have been used to expand the provision of adult literacy and basic education, returning to study courses and
Victorian Certificate of Education for adults. Some TAFE colleges have considerable experience in flexible delivery, and have developed course structures which enable students to take part of a unit of study by distance education and part by face-to-face tuition.

In addition to the benefits offered by flexible learning strategies to rural communities, the development of co-operative links between community providers and TAFE colleges in the outer eastern area of Melbourne has clearly demonstrated that these strategies can significantly increase access by people in the metropolitan area.

While the Victorian experience has shown that additional resources are needed in the initial phases to provide equipment, telephone lines and staff training, it has also demonstrated that flexible learning strategies often enable larger enrolments than traditional modes of delivery and are often therefore cost effective.6

Industry and award restructure

In the early 1980s the Australian Council of Trade Unions began to develop the proposals which were eventually published in 'Australia Reconstructed.' The Structural Efficiency Principle of the National Wage Case in August 1988 stressed the importance of training, and it was then only a matter of time before unions, employers and government realised that basic education for workers was essential to the success of award and industry restructure.

Adult, community and further education had already identified and responded to that challenge in a number of ways. For example, the concept of workplace basic education was generated in 1983 by staff at the Council of Adult Education who were aware that many literacy and basic education students were motivated by a desire to improve their career prospects, or if they were unemployed, to increase their chances of obtaining paid work. On the grounds that improved educational levels of the workforce would lift productivity the CAE successfully sought substantial government funding for a pilot project. There are now more than twenty providers across the state offering workplace basic education.

Thus it can be seen that adult, community and further education meets individual, community and broader social needs. For many adults, it is a starting point for planned learning, for others it provides pathways to work and further study. There are also many who undertake adult, community and further education for its intrinsic value.

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5. VALUES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF ADULT, COMMUNITY AND FURTHER EDUCATION

This document has already referred to a number of key values and characteristics which are important to adult, community and further education wherever it is delivered. These and others are summarised and grouped below. Few would argue that adult, community and further education practice invariably adheres to this outline, however the summary provides an ideal against which practice is often measured.

5.1 Provision

In response to the diversity of adults as learners, educational programs are:

- innovative in response to socio-economic changes;
- provided free of charge or at minimal cost where issues of access and equity are involved;
- broad in terms of content and method because there are few limits on the subjects offered, the location and method of delivery;
- the result of individual and community development approaches to education which stress the importance of interaction between individuals and their community through problem solving methodology; and
- co-operative rather than competitive both in teaching methodology and approach to decision making at all levels.

With the exception of the VCE for adults, most programs have not had the accreditation requirements of higher and vocational education. The flexibility of adult, community and further education provision has often been attributed to this circumstance.

5.2 Students

Students in adult, community and further education are adults with all the breadth and diversity of experience, knowledge, psychological development and values which the word ‘adult’ connotes. As a result they:

- choose from the diversity of a myriad of programs for a multitude of purposes;
- seek opportunities to develop social support and friendship networks;
look for education which will assist them to communicate with confidence, effectively manage their lives, participate in democratic processes, think critically, be socially informed, challenge assumptions about the place of individuals in society and make informed judgements;

- actively avoid educational settings designed for children or young people in favour of those designed specifically for adults;

- welcome the opportunity to participate in curriculum development and the overall planning of their own education; and

- have substantially contributed to the development of adult, community and further education.

The high proportion of women students in adult, community and further education (75%) means that the content and method takes significant account of the needs of women.

5.3 Tutors and Teachers

Tutors and teachers in adult, community and further education share common ground with their students. As citizens in the same community, tutors and teachers:
- negotiate much of the curriculum with their students;
- are often able to forge more equal relationships with their students;
- are predominantly women who have influenced educational processes to accommodate the specific learning needs of women;
- are strongly committed to the inherent value of the work they do.

Community based and TAFE college tutors and teachers often come into adult, community and further education as volunteers, casual workers or on a sessional basis. This means they often have minimal career paths and relatively poor terms and conditions.

5.4 Communities

The community base of adult, community and further education operates on a well developed set of principles and processes. Where communities are involved they:

- create their own adult, community and further education programs through local knowledge, and wide ranging, independent initiative;
- function through a vast array of interactive and co-operative networks at local, regional and state levels;
- contribute an exceptional level of voluntary time, skills, and vision;
- insist on autonomy of management; and
- have welcomed the Government's participation in the development of community based adult learning.

5.5 Victorian Government

The Victorian Government supports adult, community and further education because of its substantial contribution to Victoria's economic, social and cultural development, through responsive, flexible, and innovative programs. Therefore the Victorian Government has determined that it will:

- provide statutory shelter for adult, community and further education and legislative clarity of structure for policy development, effective planning and accountability for the expenditure of public funds;
• define its role as one of partnership with the community;

• make funds available for programs, program co-ordination and support services; and

• accept responsibility, in consultation with the sector and other interested parties, to develop policy priorities for the expenditure of government funds.

The concept of a partnership is one of two equal parties, jointly negotiating policy and jointly providing management and leadership. Partnership demands that the parties respect each other's contribution and acknowledge that each is dependent on the other for success in achieving mutually agreed goals.
6. GOALS AND AIMS OF ADULT, COMMUNITY AND FURTHER EDUCATION

6.1 Goals

The long term goals of adult, community and further education are to:

- provide for and promote learning opportunities for adults in a manner and setting appropriate to their needs;

- support and strengthen the capacity of local communities to respond to and meet the educational needs of members of their community; and

- provide opportunities for adults to prepare for and undertake formal education.

To achieve these goals, adult, community and further education aims to provide and promote:

- the community based direction and management of adult, community and further education;
a range of flexible quality programs which are responsive to 
individual and community needs including adult literacy and basic 
education, adult participation in the final years of secondary 
education, English as a second language for adults, liberal arts 
programs, programs directed towards the development of self 
expression and creativity, personal development programs and 
general educational programs for adults;

additional opportunities for adults to complete the equivalent of a 
full secondary education;

equitable access to educational programs;

a variety of methods by which programs are implemented;

a variety of places at which programs are implemented;

the cross crediting and linking of adult, community and further 
education courses and courses provided by other education systems; 
and

the recognition of prior learning.\(^7\)

\(^7\) Adult, Community and Further Education Bill (No. 2) 1991
7. CURRENT PRACTICE DESIGNED TO ACHIEVE GOALS AND AIMS

Current practices of adult, community and further education, developed to implement goals and aims, are briefly outlined in this section. Each aim of adult, community and further education is included according to the order in the previous section.

7.1 Community Based Direction and Management

Community based direction and management is a clearly established aim of adult, community and further education, and is implemented and supported in a variety of ways.

Management autonomy of community providers

This issue is of particular importance to community based providers which have vigorously maintained their independent status as autonomously managed, autonomous employers, and autonomous providers of adult, community and further education programs. In the case of the Council of Adult Education, maintaining legislative as well as management autonomy is a key priority.

Service agreements

Service agreements are documents negotiated between the funding body and an agency which delivers services. Typically a service agreement outlines the purpose or intent of the agreement, the responsibilities of the providing agency such as how it will allocate and account for expenditure of funds, and the responsibilities of the funding agency. Some regions are currently trialling agreements with a view to the adoption of a consistent statewide approach which is appropriate to the various levels of funding.

Local networks

The Edgar Report recommended that local networks of adult, community, and further education, already an important feature, be strengthened and encouraged. These networks vary in their geographical range and focus. Depending on local needs they may form on the basis of provider type or may focus on a particular kind of program being delivered by a number of providers. Regional Councils of Adult, Community and Further Education provide direct financial assistance to local networks where possible and appropriate.
Regional Councils and sub-committees

Regional Councils and their sub-committees, through their membership, gather together a wide range of community based adult, community and further education experience. This membership informs and directs the process whereby regional policy priorities set the planning context and resources are allocated. Regional Councils and their sub-committees also provide the basis for statewide planning and policy development.

Involvement of volunteers

Several thousand Victorians participate as volunteers through their membership of management committees of community based providers, regional Councils of Adult, Community and Further Education, the CAE Board, and TAFE college councils. Collectively they participate in the full spectrum of Victoria's metropolitan and rural community life. Volunteers therefore provide a significant community base for the direction and management of adult, community and further education.

Activities of peak bodies

The involvement of influential peak bodies advocating on behalf of employers, unions, programs, and special interest groups makes a significant contribution to community based management and control.
Three peak bodies, AFECC, ANHLC and VALBEC, receive funding from the Adult, Community and Further Education Board to perform a range of functions including the collation and dissemination of information, provision of advice to Government, and specified projects which their membership base equips them to carry out.

7.2 Flexible Quality Programs

Current strategies to achieve a range of flexible quality programs responsive to individual and community needs include:

Co-ordination and administrative support infrastructure

In budgetary terms this is a key strategy in the development of flexible quality programs which intermeshes in complex ways through various levels of activity.

Local community based providers. Co-ordinators paid to develop programs in local providers provide a direct link between adult, community and further education and the community as an integral part of their work. They establish and maintain links with community organisations and other providers of adult, community and further education in their locality, foster adult opportunities in surrounding communities where appropriate, assist committees of management to develop an auspicing role, and allocate time to foster the development of volunteer networks. All these links strengthen their capacity to develop relevant and accessible educational programs which is the main focus of their work. For example participation in women’s networks often leads to the development of educational programs and conferences particularly for women.

TAFE colleges. TAFE college infrastructure is funded primarily by the state Government. This infrastructure includes teaching support, student services including child care, learning resources, administration services and property services.

The CAE. The CAE is an experienced and well resourced organisation with legislated powers to enter into agreements for the educational support of other providers. Thus it is an important resource for adult, community and further education without being part of the administrative support structure.

Local networks. Some regional Councils provide funding for the employment of network workers to develop links, share information, foster professional development, and provide support. The focus of these public sector positions, located in providers, can be a cluster of providers and/or a program specific function such as adult literacy and basic education.
Regions. Regional staff are employees of the Office of the Adult, Community and Further Education Board. They provide regional co-ordination and administration particularly through executive and planning support to regional Councils and communication of information to all interested parties.

Administrative and educational support for providers includes direct assistance to individual providers, regional co-ordination and development, and specialist advice in areas such as Koorie education, literacy and basic education, general education, the education of people with disabilities, curriculum development, staff development, promotion and publicity, data collection, and administrative systems.

Regional staff are also required to liaise with all other appropriate regional government agencies and to provide executive support to the General Manager of DFE and the Minister. Another key function involves representation of regional perspectives in statewide policy and planning processes.

Statewide level. Co-ordination infrastructure at the statewide level is provided by the central staff of the Office of the Adult, Community and Further Education Board. The Office carries out a range of executive and administrative support functions which mirror on a statewide basis those provided by regionally based staff. This includes support for the Board in
its responsibilities for development of statewide policy frameworks, planning, and special projects with a statewide focus. The central office also liaises with other Victorian and Commonwealth Government agencies, unions and employer groups.

Through the General Manager's membership of and participation in high level state and national committees and working parties the Office contributes substantially to the development of adult, community and further education.

In line with the partnership relationship between the government and the community it is important to note that regional and central staff employed by the Office of the Adult, Community and Further Education Board do not manage the delivery of programs or the activities of autonomous providers of adult, community and further education.

**Industrial relations**

Decisions affecting the terms and conditions of staff employed in adult, community and further education are subject to the decisions of the IRCV and of the Industrial Relations Task Group which is a sub-committee of Cabinet.
With regard to public sector employment, where the Government funds autonomous employers, current interim policy concerning industrial relations is based on the principle that where positions are funded to achieve Government objectives, the level of funding should be sufficient to meet the full award rates. Government funding to community based employers in the sector is conditional on adherence to award conditions.

In most instances community based employers are not in a position to provide all or part of the funding of positions from sources other than the Government. Therefore in most but not all instances, co-ordination infrastructure positions in local providers are fully funded by the Government.

In 1990 the Division of Further Education established a Further Education PACCT Industrial Relations (FEPIR) Working Group which includes representation from the Department of Labour, ACUSA, AFECC and CAE. This Working Group exchanges information and explores issues about industrial relations matters affecting PACCT staff.

Program funding priorities

Government funding supports five broad adult, community and further education program areas:

- literacy and basic education;
- English as a second language;
- VCE for adults;
- general adult education programs; and
- vocational education where provided by community organisations.

Significant amounts of funding are tied to specific programs, in particular literacy and basic education, and English as a second language.

Curriculum development

In Victoria TAFE colleges are significant providers of literacy and basic education and the VCE for adults. Responsibility for course and curriculum development for these areas as well as college based English as a second language and access programs, is now held by the General Studies Network Management Consortium located at the Western Metropolitan College of TAFE. The Consortium consists of a number of colleges each with particular functions, for example Swinburne College of TAFE (Prahran Campus) is responsible for literacy and basic education. VCE curriculum development also takes place through the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board and School Support Centres.

The overwhelming bulk of curriculum development for adult, community and further education is carried out by providers in response to the direct
needs of their students. In relation to adult literacy and basic education, the Office of the Adult, Community and Further Education Board has had an important role in a variety of curriculum development activities. For example it has convened a curriculum development and research group, commissioned forums on curriculum and research, convened regional working groups and investigated the need for a certificate in adult basic education.

Staff development

Peak bodies, regional Councils of Adult, Community and Further Education, TAFE colleges, the Council of Adult Education and the Office of the Adult, Community and Further Education Board place great importance on encouraging and supporting provider commitment to staff development. General guidelines issued to Regional Councils have recommended that five per cent of grant funds be directed to staff development. To date all Councils have committed at least this amount for regionally based skills development initiatives. These include regional conferences, support for networks, specific workshop programs and funds for staff to attend statewide and national activities. There is a growing demand for accredited training from all areas of adult, community and further education.

Data collection and research

The Office of the Adult, Community and Further Education Board has established a Management Information Systems working group to identify information needs and appropriate ways of gathering relevant data. A centralised data base tracks information about providers, allocation of funds, student profile, program profile, and student contact hours.

Considerable work has also been done in the area of evaluation, including the development of national evaluation frameworks and performance indicators for adult literacy and basic education.

7.3 Opportunities for Full Secondary Education

Provision for adults wanting to complete the equivalent of a full secondary education is a major component of adult, community and further education.

Literacy, numeracy and basic education

Literacy, numeracy and basic education courses cater for the beginning student and extend to the basis or grounding which is needed in order to complete accredited vocational courses, the VCE for Adults and higher education. Provision is through access and bridging courses as well as
literacy and language components within vocational education programs for example. Basic education includes competencies associated with gaining employment or promotion in the workplace, as well as the range of skills needed in general family and community life. As outlined earlier workplace basic education has become a key element in literacy, numeracy and basic education provision. Basic mathematics and science are now being included in many programs.

Providers are noted for their diversity and for the flexibility of their programs. Access programs are open to all potential students but special courses exist to meet the needs of particular groups. Most students are able to choose from day-time or evening programs and part-time provision of at least two hours a week is available across the state. More intensive programs are beginning to emerge and a number of providers, most notably TAFE colleges and the CAE offer full-time study options. Programs are offered through distance modes, by volunteer tutors on a one-to-one basis, and by paid teachers of groups.

Regional DFE staff organise local adult literacy networks, provide program planning and management support, advise on curriculum and staff development issues and generally work to maintain and develop efficient and effective local provision.

**English as a second language**

Primary responsibility for provision is vested in the Commonwealth funded Adult Migrant Education Services (AMES) - which seek to ensure that its programs lead into further learning opportunities in community based providers and TAFE Colleges. Programs seek to take account of ethnic diversity in the Victorian community, and of the different practical circumstances and learning preferences of adult migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB). English in the Workplace (EWP) is growing in importance as award restructuring takes stronger effect in workplaces. In AMES, counselling, placement and referral is guided by use of the Australian Second Language Proficiency Rating (ASLPR).

As a result of changes in Commonwealth Government policy, in 1992 AMES has responsibility for students below ASLPR Level 2. Above this level they must seek other educational opportunities provided by the CAE, many TAFE colleges and community based providers. This is placing great pressure on these providers.

It should be noted that while many ESL students need language proficiency in order to complete the equivalent of a full secondary education, a significant number of recent arrivals already have this capacity.
Returning to study

Many adults planning a return to secondary or tertiary study look for opportunities to improve or revise their skills in areas such as essay writing, analysis and synthesis of ideas, research, critical thinking and organisation of time. Others lacking a specific purpose look for more general skills of confidence, assertiveness, development of personal goals, and awareness of the range of work and study options open to them. A number of courses of this kind are specifically targeted at groups such as women thinking of returning to work or study.

Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) for adults

This qualification marks the completion of senior secondary education over a two year (four semester) period. For adult students, VCE is awarded on successful completion of eight semester units, comprising two units of English (the only compulsory study) and three pairs of units at semester 3 and 4 level. Adults are not required to complete Year 11 studies before attempting Year 12, although many choose to do more than the minimum required units. Adults are able to complete their VCE studies in one year by full time study or spread over a number of years on a part-time basis. Studies already completed (e.g. HSC or Matriculation) count towards VCE. More than ninety per cent of VCE provision for adults is delivered through TAFE colleges.
7.4 Equitable Access to Educational Programs

While adult, community and further education enables all members of the community to enrich their lives, it also has a key role to play in enabling groups to overcome traditional barriers to full participation in education and employment opportunities. There has to be equitable access to adult, community and further education. But in addition, it is important that the programs continue to provide pathways to higher and vocational education.

The importance of community based and workplace literacy and ESL programs in this regard cannot be underestimated and there are a number of special initiatives and strategies which are directed at the needs of particular groups.

The variety of programs, methods and locations employed by adult, community and further education, as well as the unique spread of providers across the state ensures that access is usually available in one way or another. This is further enhanced by the fact that access programs are not subject to tuition fees.

Education for adults with disabilities

As a matter of principle, adult, community and further education is committed to ensuring that no person who meets the criteria for entry to programs is excluded on the grounds of disability. Strategies to achieve this include arranging support services for students with disabilities, staff training and development for staff in providers, locating programs in venues which allow access for those with physical disabilities, and ensuring that participation in mainstream programs is maximised.

The project known as the ‘18+ Transfer Project’ is an important Government initiative. In 1989 the 18+ Transfer Working Party of the Ministry of Education recommended that responsibility for the education and training of students 18 years and over with an intellectual disability be transferred from primary and secondary school settings to adult environments. Some of these students are already transferring to adult, community and further education providers through pilot projects designed to establish good practice. Included in the pilots are programs which draw on the expertise of both community based providers and TAFE colleges.

Koorie education strategy

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy (AEP), as adopted by all State/Territory Governments in October 1989,

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* Much of the material in this section is an edited version of parts of the Victorian Government submission to the Senate Inquiry into Adult and Community Education.
aims to achieve positive education and training outcomes from pre-school to higher education.

The policy stresses the importance of increased participation by Aborigines in education decision making processes, and as administrators and teachers in all levels of education.

Within the context of this Policy, a Victorian Government Working Party has developed a strategic plan which will support the development of Community Education Centres in areas with significant Koorie populations and achieve parity in the participation rates on Koorie students at each level of education and training, including further education.

The further education regional planning process for Koorie adult education is currently identifying literacy and basic education and other educational needs. Regions have allocated program resources and Koorie organisations will be supported to become registered further education providers.

Access to Information by women

The Victorian Government has identified access to relevant, user friendly information as one of the fundamental factors in assisting women to take advantage of educational and employment opportunities. A range of strategies was drawn together in the Choice and Opportunity Plan for Women.

An important component of the Choice and Opportunity Plan for Women is the implementation of the Job and Course Explorer (JAC) system in neighbourhood houses and community learning centres. JAC is a computerised program providing information on courses offered at universities, Colleges of Advanced Education, training and further education providers, as well as occupational and labour market information. Initially available in schools, public libraries and TAFE colleges, the JAC system has the capacity to respond to information needs related to cross-accreditation and credit transfer as arrangements for these develop.

The implementation of JAC in neighbourhood houses and community learning centres has been supported by the provision of computer equipment, extensive staff development, media promotion and telephone support. This initiative will improve women's access to information about education, work and training. It will also provide significant support for the administrative responsibilities of neighbourhood house workers and enable a greater understanding of and participation in the broader educational networks.
In addition the Job and Course Explorer Unit is developing a computer program for an adult, community and further education module which will be updated every six months.

**Child care**

The Office of Pre-school and Child Care (OPCC) was established in 1990 to consolidate the planning, co-ordination, evaluation and service delivery function of child care and kindergartens. OPCC now has responsibility for all pre-school and child care services in the State. The new arrangements will allow OPCC to consider innovations in the provision of child care, while maintaining quality of service.

In order to directly support adult involvement in education and training, child care is provided in most TAFE colleges, the CAE and approximately 250 neighbourhood houses and other venues where courses are being run.

**Concessions**

For general and vocational education programs where fees are charged, the Council of Adult Education and some community providers offer a discount to holders of the Victorian Senior's Card. Concessions for people on lower incomes are a significant aspect of fee policies operating at the CAE and many community based providers. The TAFE Fees and Charges
Policy provides for a wide range of concessions and courses exempt from enrolment fees. These include programs which specifically target women, Koorie, the long term unemployed, NESB students, pensioners, the disabled, and literacy and numeracy.

**Data collection and analysis**

Increasing use is being made of data at statewide, regional and local levels to ensure that planning takes account of access and equity. Recent work on how funding is allocated to regions is a significant example of this approach.

7.5 **Variety of Methods by which Programs are Implemented**

The diversity of adult learners challenges providers to consider learner centred rather than system or teacher centred delivery.

**Duration of courses**

Single lectures, half-day courses, single day programs, weekends, extended residential arrangements, two to three hour sessions spread over periods of ten weeks, twenty weeks or a full year are typical of the variety of length and frequency of adult, community and further education provision.

**Level of entry**

In most instances in the areas of general and vocational adult, community and further education there are no prerequisites for entry. However where appropriate introductory, intermediate, and advanced courses are advertised with students normally self-selecting the appropriate course based on the advertised description. Entry to programs such as literacy and ESL is often through an interview where the needs of the individual student are explored in detail and every effort is made to place each person in an appropriate program.

**Flexible learning modes**

Flexible learning strategies usually incorporate existing courses and programs and use familiar technology supplemented with documentation such as course notes and correspondence. Technology consists of tapes, computers, fax machines, audio cassettes, telephone contact, and videos. With this equipment it is possible to establish simultaneous links between various venues and thereby provide a program to a group unable to attend at a central location, students are provided with choice and control of content, sequence, time, place, pace, and means of learning. These modes are useful in outer urban areas as well as in isolated rural areas.
Individual and group learning

Self-directed learning is a key strategy for many adults some of whom participate in programs as part of a broad program of self-directed learning in an area of major interest. Facilities exist to assist with this kind of learning including the Educational Resource Centre at the Council of Adult Education and Open Learning Centres at a number of TAFE colleges. Similar facilities exist on a smaller scale in centres across the state, and adult, community and further education has an obvious interface with municipal libraries in relation to this type of learning.

One-to-one teaching has been an important strategy for the teaching of literacy and ESL for two decades. It is most commonly employed for those whose learning in groups needs supplementary help and for those who are unwilling or unable to learn effectively in groups.

The methodology of small group and group learning is highly developed in adult, community and further education because group learning is one of the foundation stones upon which the educational program rests. The value of groups for adult learning is actively promoted and the skills involved are frequently the subject of staff development programs. Recent publications describing group processes indicate that adult, community and further education in Victoria is at the forefront of research into this form of learning and how it can be best facilitated by teachers.

7.6 Variety of Places at which Programs are Implemented

The flexibility of adult, community and further education, and its closeness to the community ensures that a wide variety of learning settings appropriate to adults are available without major capital investment by the sector. In addition the network of locations is a key strategy in ensuring that adult, community and further education is accessible to the broad community.

Adult learning centres

AMES has thirteen major centres in metropolitan Melbourne including its city centre at Myer House. Together with mini-centres elsewhere the centres offer courses of varying length and intensity. The CAE has a large city centre supplemented by seven major suburban venues which it uses for evening programs. In addition, across the state there are over one hundred learning centres set up specifically to cater for the learning needs of adults in adult, community and further education.

Other educational settings

Of these other settings TAFE colleges are the most important. They provide both vocational and adult, community and further education in
environments especially suited to adults. Along with the much older tradition of adult education extension programs provided in higher education institutions, TAFE colleges have a proven attraction for adult students as venues.

Community venues

A wide variety of community venues such as church buildings, welfare centres, resource centres, libraries, and health centres are used by AMES, CAE, TAFE colleges and community based providers as locations for courses.

Private venues

Volunteer tutors organised and supported to teach ESL, literacy, numeracy and basic education visit the student's home, or use their own home as the location for one-to-one teaching. In addition hundreds of book groups organised by CAE take place in lounge rooms across the state.

Workplaces

ESL, literacy, numeracy, and basic education classes in workplaces focus on the needs of workers and workplaces. These programs are being integrated with comprehensive training plans developed by Industry Training Boards. As a result, adult, community and further education is participating in literacy audits and in raising awareness among supervisors. In addition, a number of adult, community and further education providers are delivering a wide variety of programs in workplaces based on their expertise in assisting adults to develop a range of personal and vocationally specific skills which employers see as relevant to the needs of their workforce.

7.7 Cross-Crediting and Linking

The possibility of an adult, community and further education accreditation system is under investigation. The legislative power to accredit adult, community and further education courses is held by the Victorian Post Secondary Education Commission (VPSEC). Under the Adult, Community and Further Education Act this power can be delegated to the ACFEB. At this stage there are only two relevant areas:

VCE for adults. The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board (VCAB) has legislative responsibility for accrediting VCE courses and currently the VCE for adults is the only formally accredited program conducted in the adult, community and further education sector. The VCE can be used as a credential for entry to employment and for promotion, or to qualify for selection into a university or college course. There are cross-
crediting arrangements between the VCE and a number of vocational education certificates and Advanced Certificates.

**Adult basic education curriculum accreditation framework.** The Office of the Adult, Community and Further Education Board, in conjunction with the State Training Board is managing the development of an accredited framework for current and future adult literacy and basic curriculum. This framework will be able to be applied to provision in community providers such as neighbourhood houses and learning centres, TAFE colleges and the Council of Adult Education. Students will receive documented evidence which recognises their competence against adult benchmarks of success. Pathways to other education and training will be facilitated. The framework will offer adult, community and further education providers a more strategic and co-ordinated structure for the development and delivery of adult literacy and basic education.

### 7.8 Recognition of Prior Learning

The State Training Board has developed and endorsed a process to apply to TAFE colleges for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). Prior learning takes two forms: structured ‘formal’ learning at educational institutions and experiential or ‘informal’ learning which comes from life experience and which for adults can include support for a family, work experience, and community involvement. A process to identify learning and transferable skills developed through life experience is particularly important for those who have limited formal education. Increasingly adults are interested in documenting the learning they do in informal adult, community and further education programs and the sector is responding by providing documentary evidence of participation, and by assisting adults to compile their own portfolios of prior learning.
8. CONCLUSION

The general context of post-compulsory education will continue to undergo rapid changes in this decade. High retention rates among senior secondary school students, the intention to promote and extend TAFE training and education, and the pressure to develop more effective links between educational systems, and between education and employment, are all features of the current educational environment. Adult, community and further education will have to take positive and well informed action to keep pace with these changes while maintaining the principles and practices which are most useful to adults.

It is clear that the following strategies will be important for the sector to pursue:

- planned, co-ordinated and documented work in relation to evaluation of educational effectiveness, research, clarification of educational goals, development of methodology, and curriculum development;

- professional development which will involve a stronger research effort into the theory and practice of adult learning and liaison with the higher education sector to further develop tertiary level qualifications;
• development of the sector’s capacity to respond to groups with special needs;

• a clear sighted response to major social trends such as the increase in the numbers of part-time workers and in the numbers of long term unemployed people;

• the extension of pathways for students through formal accreditation of programs where appropriate, and recognition of prior learning;

• clarification of priorities for expenditure of government funding;

• more effective promotion of adult, community and further education;

• expansion in the services offered and the funding base available;

• an expanded infrastructure; and

• sound industrial relations processes and appropriately resourced terms and conditions for all workers in the sector.

Adult, community and further education now has a clear decision making structure in place which it has generated in co-operation with the Government. The history and philosophy of adult, community and further education have significantly shaped a structure which is primarily designed to take adult, community and further education into the 21st century.

In addition to this structure, adult, community and further education can draw on broad community and government commitment. By taking due account of the past and looking forward to the future, the sector is well equipped to deal with the major challenges ahead.
## List of Relevant Acronyms

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<td>Australian Association for Adult and Community Education (formerly AACE)</td>
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<td>ACLAME</td>
<td>Australian Advisory Council on Languages and Multicultural Education</td>
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<td>ABE</td>
<td>Adult Basic Education</td>
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<td>ACAL</td>
<td>Australian Council for Adult Literacy</td>
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<td>ACER</td>
<td>Australian Council for Educational Research</td>
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<td>ACET</td>
<td>Australian Council for Employment and Training</td>
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<td>ACFE</td>
<td>Adult, Community and Further Education</td>
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<td>ACMFEB</td>
<td>Adult, Community and Further Education Board</td>
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<td>ACM</td>
<td>Australian Chamber of Manufactures</td>
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<td>ACTU</td>
<td>Australian Council of Trade Unions</td>
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<td>ACUSA</td>
<td>Australian Colleges and Universities Staff Association (formerly VCSA and VCUSA)</td>
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<td>AEA</td>
<td>Adult Education Association</td>
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<td>AEC</td>
<td>Australian Education Council</td>
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<td>AEON</td>
<td>Adult Education Organisers' Network</td>
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<td>AESIP</td>
<td>Aboriginal Education Strategy Initiatives Program</td>
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<td>AEP</td>
<td>National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy</td>
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<td>AETA</td>
<td>Adult Education Tutors' Association</td>
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<td>AFECC</td>
<td>Association of Further Education Centre Committees</td>
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<td>AIFS</td>
<td>Australian Institute for Family Studies</td>
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<td>ALBE</td>
<td>Adult Literacy and Basic Education</td>
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<td>ALBEO</td>
<td>Adult Literacy and Basic Education Officer</td>
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<td>ALLP</td>
<td>Australian Language and Literacy Policy</td>
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<td>AMEP</td>
<td>Adult Migrant Education Program</td>
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<td>AMES</td>
<td>Adult Migrant Education Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANHLC</td>
<td>Association of Neighbourhood Houses and Learning Centres (formerly ANLC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASCO</td>
<td>Australian Standard Classification of Occupations</td>
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<td>ASLPR</td>
<td>Australian Second Language Proficiency Rating</td>
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<td>ASWU</td>
<td>Australian Social Welfare Union</td>
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<td>BCA</td>
<td>Business Council of Australia</td>
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<td>CAE</td>
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<td>Council of Australian Industry</td>
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<td>CBP</td>
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<td>CFE</td>
<td>Council of Further Education</td>
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<td>CLC</td>
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<td>COT</td>
<td>College of TAFE</td>
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<td>CSDG</td>
<td>Community Service Development Grant</td>
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<td>CSV</td>
<td>Community Services Victoria</td>
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<td>Abbreviation</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEET</td>
<td>Department of Education, Employment and Training (Commonwealth)</td>
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<td>DFE</td>
<td>Division of Further Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>DILGEA</td>
<td>Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs (Commonwealth)</td>
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<td>DOL</td>
<td>Department of Labour (Victorian)</td>
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<td>DPC</td>
<td>Department of the Premier and Cabinet</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECC</td>
<td>Ethnic Communities Council</td>
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<td>EFT</td>
<td>Effective Full Time</td>
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<td>EOP</td>
<td>English for Occupational Purposes</td>
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<td>ESFC</td>
<td>Employment and Skills Formation Council</td>
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<td>English as a Second Language</td>
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<td>English in the Workplace</td>
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<td>FE</td>
<td>Further Education</td>
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<td>FEPIR</td>
<td>Further Education PACCT Industrial Relations</td>
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<td>FTUV</td>
<td>Federated Teachers Union of Victoria</td>
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<td>ILY</td>
<td>International Literacy Year</td>
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<td>IRCV</td>
<td>Industrial Relations Commission of Victoria</td>
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<td>ITB</td>
<td>Industry Training Board</td>
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<td>JAC</td>
<td>Job and Course Explorer</td>
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<td>JILL</td>
<td>Jobs Illustrated</td>
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<td>JSA</td>
<td>Job Start Allowance</td>
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<td>KECE</td>
<td>Koorie Education Co-ordination Unit</td>
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<td>LAEG</td>
<td>Local Aboriginal Education Group</td>
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<td>LAC</td>
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<td>MACFE</td>
<td>Ministerial Advisory Committee on Further Education</td>
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<td>MACWAG</td>
<td>Ministerial Advisory Committee on Women and Girls</td>
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<td>Ministry of Education</td>
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<td>MOET</td>
<td>Ministry of Education and Training</td>
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<td>MOVEET</td>
<td>Ministers of Vocational Education, Employment and Training</td>
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<td>National Industry Education Forum</td>
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<td>NODS</td>
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<td>NBEET</td>
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<td>NESB</td>
<td>Non-English speaking background</td>
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<td>NOWinFE</td>
<td>Network of Women in Further Education</td>
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<td>OSTB</td>
<td>Office of the State Training Board</td>
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<td>PACCT</td>
<td>Professional, Administrative, Clerical, Computer and Technical</td>
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<td>RALBEO</td>
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<td>Student Contact Hours</td>
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<td>SPSFV</td>
<td>State Public Services Federation Victoria (formerly VPSA)</td>
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<td>State Training Board</td>
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<td>Training for Aboriginals Program</td>
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<td>TCCAV</td>
<td>TAFE College Councils Association of Victoria</td>
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<td>TOCCA</td>
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<td>TAFE Teaching Service</td>
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<td>U3A</td>
<td>University of the Third Age</td>
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<td>VAEAI</td>
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<td>VCSS</td>
<td>Victorian Council of Social Service</td>
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<td>VEETAC</td>
<td>Vocational Education, Employment and Training Advisory Committee (advises MOVEET)</td>
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<td>Victorian Education Foundation</td>
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<td>VOAEL</td>
<td>Vocationally Oriented Adult Education and Literacy</td>
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