Tradies beat grads in the pay stakes

Earning power
Primrose Riordan

Trades apprentices are earning more than university graduates in their first years out, in a sign the mining boom is increasing demand for higher technical skills.

The boost for trades comes even though university entries in non-vocational degrees are at record levels as the federal government removes the quota for enrolments.

Apprentices earn an average of $52,000 a year on completion of their training, a 2010 National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) shows.

Bachelor graduates, on the other hand, can expect to make $50,000 a year during their first 12 months, a survey by Graduate Careers Australia has found.

Industry groups hope rising wages in the trades will help persuade students and their families that apprenticeships are not a “second class” career option.

Carpentry apprentice graduate Brodie Stewart said he had been earning more than his university graduate peers since finishing his training in 2009. His advantage over construction management graduates is in his hands-on experience and a longer time in the workforce, which allowed him to start his own business soon after he qualified.

Bob Taylor, the chief executive of the national skills council for the highest earning trade, electrical-technicians, said the mining boom was responsible for beefing up pay packets in the trades.

“The mining boom has had an effect and demand for our apprentices has forced wages up,” he said.

Australian tradespeople were sought-after worldwide and the more technical trades, such as electrotechnicians, are “an increasingly attractive career path with good rewards”. They also led into engineering in the longer term.

The federal government is aiming for 40 per cent of young Australians to have a bachelor’s degree or above by 2025 but industry has warned that many of the extra entrants will go into courses not always suited to the resources-driven economy.

After several years of growth, figures released by Tertiary Education Minister Chris Evans yesterday showed a 2.4 per cent increase in higher education enrolments in 2011 compared to 2010.

But as record numbers of students attend universities, so too are apprenticeship completions rising.

NCVER data from May shows the number of students completing apprenticeships rose 6.9 per cent last year. Trades training still grapples with an image problem and as graduates get further down their career paths, their earnings start to shoot up.

NCVER research shows “most senior secondary school students claim not to be interested in doing an apprenticeship”, citing the main reason being they believe the pay to be low compared to professional degrees.

The 2007 NCVER survey of students found that the main barrier to uptake and completion for those dropping out part way was the low training wage, an issue under review by Fair Work Australia.

Fair Work will begin proceedings to decide whether to increase apprentice wages from October 31.

NCVER managing director Tom Karmel said he was not surprised by high earnings figures for those completing apprenticeships.

But he said that earnings varied greatly across trades.

“In trades where the skills are getting more complex the earnings are becoming very attractive, which also coincides with better completion rates.” Mr Karmel said.

Higher education policy analyst Andrew Norton, from the Grattan Institute, said the 2006 census figures showed that up to age 24, people with vocational qualifications were more likely to report incomes of $1300 a week or more, but after that bachelor degree holders were more likely to report higher incomes.

But Brodie Stewart says “being an apprentice is definitely tough”.

“You can’t live out of home. I was working six days a week from 7am to 4pm, and then went home and worked nights mowing lawns and working as a handyman,” he said.

Stewart attended TAFE to get his building licence. Despite the hard start, it was “definitely worthwhile”.

“I’ve had the hands on experience to know what’s involved and how long a job takes. It’s important also to be able to communicate on the same level as the guys,” he said.

Perth tops accounting pay. page 48
Letters. page 51
Brodie Stewart yesterday ... being an apprentice 'is definitely tough' but 'definitely worthwhile'.

Photo: LOUISE KENNERLEY
Victoria defends skills ‘accountability’

Mathew Dunckley

The stoush between Victoria and the federal government over training standards has intensified after the Baillieu government rejected criticisms of its regulatory regime and accused the new national system of leaving students vulnerable to dodgy operators.

Victoria’s Higher Education and Skills Minister Peter Hall has written to federal Skills Minister Chris Evans taking issue with his criticisms over the quality of regulation in Victoria.

Mr Hall said he was spurred to write by Senator Evans’s comments in The Australian Financial Review that Victoria had been slow to move on substandard providers and still had not gone far enough.

Senator Evans also called on Victoria to sign up to the national regulator, the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA), partly to “preserve state accountability for the majority of funding” for vocational training.

In his letter, Mr Hall says the state had decided not to refer all its powers to the ASQA partly to “preserve state accountability for the majority of funding” for vocational training.

Even so, ASQA had power over 80 per cent of Victorian providers because they had to sign up to national standards, Mr Hall says.

“Therefore, ASQA is already responsible for the enforcement of regulatory standards for the vast majority of providers,” he says in the letter obtained by the Financial Review.

Mr Hall says the national regulator is not as rigorous as the state’s body, the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA), particularly in assessing whether private sector providers were at risk of bankruptcy.

“ASQA has very limited consumer protection powers and does not apply financial viability tests with the vigour of the VRQA,” Mr Hall says.

“The commonwealth’s decision to exclude consumer protection from national regulation means that local Victorian students at ASQA regulated providers enjoy less protection than other students in Victoria.”

In his letter Mr Hall says he hoped that the review of national vocational education standards would rectify this shortcoming.

“I am proud to defend the vast majority of providers in Victoria that offer high-quality training focused on the needs of students and industry,” he says.

The VRQA separately wrote to the Financial Review yesterday to defend its record.

VRQA chairman Stuart Hamilton rejected allegations the Victorian system was “lax”.

He said since new powers were introduced in 2010 the VRQA had cancelled or refused registrations for 400 training providers.

The Victorian government radically reshaped its vocational training funding in the May budget, stripping $300 million from the system.

The changes pulled funding from courses which had seen massive growth in demand despite not having a strong economic benefit.

The surge followed the introduction in Victoria of a “training guarantee” in 2009, championed by the federal government, meaning anyone could take a course to up-skill and could choose between public or private providers.

The government also pulled block funding from TAFEs, arguing they have competitive advantages.

The changes have sparked course and campus closures around the state.
Fly in, fly out ‘to raise tensions

Natalie Gerritsen

Mining companies are not ready for the problems that could stem from throwing together different groups of indigenous workers, a leading academic has warned.

“[Mining companies] fly Aboriginal people in and out the same as they fly non-Aboriginal people in and out,” said Professor Colleen Hayward from Edith Cowan University.

“In WA, lots of Aboriginal people being flown in and out are Noongars, so they’re from the south-west corner of the state [and] going in to someone else’s country, and that tension is something that we’re going to see … I don’t know how equipped we are as a society in Western Australia to deal with that; I fear that we’re not.”

Skills Minister Chris Evans said the efforts by miners to increase their indigenous workforce had moved from tokenistic to serious over the last few years.
Funding black hole means our asteroid sentinel may abandon crucial work

SCIENCE

By Nicky Phillips and Tim Lester

A world-renowned Australian astronomer, who has discovered 400 comets and asteroids, may be forced to abandon his work searching for objects on a potential collision course with Earth.

Rob McNaught has lost the NASA funding he relies on as the only astronomer in the southern hemisphere working on an Arizona-based survey to find and track near-Earth objects and possibly help prevent catastrophic collisions.

The Australian National University has stepped in to temporarily support Mr McNaught, but said long-term funding beyond the end of this year is “not going to come from the university”.

Mr McNaught’s record working in the Uppsala Schmidt Telescope at Siding Spring Observatory, near Coonabarabran, NSW, is formidable.

Since 1987, he has discovered 70 comets, more than twice as many as any other astronomer in history. According to Mr McNaught, the Siding Spring Survey – the only project observing near Earth objects in the southern hemisphere – “gets a chance to see objects that the northern hemisphere surveys can’t research”.

Since 2004, the survey has discovered 412 near Earth objects, including 80 classified as a potential hazard because they have a diameter of between 100 and 150 metres and an orbit that comes within 7.5 million kilometres of the Earth’s orbit.

A fellow astronomer and colleague at Siding Spring, Peter Poulos, describes his friend as “the guardian of all of us, in many ways”. “He doesn’t wear a uniform or a cape, but in the end he’s the hero in the movie. He’s the scientist that will discover the bad thing heading our way, and let us know.”

Mr McNaught has been extraordinarily successful, according to the head of ANU’s School of Astronomy and Astrophysics, Professor Harvey Butcher. “We think he’s just wonderful . . . one of the best in the world. This is work that very much needs to be done,” Professor Butcher said. But he believes without a new, more powerful telescope and better facilities likely to cost “a couple of million dollars”, there is “no clear channel of finance” to continue the work.

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In 2008 the survey’s parent program, the Catalina Sky Survey, which is run by the University of Arizona and indirectly funded by NASA, located a three-metre wide asteroid hurtling towards Earth. Within 24 hours the team had predicted, to within a kilometre, the point the object would reach Earth’s atmosphere, over Sudan.
FORMIDABLE: Rob McNaught's work at the Uppsala Schmidt Telescope at Siding Spring Observatory near Coonabarabran is under threat.
HENRY TUTTIETT
tuttietth@goldcoast.com.au

GOLD Coasters will soon have a new avenue to find work in the mining industry following news a fly-in, fly-out co-ordinator will be stationed in the city.

The search to fill the position will start today, with job advertisements expected online and in newspapers across Queensland. It comes after Federal Minister for Skills, Senator Chris Evans, and State Minister for Education, Training and Employment, John-Paul Langbroek, each committed $400,000 in the next two years to create co-ordinator roles on the Gold Coast and in the Wide Bay region.

The funding will also go towards programs designed to maximise the chances of Queenslanders gaining work in the mining industry.

The Gold Coast has long been touted as an ideal fly-in, fly-out hub for Queensland's mines, with the city's high unemployment rate forcing many to look to the industry for employment.

Thousands of people turned out to a mining expo on the Coast last year, many with their resumes ready and prepared to start work immediately.

It came after former mayor Ron Clarke opened negotiations with mining companies to establish the city as a FIFO hub, only to be trumped by Cairns when the Federal Government appointed a FIFO co-ordinator there in 2011.

Mr Langbroek said the Gold Coast would get a jobs co-ordinator because of the potential workforce in the city and accessibility to flights. "We believe that people should have a choice about where they live and work and while a fly-in, fly-out arrangement is not suitable for everyone, it can provide great outcomes for areas with high unemployment," he said.

Show me the money

Industries with salaries above the Australian median:

- Mining................. 20.6 per cent
- Construction.......... 18.8 per cent
- Oil and gas............ 16.5 per cent
- Banks.................... 10 per cent
- Industrial metal ...... 7.5 per cent
- Utilities............... 4.6 per cent
- Chemical................ 2.2 per cent
TAFE gets dregs

HIGHER Education Minister Peter Hall is sticking to his tired story about providing $1 billion in annual vocational training funding, making it sound like great generosity on behalf of the State Government.

What he doesn’t tell you is the bulk of that funding will go to more than 600 unregulated private providers, with the “dregs” going to publicly owned TAFE institutes.

No matter what excuses and promises he makes, the fact remains that public TAFEs are being forced to decimate courses and staff in order to survive.

Perhaps when TAFEs are completely privatised he will be happy, but not so countless promising TAFE students who will be disadvantaged by his autocracy.

Terence O’Neill, Mornington
Big lift in university student numbers

THE Federal Government said an almost 40% increase in university student numbers had come as a result of its decision to remove the limit on university places.

Federal Member for Blair Shayne Neumann said Census data showed an extra 996 students had access to higher education in the Blair electorate.

“Until the Federal Labor Government removed the limit on university places, the benefits associated with higher education eluded many people in Ipswich and the Somerset Region, who were missing out on the opportunity to realise their full potential,” Mr Neumann said.

“Our reforms mean more Australians have the skills they need to access the high-paying jobs of the future. The census shows that Queensland enrolments have grown on average by almost 26%, which is significantly faster than the rate our population is growing.”

Mr Neumann said Skills Australia had forecast that a third of all jobs would require a minimum of a bachelor’s degree qualification by 2025.

“To meet that demand for highly skilled workers, we are ensuring everyone who is eligible can access a place at Australian universities,” he said.
MP wants the TAFE fight to continue

THE efforts of Gippslanders to oppose to the State Government’s $290 million funding cuts to the state’s TAFE budget has been applauded by Eastern Region MP Johan Scheffer.

Mr Scheffer was the only Member of Parliament to attend a public meeting held at the Latrobe City offices about the issue on Tuesday evening.

He told the meeting that he received hundreds of emails from people right across Gippsland who are very badly affected by the cancellation of courses and campus closures.

Mr Scheffer said the funding cut to the TAFE system was a National Party betrayal of Gippsland voters who had massively supported them in recent elections.

“It is a disgrace that none of them: not Russeau Norine, not Deputy Premier Peter Ryan or Peter Hall, Minister for Higher Education and Skills showed up to face the community.

“Make no mistake, these cuts will hurt. They will close TAFE campuses and shut down courses. Gippsland is facing profound economic changes over the restructuring of the energy industry.

“At a time when we need an injection of funds and support to help re-skill our workforce, this government pulls the plug.

“I have received more emails on the TAFE cuts than for any other issue in a decade as a Member of Parliament,” Mr Scheffer said.

“Emails have come from students and TAFE teachers, from young people just starting out to those returning to study.

“And they wrote about how their lives are about to be profoundly upset owing to the budget cuts.

“It’s pretty plain that no one within the Baillieu Government had given any thought to the social, economic or personal and human impact that these cuts would have.”

Mr Scheffer urged those present to ready themselves for a struggle that would take some time and need sustained organisation.

He said those affected should make every effort to meet with Mr Ryan and Mr Hall to make them understand that the course closures will irreparably damage Gippsland’s economy and harm the ability of thousands of people to improve their skills and employment prospects.
Fears over star man’s work after NASA cuts

A WORLD-RENOWNED NSW astronomer, who has discovered more than 400 comets and asteroids, may be forced to abandon his work searching the night sky for objects on a potential collision course with Earth.

Rob McNaught has lost the NASA funding he relies on as the only astronomer in the southern hemisphere working on a survey to find and track near-Earth objects and possibly help prevent catastrophic collisions.

The Australian National University has stepped in to temporarily support Mr McNaught’s position, but has told the Herald long-term funding needed to keep the work going beyond the end of this year is “not going to come from the university”.

Mr McNaught’s record working in the Uppsala Schmidt Telescope at Siding Spring Observatory, near Coonabarabran in northern NSW, is formidable. Since 1987, he has discovered 70 comets, more than twice as many as any other astronomer in history.

According to Mr McNaught, the Siding Spring Survey, the only project observing near-Earth objects in the southern hemisphere, “get[s] a wonderful chance to see objects that the northern hemisphere surveys can’t research”.

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Mr McNaught has been “extraordinarily successful”, said the head of ANU’s school of astronomy and astrophysics, Harvey Butcher. “We think he’s just wonderful ... one of the best in the world. This is work that very much needs to be done.”

But Professor Butcher said without a new, more powerful telescope and better facilities likely to cost “a couple of million dollars”, there is “no clear channel of finance” to continue it.

Mr McNaught said he had appealed to the Minister for Science and Research, Chris Evans, and the Minister for Industry and Innovation, Greg Combet, to fund the program.

“There is no reason why NASA should fund every space program in the world,” he said.
Indigenous student numbers set the pace

JOHN ROSS

The growth rate in Aboriginal university enrolments is almost double that of the overall population, finds a federal government report to be released today.

The 2011 figures show that after languishing for most of the past decade, indigenous student numbers have ballooned in the wake of a higher education review that called for more university take-up by disadvantaged groups.

The numbers grew 24 per cent between 2008 and 2011, after rising 10 per cent over the previous seven years. Indigenous student numbers rose by 6.6 per cent last year compared to overall domestic growth of 3.6 per cent.

The number of indigenous vocational students also rose slightly faster than the overall population.

However, this falls a long way short of closing the gap. Indigenous people comprise 1.3 per cent of university students but make up 2.5 per cent of the population.

Boni Robertson, indigenous policy professor at Queensland's Griffith University, attributed the increase to support programs at universities and initiatives such as elders-in-residence. She said Griffith had just established the first council of elders in an Australian university.

Professor Robertson also credited universities for embracing reconciliation by appointing Aboriginals and Torres Strait islanders as professors and pro-vice-chancellors. But she stressed the importance of support programs to ensure that indigenous students completed their courses. “Getting them in is a little bit different to keeping them there and getting them out again,” she said.

Second year student Blake Tatafu had planned to go to university ever since accompanying his mother to classes when she was a mature-age student at the University of Western Sydney.

“My family always said you’ll never get a good job unless you go to university,” said the 19-year-old doing a community and social development degree at UWS.

Mr Tatafu was seeing increasing numbers of his indigenous peers at university, particularly this year. They had been inspired by friends already at university, and attracted by the supportive reputation of UWS’s indigenous centre of education.

The latest figures suggest that while higher education has seen rapid growth under the demand-driven system, which allows universities to enrol as many eligible students as they can, the increase has been elevated among disadvantaged groups. Regional student numbers grew by 4 per cent last year and the number of socio-economically disadvantaged students rose by 5.4 per cent.

The government said it was on track to exceed its target of socio-economically disadvantaged students of 20 per cent of the overall student body, rising to 16.8 per cent last year.
College ban sparked by enrolments surge

JOHN ROSS

A MELBOURNE college accused of ripping off public funds planned to more than triple its enrolments this year.

Vocational Training Group, which is appealing against its February deregistration, planned to ratchet up its training activity from about 1500 students last year to 5000 this year, 6000 next year and 7000 in 2014, according to documents tabled with the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

The training regulator, the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority, cited the plan in justifying its decision to cancel the college's registration. “The VRQA was concerned that such a rapid expansion ... meant there was a substantial risk the quality of education and training could be compromised,” it said in a statement.

VTG's business model involved offering $1500 enrolment inducements and teaching a nine-month course in just 15 hours. Criticism in the Victorian parliament last November led to investigations and VTG's subsequent deregistration. The case is regarded as an extreme example of training models emerging under Victoria's training reforms, which saw government training funds progressively opened up to private colleges from 2009.

According to a report by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research, VTG had 1494 publicly funded students last year and delivered almost 770,000 hours of publicly funded training.

The biggest private provider was another Melbourne college, Origin HR, which delivered more than 1.2 million hours of publicly funded training to more than 9600 students. Last year Origin HR increased its enrolments by 9000 and 5000 per cent respectively in two finance and business courses, according to a confidential Victorian government report.

The new NCVER publication, a national compendium of last year's student and course statistics, reveals the publicly funded enrolments at more than 2200 providers, including about 60 TAFEs, 490 community colleges and 1760 private providers.

The report suggests extraordinary growth in Victoria has reshaped the national training sector, skewing enrolments into a handful of qualifications and more than doubling the proportion of publicly funded students who attend private colleges.

The number of publicly funded vocational students in Australia rose by 82,000 last year. Of these, 77,000 were in Victoria. While overall student numbers barely changed nationally from 2002 to 2008, they have rocketed by 182,000 to almost 1.9 million in the three years since Victoria announced its reforms.
Disadvantaged jump at chance of a better future

CHRIS EVANS

TODAY marks the 96th birthday of one of the most influential prime ministers in Australian history — Gough Whitlam.

One of Whitlam's most enduring achievements was the opening up of our nation's universities, allowing a new generation to access the benefits of higher education.

Figures released today show the Gillard government's decision to uncap university places is reversing the stagnation of student enrolments from regional areas, indigenous backgrounds and poorer suburbs.

Today's figures reveal that the growth is driven, in part, by young people from low socio-economic backgrounds.

We are increasingly tapping into the potential of all Australians, not just the privileged. We're developing the talent that will drive high-skilled and productive industry in Australia.

Until the Gillard government removed the cap on places, the benefits associated with higher education had eluded many Australians, often for reasons not of their own making.

Access barriers to university in the form of limits on student places meant many talented young people missed out on the opportunity to realise their potential.

For three years in a row, the biggest increase in university offers has been to people from low socio-economic backgrounds, many of whom are the first in their family to go. Commencements increased by 3.3 per cent to 56,710. The latest figures indicate an improvement in the proportion of low socio-economic undergraduates, increasing from 16.5 per cent in 2010 to 16.8 per cent last year.

Leading the growth were indigenous students. Last year, 5381 indigenous students began a university course, an increase of 6.1 per cent from 2010 to 16.8 per cent last year.

Commencements have increased after a decline under the Howard government. I make no apology for giving these students an opportunity, nor do I think they bring down the standard of our universities.

By removing the limits on university places, the government is making sure anyone who is good enough and willing to study can have a university place. We can increase our access and equity in city and country without losing excellence. These are not contradictory or mutually exclusive goals.

This is a fundamental equity measure that will make Australia a fairer society, and a major economic reform that will unlock the earning capacity of disadvantaged individuals.

Just as our economy is going through structural change, so must our national skills and knowledge base adapt.

Skills Australia says the kinds of jobs that will emerge in the next five to 30 years are highly skilled and will require high levels of training and education. Expanding the number of graduates is an economic imperative.

It's not just a case of being unfair to lock people out of university. We can't afford to.

These reforms are opening up life-changing opportunities for students. A higher education makes a long-lasting impact, not just on the student's life, but on the future of their broader family, the enrichment of their community and a snowballing effect for generations to come.

When Whitlam made university education free to all Australians, it transformed a generation.

These Labor reforms are setting up a ripple effect — a bright future for all that will also be felt for generations.

Chris Evans is the federal Tertiary Education Minister.
Language colleges divided by regulators

JOHN ROSS

ENGLISH-language colleges, struggling with plunging international student numbers, face further destabilisation after being split between national regulators.

Peak body English Australia said it was stunned to learn most stand-alone English-language colleges would fall under the supervision of the higher education regulator, the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, rather than vocational training regulator the Australian Skills Quality Authority.

Executive director Sue Blundell said many English language colleges had already reported to ASQA. “What does TEQSA know about ELICOS (English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students)? They have had no engagement with us,” she said.

The change, replacing an assortment of mostly state-based regulators, was prompted by the Baird review of services for overseas students. TEQSA had been expected to assume control of university-based English colleges, but the government also gave it responsibility for colleges with higher education “pathway” agreements.

In a statement, TEQSA said the sector had been consulted and that regulation by ASQA had been “an interim arrangement until TEQSA commenced its full regulatory functions”. The regulators would meet English Australia tomorrow “to discuss the implications of the changes”.

TEQSA said the new arrangement was consistent with its view of the importance of English in achieving “quality higher education outcomes”. But Ms Blundell said the change left colleges unsure who they would deal with, “because the definition is so loose”.

“Providers want clarity (but) there are no transparent processes or documentation for them to do their everyday business,” she said. “For example if they want to change courses on the (overseas students) register, who do they talk to? How long does it take? How much does it cost them? All those questions remain unanswered. The TEQSA fee structures are designed for three-year degrees, not a boutique English language provider in Byron Bay that offers five non-award courses and delivers programs to 200 students a year.”

Since a 2008 peak, when they earned $1.8 billion, the colleges have suffered from factors including the strong dollar, the financial crisis, college failures and abuse of students, along with volatile visa policies that sometimes disadvantaged them compared with other educational institutions.

Student numbers have fallen 17 per cent in three years, with no indication the decline is over.

Ms Blundell said English colleges had benefited from the reduced number of regulators, but would have preferred one of their own. She said the government tried to treat the industry as vocational training or higher education, rather than as a unique sector.
Toolkit for academic integrity

A management lecturer aims to help private providers guard against student plagiarism

JULIE HARE

FOR a decade, Tracey Bretag has been working hard to improve how universities inculcate academic integrity and address plagiarism among students. And this year she will have private higher education providers in her sights.

On December 1, the day after her two-year $180,000 Office of Teaching and Learning grant concludes, she will embark on a $300,000, 12-month project to take her insights about public universities and apply them to private providers.

Dr Bretag’s project will explore in detail why Griffith University and its Navitas-run feeder college, Queensland Institute of Business and Technology, have been so successful in embedding academic integrity policies.

It is one of three projects representing a new direction for the OLT, one that commissions and directs potentially influential research rather than passively funding grant applications.

“The work is not interested in cheating as such,” says Dr Bretag, from the University of South Australia.

“We know that between 4 and 8 per cent of students will cheat no matter what. We will be looking at how universities and private providers can best support students from making a breach.”

Dr Bretag says her earlier research identified three groups vulnerable to breaches of academic integrity: international students studying English, academically under-prepared students and postgraduate research students.

“Postgraduate research students were a surprise. But they are the least satisfied in the quality of information they get about avoiding a breach. Most academic integrity policies do not include postgraduates. There is an assumption they are already across the issues,” she says.

Dr Bretag’s previous work has identified the core elements of exemplary academic policies and now it’s time to extend and embed those across different educational institutions. “The expectations are different for private providers,” she says. “It’s about building capacity to develop cultures of integrity among all higher education providers.”

Resources and a toolkit specifically developed for private providers will be developed during next year’s project. Next week Dr Bretag will be in Britain to deliver the opening keynote address at the fifth international plagiarism conference, in Newcastle upon Tyne.

“Implementing exemplary academic integrity policy requires sustained commitment by stakeholders at every level,” she will say. “Higher education is a dynamic environment and so our approaches must not be prescribed, but be responsive and adaptable to change.”