ACPET
Annual Report 2013
About ACPET

What is ACPET?

The Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET) is the national industry association for independent providers of post-compulsory education and training, for Australian and international students, including:

- English Language Courses
- Foundation Studies
- Higher Education
- Senior Secondary Studies, and
- Vocational Education and Training.

ACPET’s Mission

ACPET’s purpose is to enhance quality, choice, innovation and diversity in Australian education and training for individual, national and global development.

ACPET seeks to work pro-actively and co-operatively with governments, education and training providers, industry and community organisations, ensuring English language and tertiary education services provide choice and diversity, which are widely accessible and of the highest quality.
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2012-13 has been a year of profound change for ACPET and its members. Not only has Canberra given us a period of unparalleled political change without a Federal election, but for ACPET itself this year was the first time in more than a decade that we have not provided a fee-protection service to our members and their international students. This year saw our signature service to members (our Overseas Students Tuition Assurance Scheme) replaced by the government’s Tuition Assurance Service. For newer members that may not seem like a major change but the OSTAS historically generated a large portion of ACPET’s revenues (between a third and a half in most years) and had been used by the company to underpin the delivery of our advocacy efforts on behalf of members. It was also, historically, one of the reasons why a number of members joined ACPET, because they needed Tuition Assurance cover.

This year marks the first of a three year period of change for ACPET as we expand our services to members and strengthen our advocacy – without the OSTAS underpinning our revenue base. Pleasingly we have seen the organisation adapt well to the need for change with the introduction of a vastly expanded national professional development service which in 2012-13 offered 226 workshops, seminars and short courses to support members with business and regulatory issues, as well as assisting them to identify and pursue new business opportunities. The very high levels of satisfaction from those attending indicates that this focus on professional development is meeting the mark and the Board and I are pleased to see the organisation commit to expanding the program in 2013-14.

Importantly ACPET also introduced new services for members in 2012-13 including a new health check service to assist members with managing their compliance with the regulatory standards. Once again the feedback on the new service has been excellent. In addition, as a result of our advocacy efforts and our commitment to quality in tertiary education, ACPET was pleased to lead the trials of independent assessment validation services in Queensland and Victoria and we anticipate both more trials and a national service in 2013-14.

The ACPET Awards for Excellence were launched this year and it was very rewarding to see the hard work of our members, their staff and students recognised through these important awards. On behalf of the Board and staff of ACPET, thank you to the independent judges who gave of their time voluntarily to judge the awards. While ACPET continues its efforts to lift the bar on quality, and removed a further 57 members from its membership in 2012-13, the Awards for Excellence serve to focus our attention on what the best of the private sector has to offer, and that is education and training opportunities which are nothing short of extraordinary.

In 2012-13 ACPET launched a membership drive to encourage new members to join ACPET. Pleasingly these efforts saw 116 new members join ACPET and I urge both new and ongoing members to get involved with ACPET in our consultations on key issues that affect you, as well as through ACPET’s social media presence on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter; and through joining the Board and me for face-to-face meetings when we are in your home town.

After the high levels of satisfaction expressed in last year’s membership survey, it was difficult to see how ACPET could top that performance this year, especially as the organisation adjusted to the loss of the OSTAS revenues. In fact, the 2012-13 membership survey recorded even higher levels of member satisfaction than the previous record in 2011-12. This year 90% of members indicated their satisfaction with ACPET’s efforts, up from 86% in the previous year. Once again I am keen to reassure members that the Board and staff of ACPET will continue to look for ways to expand the organisation’s relevance to its members and to deliver increased value for money and ongoing advocacy on the issues that matter for members.

In terms of ACPET’s advocacy, 2012-13 was a period of further significant change in the sector. As this year’s report outlines, ACPET’s advocacy work covered a diverse range of issues including proposed changes to the standards for VET regulation, the need for equity in the various HELP student loan schemes, support for employers of apprentices and trainees, international student visa settings, the review of higher education regulation, data collection and reporting, the imposition of the genuine temporary entrant criterion for international students, inequity in ELICOS fees and regulations, the needs of small providers, the introduction of the tuition protection service, and state-level implementation of skills reforms. In part because of the political instability this year and because policy debates are rarely quickly won, there is more work still to do. The creation of a small policy team within ACPET as we head into 2013-14 sees the organisation increasingly ready to take-up the policy and advocacy challenges – before and after the Federal election and at a state level.

2012-13 saw the first year of operation of ACPET’s new presence in China. We also opened our first office in the Northern Territory and agreed that the Darwin location gave us an opportunity to increase ACPET’s engagement with Indonesia and Timor-Leste. As Australia takes its place in the Asian Century there are increasing opportunities for our members offshore, as well as in educating more international
2012-2013 Highlights

students here in Australia. A Memorandum of Understanding between ACPEIT and India’s National Skills Development Corporation, our China presence and a clear focus on our northern neighbours (Indonesia and Timor-Leste) will assist members interested in expanding their operations overseas. A national survey of members, conducted in conjunction with Austrade, identifies which ACPEIT members are currently delivering offshore and which members want the opportunity to do so. The survey results will guide ACPEIT’s efforts in 2013-14. We will also continue to focus our efforts to see Australian private providers included on the Chinese government’s Ministry of Education International Education Affairs Management and Supervision list of approved providers (the JSJ list). To that end ACPEIT hosted a visit by the Chinese Ministry of Education and the Chinese Services Centre for Scholarly Exchange and continues to work with the Australian government to see high quality private providers added to the list.

In reflecting on another year in the role of Chair, I once again wish to extend my heartfelt thanks to ACPEIT’s Directors – all of whom are volunteers in their roles on the Board and its sub-committees. This year again saw a number of changes in Board membership and I welcome those new members who have helped shape ACPEIT’s strategic intent and steer the organisation to a new future. I also want to express my thanks to those Directors who retired in 2012-13 – none more so than former Chair of the Board Larry Davies. Larry’s leadership as a Director and Chair of ACPEIT has been crucial in repositioning the organisation for the future. WA members and the staff of ACPEIT are very lucky to have him take on the role of WA Executive Officer. The Board and I are also pleased that Larry also takes on a role of strategic advisor and continues to work with the Board and CEO as we chart a course for the future.

July 2012

China
ACPEIT launched its first international presence in China, providing support to ACPEIT members that are currently, or wish to be, active in the China market. NSW Premier, the Hon Barry O’Farrell MP, launched ACPEIT’s China presence at an official function in the city of Chengdu.

Also announced at the launch was the appointment of Li Min as ACPEIT’s Executive Officer (EO) for China. As the EO, her responsibilities include leading and coordinating ACPEIT’s activities in China, establishing and maintaining high-level government contracts and providing linkages to education and training for prospective students.

Federation of Private Technological and Vocational Colleges of Thailand (FPTVCT)
ACPEIT signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the FPTVCT, with the aim of building stronger links with the Australian private tertiary education and training sector.

Skills for All launched in South Australia
ACPEIT members delivering VET in South Australia saw greater contestability and choice for students and employers introduced with the roll out of Skills for All reforms.

ACPEIT-CCI Private Provider Forum
In partnership with the Western Australia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI), ACPEIT held a private provider forum in Perth. The forum was a one day conference aimed at gathering education and training professionals, industry stakeholders and key officials to one showcase event. The forum provided a platform to discuss key issues facing the sector, including the regulatory approaches of ASQA and the WA Training Accreditation Council, and plans for skills reforms in WA.

India Skills Conference
The Australian India Education Council (AIEC) held its Australia India Skills Conference in Perth. The conference was titled ‘Partners for Prosperity’, with the aim of fostering innovation and collaboration to deliver future prosperity and meet the various skills shortages challenging both countries as they move into the 21st century.

As a member of the Australia India Skills Working Group, ACPEIT was pleased to help plan the conference and to see a number of ACPEIT members sign MoUs with Indian training providers and employers during the conference.

August 2012

2012 ACPEIT National Conference
The annual national conference was held in Sydney on 30 and 31 August 2012, with over 460 delegates attending. The conference theme was ‘the changing tertiary education sector’, and included significant political debates on the role and work of private providers.

Inaugural Awards for Excellence
To celebrate ACPEIT’s 20th anniversary the ACPEIT Board introduced an Awards for Excellence program, showcasing the contribution members make to the private tertiary education sector. See page 13 for a list of the winners.

Annual General Meeting (AGM)
ACPEIT’s Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held in conjunction with the national conference on Thursday, 30 August 2012. Members agreed to a number of revisions to the ACPEIT Constitution ensuring compliance with relevant legislative instruments, including the Corporations Act, providing additional specificity in relation to:
• ACPEIT being a “special purpose not for profit public company”
• members wishing to nominate for Director positions on the Board only being able to nominate for one Director position
• ensuring that reasonable costs are covered should a member initiate an Extraordinary General Meeting, and
• changes to align the Constitution with the Corporations Act in relation to the proportion of members required to support a resolution.
New look website
A major refresh of the ACPET website was introduced to make it easier for users to find information about ACPET and its services. Key improvements include changes to make it easier to book and pay for ACPET Professional Development (PD) activities; and secondly the ability to search for an ACPET member institution.

International Student Barometer (ISB)
All Commonwealth Registered Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) registered ACPET member colleges and international students were encouraged to participate in ACPET’s ISB for 2012. The ISB provided a measure on the experience of international students. For a summary of the report key findings refer to page 15 of this report.

September 201/
Victorian Government Trade Mission to China
The Victorian Government conducted the largest ever trade mission to leave Australia’s shores to China. ACPET was part of the delegation representing its members and the private education and training sector, among other Victorian businesses and organisations, representing 15 sectors of the economy engaged with China.

2013 New Board Meeting
ACPET’s Board members held their first board meeting for the 2012-2013 year. New members included Mark Hopkins (Category B Director), Stephen Pasfield (Category B Director), Dr Maria Fiocco (WA), and Karen Nicholas (ACT).

October 201/
Careers Adviser Association (CAA) Conference
The CAA of NSW and ACT held their annual conference at Dockside, Darling Harbour. For the very first time ACPET was present at this event as an exhibitor, amongst many ACPET members.

VET in Schools Conference
The ACPET SA EO, Joy de Leo, attended the SA VET in schools conference and met with VET coordinators from private schools across the state. A presentation was given providing the opportunity to inform school staff of the wide range of VET options offered through private providers. There was open discussion on implementation of the Training Guarantee for SACE Students (TGSS) levy, and continued work with Independent schools in SA.

Australian International Education Conference (AIEC)
The AIEC was held in Melbourne, with the theme of ‘International Education in the Asian Century’. ACPET Deputy Chair, Mel Koumides, contributed to a lively panel discussion on global education standards. ACPET’s International Engagement Manager, Ingeborg Loon, chaired a discussion session on ‘Positioning: Skills Needs in the Asian Century’.

ICEF Agents’ Workshop, Beijing
ACPET’s China representative Li Min joined the ICEF Agents’ Workshop. Min attended the workshop where 210 key agents represented potential students from 19 countries.

Min represented a number of ACPET members unable to attend the workshop, as well as supporting those in attendance. Following advice from members attending the workshop, Min commenced work on planning for a number of delegations, study tours and exchange programs.

ICEF Agents’ Workshop, Berlin
ACPET participated in the ICEF Agents’ Workshop representing its internationally-active members and more broadly, Australia as a study destination. Twelve of ACPET’s internationally-active member institutes also participated, meeting with agents from 97 countries.

ACPET, English Australia and Austrade also presented a joint session at the workshop, offering agents advice on recent educational policy changes in Australia and encouraging them to consider Australia as a study destination.

November 201/
2013 ACPET e-learning Mentoring Program
ACPET’s e-learning mentoring program has been in operation since 2000, funded through the Victorian government. In 2013, 14 RTOs
participated in the program, at beginner and intermediate levels to integrate e-learning into their operations.

**Higher Education Forum**

ACPET and the South Australian Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology (DFEEST) jointly sponsored a forum on the ‘Implications of Scholarship for HEPS’. The guest speaker was Professor Gareth Parry, who is the Professor of Education and Director of the Centre for the Study of Higher Education at the University of Sheffield and England’s leading researcher on the relationship between higher and further education.

**National Training Awards**

ACPET WA member, Labtech Training, was the winner of the Australian Training Award for the Small Training Provider of the Year.

**National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)**

NSW Premier Barry O’Farrell MP attended the official reception in New Delhi for the MoU signing between ACPET CEO, Claire Field and NSDC CEO and Managing Director, Dilip Chenoy. The MoU focuses on the establishment of partnerships between Australian providers and Indian employers. The partnership aims at assisting the NSDC to meet the Indian government’s ambitious goal for the NSDC to upskill 150 million people by 2022.

**Report of Queensland Taskforce on Skills Reform**

As an appointed member of the Queensland Skills and Training Taskforce, ACPET contributed to the Final Report on reforms needed to the Queensland VET System. In forming its recommendations for reform, the Taskforce drew on the experience and expertise from a broad range of stakeholders, gaining the views of 91 submissions through various consultation methods.

**December 2013**

**Second Edition ACPET Journal for Private Higher Education Journal**

ACPET released its second edition of the ACPET Journal for Private Higher Education. The journal is a bi-annual publication covering existing and emerging issues related to the private higher education sector. Since its June 2013 launch, support has grown quickly, with readership already extending across the tertiary education sector, government and media.

The second issue of the journal presented two new features. The first was a commentary section with the aim of promoting debate and discussion about issues in higher education. The second feature offered the opportunity to advertise services and products in the journal which may interest private tertiary education providers.

**Queensland Government’s Trade Mission to India**

The Hon Campbell Newman MP, Premier of Queensland, led an official trade mission to India. ACPET Executive Officer, Matthew Traynor, joined the delegation and made presentations to key organisations in the Indian education and training industry.

**January 2013**

**ACPET NT**

ACPET opened its Northern Territory office, in the Darwin Plaza building, with support and assistance from the Northern Territory government. Michael Hall, ACPET’s NT Executive Officer, also has responsibility for leading ACPET’s efforts to assist its members in engaging in Indonesia and Timor-Leste.

**February 2013**

**ACPET New Service Launch**

ACPET launched a new RTO health check service. The health check provides a high-quality, low-cost opportunity for RTO members to receive an independent review of their evidence of compliance against the national standards. This service is particularly useful to members preparing for re-registration or other government regulatory audits and now that they can trust the advice they receive. ACPET intends expanding the service in future to higher education and ELICOS members.

**ACT Association for Providers of Training Services (APTS)**

ACPET’s CEO and the APTS President (and ACPET ACT Board member) Karen Nicholas, along with sectoral stakeholders, celebrated the partnership agreement between the two organisations at the ACT office. The partnership agreement focuses on ensuring a coherent voice for ACT providers.

**ACPET’s International Strategic Plan 2013-2015**

ACPET’s International Education Committee endorsed ACPET’s International Strategic Plan 2013-2015.

The plan includes the following activities:

- profiling the ACPET membership’s capability, quality and diversity
- identifying and securing international projects and funding to support ACPET members
- spearheading mutually beneficial partnerships with leading international education, industry, government and support agencies especially in key target markets of China, India and Indonesia
- national and international advocacy to secure more favourable visa and post-study work arrangements, and
- working to reduce the regulatory burden on ACPET members.

**WA International Education Forum**

The Hon Peter Collier MP, Minister for Education, discussed the government’s plans and priorities for international education at ACPET’s WA forum. Along with the keynote address, a range of stakeholders, ACPET’s CEO and ACPET members canvassed opportunities for providers offshore and the onshore challenges affecting providers, specifically regulation and visa arrangements.

**ACPET’s Economic Contribution of International Students Report**

ACPET commissioned a report by Deloitte Access Economics, *Economic contribution of international students*, highlighting the
immense and ongoing cost of delays in implementing international student visa reforms to the Australian economy.

The report confirmed the difficult experience of providers across the private sector and quantified the decline in the value of international education as a key Australian export. The 2011-12 financial years reported student expenditure of $14.7 billion, a reduction of about 19% from the peak in 2009.

March 2013

Queensland International Breakfast

ACPET hosted a breakfast for around 70 members and stakeholders in conjunction with Trade Investment Queensland. The Assistant Minister for Trade, the Hon Deb Frecklington MP, discussed overseas markets and offshore training opportunities for the private education sector.

Breakfast delegates were also treated to a presentation from ACPET’s CEO and to a panel discussion from ACPET members on the lessons learned in setting up offshore operations.

New Colombo Plan

The Deputy Chair of the ACPET Board, Mel Koumides, and ACPET’s International Engagement Manager Ingeborg Loon attended the Coalition’s policy think tank discussion hosted by the Menzies Research Centre on its plans to further internationalise Australia’s students through the proposed new Colombo plan.

The plan aims to encourage Australian undergraduate students to study part of their degrees in the Asia-Pacific region.

ACPET will continue to press for the extension of this policy to private higher education and VET students should it be implemented.

April 2013

National VET Forums

In April, ACPET held a series of state-based VET forums. With sessions conducted in Alice Springs, Darwin, Brisbane, Sydney, Adelaide and Melbourne, the forums were well attended with almost 400 participants representing the diverse national private VET sector. Skills and regulatory reforms were recurring issues. ACPET’s CEO also took the opportunity to speak at the forums on key issues affecting members, including student visa reforms affecting ACPET’s CRICOS members.

Higher Education Symposium

The Federal Minister for Higher Education and Skills, the Hon Sharon Bird MP addressed ACPET’s higher education symposium. Participants were also able to hear from the Federal Opposition on its views on higher education with a presentation from Senator Brett Mason, the Higher Education Opposition Spokesperson.

The symposium provided participants with the opportunity to engage in scholarship on a range of issues including academic governance, benchmarking, academic workforce planning, funding, regulation and policy. Key stakeholders in the private higher education sector and ACPET members made thought provoking and stimulating presentations.

VET Business Benchmarking

ACPET’s VET Business Benchmarking service operates on a bi-anual basis, allowing ACPET’s RTO members to benchmark against other ACPET members in a manner that does not compromise commercial sensitivities.

ACPET works with Deloitte to undertake the benchmarking process. The service provides online access to data for business monitoring and planning allowing the enterprise and employees to realise and quantify business financial gaps, spotlighting potential immediate improvements and identifying longer term priorities amongst other tools.

National Monday Update (NMU) 500th Edition

NMU celebrated its 500th Edition in April. The idea to publish a weekly e-newsletter for ACPET members industry and government was unveiled in 2001. Twelve years later the evolution of the first edition to the 500th has seen it go from strength to strength. The first version was a word document attached to an email, while the current newsletter is embedded into ACPET’s website.

NMU originated as a result of the three separate state based ‘Friday File/s’, involving NSW, Queensland and Victoria. The 500th edition published reflections from former Chairs and CEOs of ACPET.

State Committee Formed

An ACPET NT sub-committee was established to be the voice of Territory members to the ACPET Board.

Victorian Minister Hall present at Board meeting

The Victorian Minister for Higher Education and Skills, the Hon Peter Hall MLC, met with the ACPET Board to discuss the success of the reforms delivered by the introduction of the Victorian Training Guarantee (VTG) and to thank ACPET for its work on a statement of expectations for VTG-funded providers, based on ACPET’s Code of Ethics.

Council for Private Education (CPE), Singapore

ACPET’s CEO provided the keynote address at the inaugural conference on private higher education in Singapore. The conference was organised by the CPE, the Singaporean regulator for private tertiary education, focussing on themes of quality and regulation.

Australia New Zealand Agent (ANZA) Workshop, Brisbane

ACPET and 13 members participated in the annual ANZA workshop. ACPET was a sponsor of the workshop and participants had the opportunity to strengthen existing links between international education agents and institutions along with establishing new working relationships.

National Skills Standards Council (NSSC)

ACPET prepared a response to the NSSC position paper: Improving vocational education and training: the case for a new system which has the potential to require major changes to members’ business
operations. ACPET undertook extensive consultations with both members and the NSSC.

**ACPET Mission to India**

Ten delegates from eight ACPET member institutions joined ACPET’s International Engagement Manager Ingeborg Loon for a week of meetings in India with government officials, employer groups and training organisations.

The mission explored India-based training opportunities and business models addressing India’s skills development challenge, and builds on the MoU between ACPET and the NSDC.

**Toward Tomorrow’s Future forum**

Toward Tomorrow’s Future was the theme for the 2013 ACPET Queensland private provider forum. The Minister for Education, Training and Employment, the Hon John Paul Langbroek MP, provided the opening address.

Maha Sinnathamby, Chairman of Springfield Land Corporation, delivered the keynote address ‘stop not till the goal is reached.’

**May 2013**

**ACPET Organisational Re-structure**

ACPET’s organisational re-structure saw changes to the executive leadership structure, with the introduction of two senior roles, General Manager, Business Development and General Manager, Policy and Research. Along with the executive changes, ACPET has been able to bring on board a Strategic Advisor offering expertise recommendations to support ACPET’s strategic long term vision. The re-structure allowed for the opportunity to relocate the membership team from Sydney to Melbourne, aligning all national ACPET services in our head office.

**ACT Office Relocation**

ACPET’s ACT office relocated to its new co-located home with Universities Australia (UA). UA is the peak body representing the university sector for the 39 Australian Universities and is increasingly working with ACPET on common issues including the regulatory burden on providers, international education issues and government policies affecting higher education students.

**Queensland Government’s Trade Mission to Papua New Guinea (PNG)**

Queensland’s Executive Officer Matthew Traynor was invited to participate in the Queensland Premier’s trade mission to PNG. The aim of the visit was to strengthen links in the agribusiness, resources, construction, infrastructure and education industries.

**June 2013**

**Career Practitioners Walking Tour**

ACPET, in partnership with the Career Education Association of Victoria, organised a walking tour for careers advisors. The tour introduced the practitioners to private education providers, showcasing the innovative approaches to course delivery, student support and facilities of ACPET’s members.

**Third Edition of ACPET’s Private Higher Education Journal**

The third issue introduced a new international perspective, with our very first article from an overseas researcher offering an overview of the rapidly expanding private higher education sector in Nigeria. This is a positive sign that the ACPET Journal is increasingly well received nationally and internationally.

“Higher education in Australia has been following a growth trajectory unmatched for the past 20 years. While the recent growth in university enrolments over the past few years has been facilitated by the federal government’s demand-driven funding policy, private providers have also been expanding and contributing to the overall national aims of increasing attainment. The opening commentary by Dr Daniel Edwards (ACER) suggests now is the time for considering the role that private providers and TAFEs will play in the Australian higher education sector in the coming decades.” (Invited commentary by Dr Daniel Edwards, ACER, ‘Growing Australian Higher Education: Achieving Targets and Rethinking Provision,’ issue 1, 2013).
Our Core Purpose
Through its leadership, ACPET enhances and promotes the role of private tertiary education in order to achieve the highest quality educational outcomes for individuals for the benefit of themselves, their employers and the public interest.

ACPET will:
• Be a primary influencer of decision makers respected for its strategic thought leadership;
• Present an educational brand that is recognised as the benchmark for educational and ethical standards;
• Build the capacity of members through the delivery of relevant, cost effective services and the provision of timely information;
• Be a sustainable organisation that will deliver for members into the future.

2012-2014 Strategic Issues
Relevance to members and stakeholders
Leadership and competitive positioning of ACPET and its members
Growth to ensure a sustainable future for ACPET
People and Culture
Ensuring ACPET is fit for purpose

2012-2014 Strategic Objectives
Effective and valued services to members
Ongoing development and review of products and services to ensure value to members
Mutually beneficial partnerships with leading industry bodies and stakeholders
Professional learning programs that keep members up to date with the changing sector

Influencing nationally and regionally
A widely recognised ACPET brand, known as the ‘quality stamp’ in the industry
Effective, visionary and well publicised thought leadership initiatives that have a positive impact on the sector

Domestic and regional positioning of members to support their individual marketing activities
Attracting quality new members
High levels of member retention
Strategic risk management activities

Strong leadership that is innovative, proactive and responsive
Best practice in recruitment, development and retention
Rigorous succession planning
Key people recognised as experts in their fields

Maintaining a sound financial position
Improved knowledge management
Infrastructure and processes responsive to member needs

Our Values
Respect
Integrity
Commitment
Honesty
Board of Directors

Martin Cass  
National Chair  
Director representing NSW (since 2008)  
Director, JMC Academy

Mel Koumides  
Deputy Chair  
Director representing Victoria (since 2010)  
Director, Academia International

Mark Hopkins  
Director representing Category 5, 6 & 7 Members (since 2012)  
Executive Vice President, Hillsong International Leadership College

Karen Nicholas  
Director representing ACT (since 2012)  
Director, Learning Options

Gurdeep Dhillon  
Director representing Category 2, 3, 4 Members (since 2011)  
CEO, Australian Institute of Technical Training (AITT)

Jenny Field  
Director representing Queensland (since 2011)  
Academic Manager, Prime Learning and the Australian College of Training and Employment

Richard Finlayson  
Director representing SA (since 2010)  
Group Managing Director, Quality Training & Hospitality College

Maria Fiocco  
Resigned 6 May 2013

Nicole Gayewski  
Director representing Tasmania (since 2011)  
Tasmanian State Manager, MEGT Institute

Sean Mahoney  
Director representing Northern Territory (since 2012)  
Managing Director, International College of Advanced Education (ICAE)

Stephen Pasfield  
Director representing Category 8 & Corporate members (since 2012)  
National Training Manager, Access Training Pty Ltd

Larry Davies  
Resigned 22 April 2013
Our People (ACPET Executive Team)

Claire Field
Chief Executive Officer

Dennis Katsoulakos
Deputy Chief Officer and Company Secretary

Ben Vivekanandan
General Manager Policy and Research

Maria Langwell
General Manager Business Development

Larry Davies
Strategic Advisor and Western Australia Executive Officer

Joy De Leo
South Australia Executive Officer

Michael Hall
Northern Territory, Indonesia and East Timor Executive Officer

Catherine Kearney
Australian Capital Territory and New South Wales Executive Officer

Nick Oklobdzija
Victoria Executive Officer

Matthew Traynor
Queensland Executive Officer
Health Check Services

ACPET’s new health check service was proudly launched in February 2013. The health check service has been designed to offer member RTOs a high-quality, low-cost opportunity for an independent review of their evidence of compliance against the national standards. This service is particularly useful to members preparing for re-registration or other government regulatory audits.

Two ACPET health check options are currently available:

- RTO health check and
- RTO health check plus+ (incorporating CRICOS compliance and/or additional qualifications and delivery sites).

The service incorporates five key diagnostic stages and focuses on how the RTO operates its business. Both services are provided by experienced ACPET team members and contractors who hold auditor qualifications and/or equivalent expertise in RTO operations and/or regulation. To support the service, ACPET has established its ACPET approved consultancy list. These consultants are also offered to members to support rectification, where risks have been identified through the health check service. Although a relatively new service, members participating in a health check have expressed their high satisfaction.

“it was a long day and I didn't sleep last night 'cause my head was buzzing, but it was well worth every minute.”

ACPET will expand the service to assist higher education and ELICOS members in 2013-14.

National Professional Development Framework

ACPET’s national PD Framework was launched in early 2012 to provide the sector with nationally consistent and high quality PD. The service has gone from strength to strength since January 2012, with over 3,500 people participating in ACPET’s PD activities and short courses. Indeed, close to 1,700 participated in 226 workshops, seminars and short courses during 2012-13. This includes ACPET’s high profile annual conference, our higher education symposium and state-based forums and events, with a high level of client satisfaction.

“an impressive 99% rating of satisfactory or very satisfactory.”

In 2013, the framework maintains its four streams of:

- business development
- business management and administration
- teaching and learning, and
- student engagement and support.

As well, workshops have been grouped into four sub-streams assisting participants choose the right level activity for them:

- introduction
- essential: the must dos!
- master classes, and
- rapid refreshers.

Together with the more popular 2012 workshops, close to 45 new workshops were on offer in 2013. All workshops assisted with compliance requirements directly mapping to the relevant national quality standards for VET, higher education and the international education sectors. ACPET offered over 200 diverse workshops during the year, provided for a range of interested parties, from CEOs and Executives through to academic, teaching and administrative staff.

Peer+ Points

ACPET also recognises individuals and institutions which engage with continual PD through its Peer+ Points program, with points allocated on the basis of the type and duration of the activity. In early 2013, ACPET announced its inaugural Peers, who demonstrated their understanding of the importance of, and commitment to, PD by availing themselves of the wide range of ACPET activities during 2012. These ACPET Peers consist of six individuals and 14 institutions.
**Engagement with Career Practitioners**

ACPET members have enjoyed heightened recognition by career associations and their members through the implementation of ACPET’s national career practitioner engagement strategy. Some of the activities undertaken in 2012-13 include:

- ACPET Queensland’s development of a member study guide, to be used to attract school leavers to private institutions. The study guide is fully funded by members and will be used in career expos across Queensland.
- ACPET Victoria’s promotion of member open days through the Career Education Association of Victoria 2013 calendar, a resource which is forwarded to all careers practitioners across Victoria.
- ACPET Victoria, as well as ACPET NSW, presenting on how to select a quality training provider at various high school and career practitioner events, such as the Cumberland Careers Forum in February 2013.
- A careers practitioners’ walking tour of Melbourne’s central business district-based members conducted in June 2013.
- Submission of a range of editorials and articles in career association e-newsletters.
- Promotion of all ACPET members through Career Development Association of Australia’s national conference held in May 2013, with over 250 careers practitioners in attendance.

**Benchmarking Services**

**ACPET’s Higher Education Benchmarking System**

ACPET’s Higher Education Benchmarking System was initially developed in 2010 to support higher education members’ benchmarking and improve their corporate and academic governance. The system was reviewed in 2012 with members invited to provide suggestions on what improvements were required. An updated system was released for the 2012-13 cycle, attracting a record 23 higher education member participants.

**VET Business Benchmarking Tool**

The VET Business Benchmarking Tool includes a range of financial and business performance metrics allowing ACPET members to benchmark their businesses against like competitors without compromising the confidentiality of individual members’ operations and data or commercial sensitivities.

**Member Benefits Scheme**

ACPET supports its members by offering a range of discounted third party products and services, including:

- national police checks (new in 2012)
- entertainment (new in 2012)
- communications and telephony
- grants and tender notification
- office supplies
- printing
- QANTAS club membership, and
- superannuation.

**New Services Under Construction in 2013**

In addition to existing services, ACPET is also considering a range of new services, to better support its membership base. These services are expected to be launched during 2013-14 and include:

- the ACPET Catalogue, an online resource of ACPET members, to support greater recognition of the quality and diversity of members.
- an ACPET quality management system, which will offer a solid e-business foundation for RTOs.
- Industry validation of assessment services, which will connect RTOs with real employers through hands-on workshops, and
- an education resource service, showcasing a range of commercially-available training material in industry priority areas.
National Conference

ACPET held its 2012 national conference at The Westin in Sydney on 30 and 31 August 2012. The theme for the conference was ‘the changing tertiary education sector.’

The annual conference is the largest gathering of private and not-for-profit tertiary educators and managers in Australia, providing an important opportunity to combine networking and professional learning. It is a key event for private tertiary education providers, as well as representatives of government, regulatory stakeholders, and industry and business peak bodies. The conference provided an opportunity to challenge preconceived ideas, explore new possibilities and inspire further innovation.

National Conference Program

The conference offered a comprehensive program which challenged and informed over 460 delegates. ACPET members heard from a range of local, state and federal politicians, speakers from a variety of international institutions, and presenters discussing the changes happening across the sector.

The Minister for Tertiary Education and Skills, Senator Chris Evans, praised ACPET for its leadership on efforts to lift quality and the establishment of our first offshore presence in China, to assist members explore opportunities in taking their services globally.

The conference presentations provided a blend of workshops that included political overviews, RTO compliance and best practice along with inspirational student stories about achievement and welfare. In addition 18 concurrent conference sessions were held over the two days, focussing on themes such as: quality in tertiary education, the role VET plays in productivity, the introduction of the ACPET Journal for Private Higher Education, and developing a culture of scholarship and research in private higher education.

Inaugural Awards for Excellence

ACPET turned 20 in 2012 and to celebrate this important milestone ACPET introduced its own awards program for excellence by private providers.

The inaugural 2012 Awards for Excellence recognised the contribution made by independent private providers of education and training across Australia’s tertiary sector. The aim of the awards is to acknowledge individual practitioners, students, education providers, initiatives and achievements built on relationships with industry and the broader community, which are setting the benchmark in the delivery of high quality private education and training.

There were seven categories covering the diversity of the private sector including:

- Higher Education Provider of the Year
- Industry Initiative
- International Provider of the Year
- Social Inclusion Initiative
- Student of the Year
- Teacher of the Year, and
- VET Provider of the Year.

The awards were judged by independent panels comprising academics, industry and government representatives. The winners were announced at the 2012 ACPET national conference dinner.

ACPET Awards for Excellence 2012 Winners:

Teacher of the Year
Nicole Gibson
Marjorie Milner College

Student of the Year
Ramanbir Kaur
Melbourne Institute of Technology

Social Inclusion Initiative
MEGT Institute

International Provider of the Year
Academia international

Industry Initiative
First Impressions Resources

Higher Education provider of the Year
Think Education Group Pty Ltd

VET Provider of the Year BCA
National Training Group Pty Ltd

Special Commendation – VET in school
Whitehouse Institute of Design
In 2012-13, ACPET continued to build on its already significant role as the leading peak body for private higher education providers, with the expertise and experience of higher education members increasingly recognised and sought after by government and other stakeholders.

A period of political instability, particularly during the early months of 2013, saw the resignation of the Hon Christopher Evans and the Hon Chris Bowen, from the Tertiary Education portfolio, and the Hon Dr Craig Emerson as Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills Science and Research and the Hon Sharon Bird as Minister for Higher Education and Skills. Succeeding these Ministers is the Hon Brendan O’Connor. ACPET had an existing relationship with Minister O’Connor before he took up his current portfolio and accordingly was able to ensure that the interests of members continued to be represented to government even with the change of Ministers.

ACPET CEO, Claire Field, met with Minister O’Connor not long after he took up his portfolio. Claire Field and the ACPET Executive also met regularly with key government officials to represent member interests in relation to policy, regulation, funding and data collection issues.

ACPET has continued its regular interactions with the higher education regulator, the Tertiary Education and Skills and Quality Agency (TEQSA). The Chief Commissioner of TEQSA, Dr Carol Nicoll, met with the ACPET Board and Commissioner Michael Wells with the ACPET Higher Education Committee (a sub-committee of the Board). ACPET’s CEO and ACPET Executive staff also met with Commissioners Hawke and Kristoffersen to advocate on behalf of members. At the 2013 TEQSA provider forum Dr Nicoll noted the impact and contribution peak bodies have had in informing TEQSA’s focus and operations.

ACPET also provided numerous submissions and attended consultation sessions with TEQSA, Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (DIICCSRTE) and the Higher Education Standards Panel.

The ACPET Higher Education committee continued to oversee much of ACPET’s work in representing the interests of members to government. The committee was involved in the development of ACPET’s 2013 Federal Election policy statement and the continuation of ACPET’s high-level submissions on national issues over the past 12 months.

These include:

- ACPET Response to Higher Education Standards Panel – Research, Research Training and Learning Outcomes
- ACPET submission to the review of the Higher Education Support Amendment Bill
- ACPET submission to the Higher Education Standards Panel – Course Design and Learning Outcomes
- ACPET input into TEQSA’s approach to public reporting
- ACPET pre-Budget Submission 2013-14, and
- ACPET submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the Higher Education Support Amendment Bill 2013 (OS HELP).

ACPET held a highly successful private provider symposium on Higher Education on 18 April 2013 in Melbourne, attracting over 80 delegates. The ‘Leadership in a Dynamic Environment’ symposium brought together members and other leading decision makers to explore issues shaping the private higher education sector. The new Federal Minister for Higher Education and Skills, Sharon Bird, and the Opposition’s Higher Education Spokesperson, Senator Brett Mason, gave presentations to delegates. Professor Richard James from the Higher Education Standards Panel also provided an update on the work and future focus of the panel.

ACPET’s Higher Education committee continued to focus on representing and promoting the interests of ACPET’s higher education members. The Committee is also examining the intended data collection arrangements being developed by the Commonwealth and the impact these arrangements will have on members. Furthermore the committee is dedicated to developing relevant services allowing members to focus on raising the quality bar within their institutions.

At the time of publication, the third edition of the ACPET Journal for Private Higher Education was being issued. With early critical success, ACPET is building on ways to promote member submissions to the Journal and promote the publication as a forum for highlighting research and scholarly activity from and about the private higher education sector.

ACPET formulated its 2013 Federal Election policy statement early in the year and has used this statement as a platform to advocate on behalf of members. This advocacy has included formal representations to all sides of government. Accordingly, ACPET has a professional relationship with both major parties and stands ready to actively advocate on members’ behalf regardless of which party is in power following the Federal Election.
International Education

In 2012-13 the international education industry saw the further implementation and impact of the recommendations of the Baird and Knight Reviews. On 1 July 2012 the federal Tuition Protection Scheme (TPS) was introduced. The sector also felt the varying impacts of the Knight Review recommendations of student visa reforms such as streamlined visa arrangements for universities and their partners, with the concurrent application of the GTE criterion. This has lead to a fragmentation of the International Education sector.

The International Education Advisory Council (IEAC) report Australia – Educating Globally was released in February 2012 and contained 35 sensible whole-of-industry recommendations.

The political environment has been complex and unstable, with changes of Ministers contributing to the delay of critical announcements such as the extension of the streamlined visa processing (SVP) arrangements to the non-university sector, and the government response to the IEAC report.

In this context, international student enrolments started to recover for universities and their pathway partners with an ongoing decline for the rest of the sector.

ACPET China

In July 2012 ACPET capitalised on the relationship built with the Chinese government, industry and education providers and Australian Education International (AEI), by launching its first offshore presence in China.

ACPET China was established to provide onshore support to ACPET members that are currently active or wish to become active in the China market, profiling the sector in China with the goal of official recognition for ACPET members by the Ministry of Education, and exploring further transnational education and training opportunities. Promoting ACPET member institutions to potential students through agent and institutional links is another important role that ACPET China plays.

ACPET’s Executive Officer for China, Li Min, is a member of the Australian Chinese Education Working Group and the Australia China Chamber of Commerce in Chengdu, roles that are pivotal in profiling ACPET member strengths to business, government and education and training stakeholders in China.

ACPET International Student Barometer

At the national conference the results of the ISB 2012 were released. The results showed that international student satisfaction has increased at Australia’s best private tertiary institutions with satisfaction and propensity to recommend higher than they were three years ago. Satisfaction rates outpace the global average of similar institutions on most indicators.

ACPET student satisfaction levels are also ahead of the global average in each of the four major categories – learning, living, support and arrival – scrutinised in a survey of 22,000 students around the world:

- overall learning satisfaction is 88% compared to the global benchmark of 87%
- living satisfaction is 89%, 3% higher than the global results
- average support satisfaction is 93% above a global average of 90%, and
- arrival received an overall satisfaction rate of 91% against the global 87%.

China MOE

In September 2012, the Chinese MOE sent a delegation to Australia solely to meet with ACPET, its members and the national regulators, ASQA and TEQSA.

ACPET has been working with Australian Education International in Canberra and Beijing encouraging the MOE to expand ‘The Supervision and Management of Cross-border Higher Education Information Website’ (the JSJ website) list of approved foreign institutions to include ACPET members.

The purpose of this official visit was for the MOE to deepen its understanding of the quality, strengths and diversity of the private tertiary sector, with a view to adding Australian private providers to the JSJ list. The MOE visit was followed up by a return visit by a TEQSA official to China. ACPET understands both activities have been received positively in China, and in 20013-14 ACPET will continue to press for members to be added to the JSJ list.

ACPET Delegation to India

ACPET led its first mission to India in April 2013. The ten delegates from eight ACPET member organisations participated in a productive week of meetings and workshops on opportunities and barriers to market entry. ACPET members held collaborative discussions and strengthened ties between Australian and Indian training providers.

ICEF Agents’ Workshop

Improving on ACPET’s level of engagement at the 2011 ICEF Berlin Workshop, both in terms of representation and reach, ACPET joined forces with English Australia and Austrade to jointly represent ‘Study in Australia’ at the 2012 workshop. Twelve of ACPET’s internationally-active member institutions participated in the workshop, meeting with agents from 97 countries over two days. The main topics of concern for agents were the fact that sectors other than the universities did not have streamlined visa arrangements and the high number of visa refusals based on the GTE.

ACPET’s China representative joined the ICEF Agents’ workshop in Beijing with 210 key agents from 19 countries. As well as attending workshops, ACPET also hosted the Australia New Zealand Agent (ANZA) workshop, in Brisbane, Queensland. The aim of the workshop was to strengthen existing links between agents and ACPET members.

Economic Contribution Report

The international education sector has faced a number of challenges such as changes to education visa requirements and the General Skilled Migration program along with the relatively strong Australian dollar.
The Economic Contribution report provided an estimate of the economic contribution of international students and their visiting families and friends for the calendar year 2011, with an overview of developments in global demand for international education, including Australia and Australia’s role in the world market.

The report highlighted the immense cost of delays in implementing international student visa reforms to the Australian economy, quantifying the decline in the value of international education as a key Australian export.

The financial year export income reported by the Australian Bureau of Statistics at $14.7 billion in 2011-12 was compared to the peak of $18.1 billion in 2009-2010, reflecting a decline in the international education sector’s export income of almost $2 billion per annum.

The report showed the industry had contributed 130,000 workers in 2011, up from 126,000 in 2007-08. This slight increase was due to the steady increase in university enrolments, against an ongoing decline in the VET, Schools and English language sectors since 2009.

**International Engagement Strategic Plan**

The 2013-2015 strategic objectives are:

To be relevant to members and stakeholders through:

- profiling ACPET membership’s capability, quality and diversity to enhance international student engagement
- identifying and securing international projects and funding to support ACPET members, their students and partners
- spearheading mutually beneficial partnerships with leading international education, industry, government and support agencies especially in key target markets of China, India and Indonesia, and
- delivering professional development programs with an international marketing, compliance and business development focus.

Leadership and Competitive Positioning of ACPET and its members through:

- national and international advocacy to secure more favourable visa and post-study work arrangements
- work to ensure the regulatory burden on ACPET members is reduced
- promotion of and support for all ACPET members
- sustained representation of the private sector on key government-led councils and advisory boards
- ACPET Tick of Approval, and
- acknowledgement of ACPET as a thought leader in international engagement and policy development.

Growth to ensure a sustainable future for ACPET through:

- fee-for-service learning programs and tools to support members’ international activities
- identifying opportunities to secure funding through international projects and initiatives
- fostering strong relationships with key international stakeholders, and
- maintaining and growing a diverse membership of quality providers.

**Vocational Education and Training**

ACPET’s high level of activity in the VET sector continued throughout 2012-13, with significant ACPET involvement in a number of high-level consultations and reviews of proposed policy, legislation and regulation.

With a period of political instability, particularly during the early months of 2013 for VET, parallel with the higher education portfolio changes, this was a difficult period in which to achieve policy success.

ACPET continued its regular interactions with the national VET regulator, the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA), including monthly dialogue between ACPET’s CEO and ASQA’s Chief Commissioner. ACPET was an integral member of the peak body roundtable advising ASQA on various provider issues. On multiple occasions Chris Robinson met with the ACPET Board for frank and open discussions around regulatory issues faced by members.

The ACPET Board also met with the Chair of the National Skills Standards Council, the Hon John Dawkins AO, to discuss the NSSC position paper *Improving vocational education and training – the case for a new system*. This meeting was in addition to a number of meetings held between the NSSC Secretariat and the ACPET Executive on NSSC related issues, and an earlier meeting between the NSSC Chair and ACPET’s Chair.

ACPET’s VET committee, a sub-committee of the ACPET Board, continued to oversee much of ACPET’s work in representing the interests of members to government and other stakeholders. The VET committee was also involved in the development of ACPET’s 2013 Federal Election policy statement and the continuation of ACPET’s high-level submissions on national issues over the past 12 months.

These include:

- ACPET Submission on the NSSC’s Position Paper *Improving vocational education and training: the case for a new system*
- ACPET Submission to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Inquiry into the role of TAFE
- ACPET Submission to the NSSC consultations on Standards for VET Accredited Courses
- ACPET Submission to the proposed ASQA fees and charges Cost Recovery Impact Statement
- ACPET Submission to the Unique Student Identifier Consultation
ACPET has continued to build its representative presence in strategic focus groups and committees at both a national and state level through membership by both ACPET members and/or executive staff. In doing so ACPET has ensured representation of the private sector in policy development, qualification and resource development, professional development and other ongoing initiatives in the VET sector. This includes membership of the IBSA Sector Advisory Committee (Education), numerous Commonwealth and State government committees and advisory groups and various ISC Training Package Committees. Details of ACPET’s state-level engagement are outlined in the State/Territory section of this report.

Key national-level VET issues for the sector in 2012-13 were the NSSC’s Review of the Standards for VET Regulation, ASQA’s regulatory approach, and changes to the employer incentives for apprenticeships and traineeships. On each of these issues the ACPET Board, VET Committee, staff and members worked hard to ensure the needs of private providers and their students were understood and considered in policy changes. Regular meetings with ASQA’s Commissioners ensured any regulatory anomalies being experienced by members could be dealt with quickly.

Pleasingly, after changes to employer incentives for apprenticeships and traineeships announced in 2011-12, further changes were not rolled out in 2012-13. While the NSSC’s proposed changes to the Standards for VET Regulation are not due to be agreed by Ministers until November 2013, by the end of the year in review and as a direct result of ACPET’s extensive advocacy, the more controversial proposals being considered had been put to one side. Ministers had also agreed to a detailed cost-benefit analysis and engagement with ACPET and a reference group of small providers, to ensure that any changes to the Standards would not have unintended consequences on smaller providers. During the year in review, ASQA also undertook consultations on fee increases as it moved towards a full-cost recovery model. While ASQA’s 2013-14 fee schedule had not been released at the end of June 2013, it is anticipated that some of ACPET’s concerns about inequities in the new fee schedule have been addressed. Ministers have also agreed to a comprehensive review of ASQA’s processes before considering any future fee increases.

At its November 2012 meeting, the Standing Council on Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment (SCOTeSE) agreed to the mandatory collection and reporting of total VET activity (TVA) data from 1 January 2014. SCOTeSE’s rationale for this decision was that reporting of TVA data will improve the operation of regulation for consumers, inform policy-making and enable provision of more comprehensive information to students, employers and training providers. It is envisaged that TVA data reporting, the MySkills website and the Unique Student Identifier (USI) will result in improved accountability, visibility and transparency of the VET sector.

ACPET was heavily involved in a number of consultations regarding TVA data reporting requirements. During the consultation period ACPET provided detailed advice on the administrative and regulatory impact that the proposed TVA data reporting would have on RTOs. This advice was provided via a submission and formally briefing state and commonwealth officials. On behalf of members ACPET was able to negotiate for partial reporting exemptions of TVA data on certain short units or modules delivered on a stand-alone basis.

ACPET also partnered with the Commonwealth Government to disseminate information on the USI and MySkills website to members via a combination of face to face workshops, webinars and the distribution of newsletters and fact sheets. The combination of MySkills and USI sessions attracted over 800 individuals from ACPET member institutions. The information sessions also provided members with the opportunity to deliver direct feedback to the Commonwealth on how these initiatives could best be implemented.

As with its higher education and international education policy advocacy, ACPET has worked extensively to represent its VET members’ issues to all sides of politics through meetings in Canberra and in parliamentarians’ electorate offices. ACPET has a professional relationship with all of the major parties and stands ready to actively advocate on behalf of members whatever the outcome of the Federal election.
The work of the ACPET Board is supported by a number of state committees. These committees assist the Board in understanding state-level issues, and in providing support to state-based ACPET Executive Officers in their engagement with stakeholders.

**Australian Capital Territory**

**State Summary**

2012-13 has been a year of both consolidation and change for ACPET in the ACT. ACPET ACT did not have a state/territory committee in 2012-13 but in order to strengthen the voice of private training providers in the ACT, formalised its cooperation with the Association of Providers of Training Services (APTS). This agreement delivered joint representation on ACT government committees, and shared promotion and delivery of professional development and networking activities.

In October 2012 Karen Nicholas (President, APTS) was appointed to the position of Director to represent the ACT on the ACPET Board.

During 2012-13 ACPET represented ACT members through various councils and forums including the Learning Capital Council, the e-Learning Collaborative Group, the ACT Youth Commitment Forum, the Canberra Education Export Committee and the Training and Tertiary Education Forums.

ACPET advocated on issues affecting ACT members, including changes to the VET Standards proposed by the NSSC, and proposed increases to ASQA’s regulatory fee schedule and skills reform.

**State-based Professional Development**

ACPET ACT piloted a number of PD workshops throughout 2012-13 as part of the national framework, including sessions on the collection of evidence and models of independent validation. The introduction of PD sessions delivered using video streaming and via webinar allowed ACT-based members to participate in a wider range of PD sessions held nationally.

**New South Wales**

**State Summary**

During the year in review ACPET NSW has firmly focused on building and strengthening relationships with government, other representative bodies and stakeholders. ACPET held a number of state-based breakfasts and forums, as well as a wide range of PD sessions as part of ACPET’s new national framework. ACPET NSW delivered more than 30 workshops to 300 participants during the first half of 2013.

The announcement of a student entitlement model for VET by the NSW Government in October 2012 flagged the beginning of a period of change for many ACPET members and the VET sector as a whole. While members delivering to international students waited for progress on policy changes at a national level during 2012-13, ACPET continued to engage with the NSW government ensuring ongoing advocacy in relation to the important contribution of international students and providers in NSW.

**Stronger Relationships with Government**

In 2012 ACPET strengthened its links with the NSW Government in a range of areas, most particularly with the NSW Department of Trade and Investment and the Department of Education and Communities.

In October 2012, the NSW Government announced its plans for skills reform through the Smart and Skilled framework. The long-awaited announcement was met by an ACPET commitment to ensure that the government tap into the immense capability of the private sector to assist in skilling NSW for the future.

**ACPET 2012 National Conference and Inaugural Awards for Excellence**

Sydney was the proud host of ACPET’s 2012 national conference in late August. The large number of ACPET members as well as industry
and government supporters and stakeholders who participated in this key event is a testament to the collective strength and credibility of ACPET’s role in the tertiary sector in NSW and nationally. The conference highlighted the recognition of a number of ACPET members through the inaugural awards program. Two NSW members received awards; BCA National Training Group for VET Provider of the Year, and Whitehouse Institute of Design with a special commendation for its VET in Schools partnerships, of which both organisations were deservedly very proud.

Progress on Smart and Skilled Consultation

At the beginning of 2013, ACPET began working with the Department of Education and Communities and its members across the VET sector on initial consultations regarding the Smart and Skilled reforms. ACPET members engaged with the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal on a pricing model for VET and participated in consultations regarding a draft quality framework for Smart and Skilled providers.

Professional Development Activities

In addition to events and workshops offered through ACPET’s national PD framework, ACPET held two Ministerial breakfast events and a successful VET provider forum during the year in review. ACPET NSW has expanded its PD offerings to regional members and stakeholders in Newcastle, Dubbo and Tamworth this year, with additional webinars making it easier for all members to access PD opportunities.

State Committee Update

Dr George Brown resigned from the NSW Committee in July 2012 following a significant contribution in NSW as a member of the ACPET Board. The membership of the NSW committee remained consistent throughout 2012-13 and included Chair, Martin Cass and members Stephen Pasfield, Mark Hopkins, Andrew Dawkins, Ian Tudor, Ron Maxwell, Cristine Russell, Sue-Ann Stanford, Bruce Callaghan and Robert Parsonson. Committee members supported the achievement of goals outlined in the operational plan for ACPET NSW, including closer engagement with the NSW Government and careers practitioners.

State-based Professional Development

ACPET NSW piloted a number of PD workshops in NSW in the second half of 2012 that were included in the national PD framework, including sessions on the collection of evidence and models of independent validation (in conjunction with ACPET Queensland).

Partnerships

ACPET NSW has strengthened relationships with the Group Training Association (GTA) of NSW-ACT and Community Colleges Australia on issues of concern to members.

Business and Industry Connections

ACPET NSW was a member of the NSW Business Chamber during 2012-13. ACPET encouraged stronger links between NSW members and key industry groups through initiatives managed by the City of Sydney (the 2013 Harmony festival and Chinese New Year business luncheon) and Austrade (key market briefings and other events).

International

ACPET’s CEO, Claire Field, along with a number of ACPET members, were invited by the NSW Government to join the International Education and Research (IER) Taskforce in 2012. The taskforce made a number of recommendations to government, through the IER Action Plan which informed the NSW Economic Development Framework: A Platform for Growth, launched by the Deputy Premier in November 2012. The IER Taskforce’s recommendation for transport discounts to be provided to international students was immediately accepted and announced by the Premier in late October. This followed strong representation by ACPET on this key issue over a number of years.

ACPET participated in two of the Premier’s international delegations in 2012; the first to China in July 2012, where the Premier opened ACPET’s China office; and the second to India in November 2012, with the Premier witnessing the signing of the MoU with the NSDC. The capacity of the private sector to respond flexibly and speedily with industry and educational institutions in both China and India is recognised by government.

Onshore, ACPET NSW hosted government and business delegates from around the world during 2012-13, including visitors in Sydney for ACPET’s 2012 national conference and a large delegation of college leaders from Chongqing, China who toured a number of member colleges in February 2013. Delegates were able to see the high-quality of member facilities and course offerings, meet and speak to students and have detailed discussions about course curriculum and regulatory requirements.

Local Events

Government Representatives:

- December 2012, skills reform breakfast with Minister for Education Adrian Piccoli attended by 100 members and supporters
- April 2013, NSW VET forum attended by Parliamentary Secretary for Tertiary Education and Skills Gabrielle Upton, ASQA Commissioner Michael Lavarch, key Department of Education and Communities officials and more than 70 members and stakeholders, and
- June 2013, international education and NSW economic development framework forum with Deputy Premier Andrew Stoner and Parliamentary Secretary Gabrielle Upton with the attendance of more than 80 delegates.

Exclusively for ACPET Members:

- July 2012 and September 2012, CEO forums hosted by NSW Committee members, and
- February 2013, meet the Board event for members in conjunction with Board’s Sydney meeting.

Funding submissions and/or discussion papers

In working with the NSW Government on the development of Smart and Skilled reforms, ACPET had input into the development of the following:

- the draft quality framework for providers
- a pricing model for VET qualifications with the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal, and
- consultancy selection for Independent Validation pilots in NSW.

ACPET NSW also provided a response to the NSW Industry Action Plan on International Education and Research and was involved in ongoing consultation with the Department of Trade and Investment on the plan’s recommendations.
Northern Territory

State Summary
With the opening of the NT office in January, ACPET now has a representative office in every mainland capital. We recognise our role in the Asian Century with the NT office intended to play a pivotal role in forging stronger links with Timor-Leste and Indonesia.

Priorities for ACPET NT during the past year have been to provide on-the-ground support for local members, forging stronger alliances with key stakeholders and working with the NT Government in the implementation of local and COAG-endorsed VET reforms.

ACPET has facilitated three major RTO forums in the NT over the past year, two in Darwin and one in Alice Springs. Two of these forums were supported by the NT Government. ACPET NT also continued to develop a local professional development program to complement the ACPET national PD framework.

In 2013, ACPET entered into a three year contractual arrangement with the NT Department of Business providing support to all private RTOs in respect of VET reforms, developing and conducting PD and related activities; assisting in the development of quality benchmarks to determine an endorsed provider model; identifying strategies to assist in VET workforce development; investigating the possibility of third party access arrangements by private providers to existing capital infrastructure; and continuing to advocate on behalf of private providers to industry, community and government.

An ACPET NT committee was also established to be the voice of Territory members and the production of a regular NT RTO newsletter is in the pipeline to inform all private RTOs of reforms, PD opportunities and key dates.

ACPET is well placed to further drive the growth of private providers in the NT, and it is noteworthy that the Chief Minister of the NT Adam Giles is an alumnus of our member, BCA National Training Group having undertaken a business qualification. BCA is active across the Top End and is currently providing training throughout the NT as well as the bordering Kimberley district in WA. BCA was the winner of the inaugural VET Provider of the Year at the 2012 ACPET Awards for Excellence.

Queensland

State Summary
The 12 months in review have been a period of significant debate, challenges and change for ACPET members across Queensland.

Whilst the newly elected Newman Government began to shape its training reform agenda through the final report and recommendations of the Queensland Skills and Training Taskforce, the sector has been in a holding pattern, waiting for implementation strategies to commence. ACPET was a member of the taskforce deliberations supporting the state’s growth through the four key economic pillars and reducing unemployment. The latter part of this review period saw the establishment of the Training Reform Reference Group to provide the right advice about implementing fundamental skills reforms that will establish a longer term strategy for VET in Queensland.

State Committee Update
The Queensland state committee is made up of nine member representatives, whose organisations and roles characterise the breadth of the training sector. The majority of the committee are long-standing members. A key focus of the committee throughout 2012-13 has been the state government’s transition towards entitlement and contestability, with particular emphasis placed on the Minister’s Skills and Training Taskforce terms of reference and final report recommendations.

Private Provider Study Guide
An initiative of the Queensland state committee was the planning and design of a study guide to showcase the broad range of offerings the private sector provides. The study guide aims to raise the image of the sector by targeting the school leaver market, career changers and people currently employed who are looking to enhance their career opportunities but remain within their chosen industry sector.

The study guide also offers potential students helpful study method tips, a checklist on how to choose the right ACPET College for them, and useful interview techniques when students are applying for work.

Business and Industry Connections
The Queensland Independent Assessment Validation pilot (sponsored by the Queensland VET Development Centre) was conducted between June and December 2012. It examined research, gathered stakeholder views and completed pilots in both the children’s services and construction industries.

International
During the year, the Queensland EO was invited to join the Queensland Premier’s trade missions to India and PNG along with interested members. The value and insights gained from the India missions was useful in the planning of ACPET’s subsequent trade mission to India in April. The mission to PNG provided the opportunity to meet with officials from the PNG government and business owners to discuss their skillling and employment needs in a growing economy.

On top of these offshore missions, the Queensland office and members hosted numerous delegations from across the globe. These delegates came from China, Bhutan, Chile, Brazil, Maldives, Africa, United States, Korea, Vietnam and India with a view to discussing policy frameworks, strategic planning, funding models, learning and assessment strategies and, in some cases, to simply shadow RTO practitioners and learn by observation and questioning.
Member participation was highly valued by our international guests who gained both ideas and information from them and received enormous exposure to the workings of RTOs, particularly those operating in a workplace context.

Local Events

2013 State Forum

Over 90 people joined the Minister for Education, Training & Employment, the Hon John Paul Langbroek MP along with Assistant Minister Saxon Rice at the Queensland annual state forum, themed ‘Toward Tomorrow’s Future.’

Our keynote speaker was Maha Sinnathamby, Chairman of Springfield Land Corporation, who delivered a highly motivational presentation with his catch cry “persistence, persistence, persistence.”

South Australia

State Summary

The past year was dominated by the implementation of the South Australian Skill Reforms: Skills for All and ACPET’s input to their development based on SA state committee feedback and member consultations. ACPET continued to engage with the State Training Authority throughout the year to adjust policy settings as the reforms were rolled out and progressively refined as the market evolved.

In particular, ACPET contributed actively to two sets of consultations conducted in the first half of 2013, which led to strategies for managing high growth courses, for implementation from 1 July.

Other issues included liaising regularly with ASQA at the local level regarding emerging issues as members adjusted to the uncertainty of changed regulatory approaches.

ACPET consultations with members during VET forums, professional higher education conversations and round table meetings strengthened ACPET’s capacity to represent members actively on key issues.

Industry specific networks and communities of practice were established by ACPET SA to support VET practitioners to implement sustainability skills in their training with confidence. Special events with key industry speakers were held for VET practitioners in business services, building, construction and trades, and food and hospitality, to hear about the sustainability knowledge and skills needed by employers in those industries. The network of interested practitioners grew substantially, leading to the sharing of good practice both face to face and by means of Facebook.

A large network of VET practitioners interested in building their capability to meet the Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) needs of their students was also established in 2013, with over 60 participants interested in continuing their involvement in seminars, workshops and webinars over the coming year.

The highlights during the year included:

- the positive increases in student enrolments for RTOs participating in Skills for All and the excellent satisfaction rates. (Skills SA, Skills for All Summary Reports 1 & 2, Dec 2013 & April 2013)

- the success of several funding submissions, including two from DFEEST for establishing practitioner networks for building capability in LLN and in delivering sustainability skills and one from DIICCSRTE for developing a framework to assist RTOs in implementing sustainability skills
- a renewed funding agreement with DFEEST for ACPET’s ongoing professional development for the VET and Higher Education sector and input to DFEEST for continuing enhancement of skills reforms
- the positive response received to ACPET’s advocacy for private providers in shaping the ongoing development of skill reforms in SA
- collaboration with Education Adelaide in planning for the introduction of streamlined visa processing (SVP) for non-university providers, to assist with the associated administration and to develop alternative strategies for those providers not qualifying for SVP, and
- a Higher Education forum conducted jointly with DFEEST with an international guest speaker who discussed comparative approaches to quality between Australia and the UK.

State Committee Update

The SA state committee, chaired by Richard Finlayson, met throughout the year to address a wide range of issues affecting members. The state committee met regularly with the Skills for All team, DFEEST staff, the Minister and MPs of both major parties and Independents advocating on behalf of members on a range of key concerns including: Skills for All, SVP and a shortage of clinical placements for students.

A VET forum was held in April 2013 during which the state Chair outlined ACPET’s advocacy and intervention regarding a number of regulatory and skills reform matters, including ASQA fee increases and NSSC proposed changes to VET.

Advocacy, Policy and Government

Advocacy for members continued throughout the year for conducive and efficient quality arrangements for the implementation of skill reforms, through regular meetings with DFEEST and the Minister. Two substantial papers were submitted in relation to Skills for All following consultation with members.
Member advocacy included correspondence with the Minister on behalf of Industry Skills Boards to continue funding levels and to address key concerns regarding skill reform implementation and the significant drop in international student numbers particularly in the VET sector.

In addition to meetings with the former and new Minister, the Opposition and the Greens on a range of issues, meetings were held with:

• Education Adelaide regarding continued action for increasing international student numbers coming to the state
• members regarding the potential inclusion of private providers in the SATAC Guide, and
• several individuals and agencies regarding the shortage of student clinical placements.

State-based Professional Development

There were 40 PD workshops and information sessions scheduled throughout the year. In addition, an information session on VET benchmarking was held in 2012 and a VET forum was conducted in April 2013.

A Higher Education forum was conducted jointly with DFEEST in the latter half of 2012 and the Higher Education Professional Conversations recommenced in May 2013, starting with the issue of inclusion in the SATAC guide.

ACPET has been very active in SA in establishing practitioner Communities of Practice particularly in building capability for LLN and for sustainability skills, the latter by industry area in building and construction, business services, IT and for TAE practitioners.

Partnerships

ACPET engaged with many partners and stakeholders in SA throughout the year, including with key government agencies and Industry Skills Boards.

The ongoing partnership with Education Adelaide on behalf of members delivering to international students continues to be very productive in responding to key issues as they arise.

ACPET has collaborated with TAFESA and DFEEST in PD initiatives relating to building capability for LLN, for promoting and up-skilling practitioners in skills for sustainability and conducting a forum for Higher Education providers.

International

The key activity has been to advocate to MPs for members for an announcement regarding the introduction of SVP for RTOs and to collaborate with Education Adelaide to support RTOs when an announcement is eventually made.

Other Committee Representation:

ACPET is represented on the following groups in SA:

• the Skills for All Consultation Forum, which meets every two months
• VET in SACE Policy and Implementation group
• the SA VET sector agreement group
• the DIISRTE Green Skills Advisory and Implementation Group, and
• SESA Industry reference Group.

Funding submissions and/or discussion papers

Two funding submissions were presented to DIICCSRTE; one for a national Energy Efficiency project and another for developing an RTO Framework for Implementing Sustainability, the latter of which was successful.

Three funding submissions were presented to DFEEST, being for renewing the ACPET Funding Agreement, and for creating two VET practitioner networks, all of which were successful.

A funding submission to NCVER to recognise the significant contribution of ACPET to NCVER research efforts was unsuccessful.

Two papers were submitted to DFEEST to advocate for improved policy settings under the Skills for All program, which were well-received.
Tasmania

State Summary
During 2012-13, ACPET Tasmania has steadily and pleasingly grown its membership base. During this period ACPET continued to offer a range of relevant professional development workshops, which aimed to support the VET sector in particular to better understand and prepare for the VET reform agenda. ACPET was also invited to present at the annual SkillsTAS Conference in May 2012, attended by over 200 delegates, where ACPET’s Executive Officer presented a paper on positioning RTOs in a changing environment. As an acknowledgement of ACPET’s high quality national professional development (PD) program, SkillsTAS commissioned ACPET to conduct a series of PD workshops for the Tasmanian VET sector during 2013, ranging from business management through to student engagement. During January – June 2013, ACPET delivered seven successful workshops, attended by over 80 VET staff, in both Launceston and Hobart. These workshops were well received, with strong participant satisfaction rates.

In October 2012, and in partnership with DEEWR Tasmania and SkillsTAS, ACPET Tasmania co-sponsored and organised the inaugural Provider Interconnected Forum, aimed at enhancing the links between VET providers and employment service providers. Once again, this forum was well received, with over 60 registrants from across Tasmania in attendance. In addition, and to showcase ACPET’s quality Tasmanian members, ACPET attended the Commonwealth Government’s high profile Jobs and Skills Expo in February, organised in Hobart.

During this period, ACPET Tasmania was advised that it was successful in its SkillsTAS Equity Grant submission, Having the conversation. This project, run in conjunction with the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (TCCI), aims to reinforce the benefits of employing people with a disability, whilst supporting employers with a range of strategies to assist them to recruit as well as to adjust their workplaces in order to easily accommodate people with a disability.

ACPET Tasmania continued to represent the Tasmanian private training provider sector as an active member of the SkillsTAS Service Provider Committee until the committee’s abolition in February 2013. It looks forward to participating in the expert reference group that will be established under the endorsed provider model, a SkillsTAS VET reform initiative which will provide guidance on matters such as quality endorsements, VET practitioner PD and VET workforce development.

Victoria

State Summary
A key focus for ACPET Victoria was to continue to engage with government on its VET reforms and advocate on behalf of members to promote a client-driven VET market. These reforms culminated in a truly competitive VET market in which for the first time private provider enrolments exceeded that of the public sector. The Victorian Training Market Quarterly Report Full Year 2012 shows that private providers accounted for 46% of enrolments in government-subsidised training, with TAFE and the ACE sectors accounting for 42% and 12%, respectively.

With this increased activity and rapid market growth, it is important that quality is maintained. ACPET’s PD programs provide leadership to members in this regard by delivering workshops that not only aim at compliance but also quality in training outcomes.

One of the highlights of the year was the ACPET VET Forum, attracting 114 delegates to hear about the state of VET in Victoria. Speakers included the Minister for Higher Education and Skills, the Shadow Minister for Higher Education and Skills, the Parliamentary Secretary of Education, the Chief Commissioner of ASQA, as well as key industry and education and training stakeholders.

Advocacy, policy and government
As well as representing members through advocacy, ACPET also undertook a number of projects on behalf of the government. ACPET engaged with HESG to develop a code of conduct to enhance the quality of training by contracted providers in Victoria. ACPET’s Code of Ethics was the basis for the new Victorian Statement of Expectations for training organisations. The Hon Peter Hall, Minister for Higher Education and Skills, chose the ACPET VET Forum to launch this important reform.

ACPET secured a HESG-funded project to trial industry validation of RTO assessment. The project stemmed from the COAG agreement on skills reforms, which include the implementation from 2014 of independent external validation of training provider assessment. This project selected, trialled and evaluated different models of validation of assessment in two industries (nursing and commercial cookery) with a view to recommending the wider implementation of independent validation approaches in the future. Both RTOs and industry participants found this a valuable exercise.

ACPET represents members’ interests on a number of working groups and committees, including:
- senior Council of Vocational Education and Training Providers (community services and health), nursing RTOs
- flexible Learning Steering Committee influences direction of e-learning in Victoria
- Victorian Tertiary Admittance Centre (VTAC), and
- Australian China Business Council (Victoria Branch) Education sub-committee.

State committee update
The ACPET Victoria state committee met six times over the last 12 months. The committee provided guidance to the Victorian EO in planning activities such as the VET Forum, and participating in a number of consults with the Higher Education and Skills Group (HESG) and the Department of Business and Innovation (DBI). The Victorian committee Chair and EO met with the Minister for Higher Education and Skills on a number of occasions to discuss key policy issues such as the Victorian VET reforms and the new VET Standards proposed by the NSSC. Regular meetings were also held with the Minister’s advisers as well as HESG and DBI.

To ensure that member institutions are considered by careers practitioners when recommending further education and training for their students, ACPET continued to engage with the CEAV, the peak body for Victorian careers practitioners. The CEAV conference
was held on 31 October at which the EO presented on ‘how to select a quality provider’. At this conference there was an ACPET Alley with 20 trade stalls made available exclusively to ACPET members. With more than 100 careers practitioners attending, those members involved were highly satisfied with this ACPET-initiated activity.

A very positive benefit for members and an opportunity to raise the profile of private providers was also achieved through ACPET securing the listing of member open days in the CEAV calendar which is distributed to all CEAV careers practitioners.

In June ACPET organised a CBD Melbourne Walking Tour for careers practitioners, showcasing the breadth and quality of ACPET members and their facilities. The post-tour feedback was very positive and this activity will be a key strategy for future engagement with the CEAV.

International Engagement

ACPET members and senior staff participated in a number of consultations and round table discussions with DBI in relation to the formulation of an International Education Strategy for Victoria. Disappointingly, the strategy was yet to be released at the end of the year in review.

Western Australia

State Summary

The year in review has been a challenge to continue the good work of last year when ACPET in WA was able to build its profile in the sector to firmly position ACPET as the key advocacy group representing quality private providers of education and training. There have been three state EOs and two state Directors throughout the year.

In WA there has been a strong focus on quality. This is quality of service provided by ACPET to its members and the quality of services delivered by ACPET members to their students and clients. Proactive continuous improvement processes are critical for members to remain compliant but more importantly to ensure that they stay focused on providing quality education and training. This has been a challenge in a year when there has been so much change and with more mooted. In times of such rapid change there is always a danger of falling back to a focus on meeting compliance requirement rather than aspiring to excellence.

State Committee Update

The WA state committee met at regular intervals during the 2012-13 financial years with six meetings being held in total. However, with the changes in staff and Director and of short periods without a state Director, maintaining a focus on all aspects of the state operational plan has been difficult. The quality of representation on the committee helped to compensate for the staff changes.

The key message driven by the state committee was to ensure that ACPET built meaningful relationships with key stakeholders in the education and training industry, such as state ministers and regulators, as well as industry leaders such as the Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

State-based Professional Development

During 2012-13 more than 500 provider staff attended 34 ACPET PD activities. Participant satisfaction rates have been consistently 90% and above, with compliance related topics the most popular.

ACPET successfully applied for a number of government-funded initiatives and assisted six members in gaining access to government-funded workforce development initiatives:

- an e-learning grant from the State government which has given 30 staff from 15 private providers the opportunity to participate in workshops and one-on-one mentoring to develop and e-learning project
- a grant from the State government, administered by the VET Development Centre, which has given eight team leaders/managers from member institutions the opportunity to participate in leadership workshops and access one-on-one mentoring from a professional coach/mentor, and
- six ACPET members were each able to secure a $10,000 workforce development grant from the Victorian government via the VET Development Centre.

Partnerships

In line with the state committee’s requirement for ACPET in WA to establish relationships with key stakeholders, ACPET invested heavily in creating and nurturing connections primarily with the Minister of Training and Workforce Development and his Principal Policy Advisor. ACPET and these key stakeholders met on numerous occasions at formal private meetings.

Relationships were also established with the Department of Training and Workforce Development and the Department of Education Services. Meetings were held throughout the year between ACPET and Executive Directors and Managers of both Departments.

ACPET also forged a strong relationship with regulatory bodies in Western Australia throughout 2012-13 with numerous meetings
ACPET has worked hard to position itself and its members favourably with the Chinese government, industry and education providers over the past decade. Two delegations to China by ACPET’s senior executives in the latter half of 2011 confirmed that having an ACPET presence in China would assist the private education and training sector in meeting several of its international engagement objectives in one of its key markets.

ACPET proudly launched its presence in China in late July 2012 with the NSW Premier attending as part of his China trade mission. Objectives for ACPET’s China EO include:

- providing onshore support to ACPET members that are currently active or wish to become active in the China market
- profiling the sector in China with the goal of official recognition by the MOE, and
- exploring further transnational education and training opportunities as per the Knight Review.

International Education Forum
The title of the forum was ‘has the mining pit consumed international education in WA?’

There were a series of important questions which needed to be asked including:

- what does the future hold for International Education in Western Australia?
- how serious is the Government about positioning International Education as an export earner?, and
- how is Western Australia being sold and perceived as a destination for international students?

The forum brought together education and training providers, industry stakeholders and key officials who are engaged in international education in WA. Participants included the Minister for Education, The Hon Peter Collier MLA, Perth Education City, Austrade, Consulate General of India, and Australian Vocational Training and Employment Group (AVTEG).

The forum is part of ACPET’s lobbying effort to have the international education and training sector recognised as a key part of the WA economy and an area capable of growing significantly.

Christmas Breakfast
To provide an opportunity for members and to celebrate the festive season, a breakfast was organised with guest speaker Andrew Mathwin, of Clarity Communications. He provided a stimulating overview of social media and how to make use of the available tools no matter what size of business members operate. Those wishing to obtain a more detailed understanding were offered the opportunity to explore the subject in greater depth in a full day PD session in January. It proved a very successful Christmas event and the follow up session was very well attended.

China
Country Summary
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The past 12 months have focused effort on establishing ACPET in the market and building a reputation. Relationships with Chinese government, local educational organisations and educational agents was strengthened through a range of on-and off-shore events, including delegations to NSW and Queensland and attendance at the annual Chongqing International Education Exhibition.

In addition, ACPET’s China EO attended key economic and education events such as the Beijing IDP conference and Chengdu Business Investment forum as well as attending and supporting its Victorian members on the Premier’s super trade mission.

In September 2012, ACPET hosted a visit by the Chinese MOE and the Chinese Service Centre for Scholarly Exchange (CSCSE), to discuss areas of cooperation and to progress access to the Chinese JSJ list by private institutions. The delegation visited both Victoria and NSW. ACPET understands the report of the trip makes positive recommendations about the inclusion of private providers onto the JSJ list.
ACPET regularly made submissions to government and produced policy position statements on a range of matters pertinent to private education and training.

In the year in review, 18 were delivered over a range of themes.

- Response to the NSSC’s Position Paper – Improving Vocational Education and Training: The Case for a New System
  April 2013
- Submission into the role of TAFE
  April 2013
- Submission to the Higher Education Standards Panel – Course Design and Learning Outcomes
  April 2013
- Submission to the NSSC consultations on Standards for VET Accredited Courses
  April 2013
- ASQA proposed fees and charges Cost Recovery Impact Statement –ACPET’s response to the exposure draft
  April 2013
- Inquiry into Higher Education Support Amendment (Asian Century) Bill 2013
  March 2013
- Unique Student Identifier consultation ACPET response
  February 2013
- Response to questions: AWPA ICT Workforce Issues Paper
  February 2013
- Deloitte Report: Economic contribution to international students (summary report)
  February 2013
- ACPET 2013-14 Pre-Budget Submission
  February 2013
- ACPET SA Response to the proposed changes to the Skills for All Funded Training List
  January 2013
- ACPET Submission to review Higher Education Support Amendment Bill
  August 2012
- COAG Consultation Regulation Impact Statement on total VET Activity Data Collection
  August 2012
- ACPET Submission: National Career Development Strategy Green Paper
  August 2012
- ACPET Submission: NSSC 2012 Review of the Standards for the regulation of VET
  July 2012
- ACPET Submission: AQF Council proposal for the Graduate and Vocational Graduate Certificates and Diplomas in the AQF
  July 2012
- ACPET Submission: DIISRTE VET FEE-HELP Redesign 2012
  July 2012
ACPET’s corporate governance is overseen by the Board’s Governance, Audit and Risk Committee which is in turn assisted by three working groups focussing on Finance, Governance, and Tuition Assurance. Details of committee membership are at page 29.

Annual General Meeting

ACPET’s Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held in conjunction with the national conference on Thursday, 30 August 2012. Members agreed to a number of revisions to the ACPET Constitution ensuring compliance with relevant legislative instruments, including the Corporations Act, providing additional specificity in relation to:

- ACPET being a “special purpose not for profit public company”
- members wishing to nominate for Director positions on the Board only being able to nominate for one Director position
- ensuring that reasonable costs are covered should a member initiate an Extraordinary General Meeting, and
- changes to align the Constitution with the Corporations Act in relation to the proportion of members required to support a resolution.

Members also accepted the re-appointment of MDHC Audit Assurance Pty Ltd as ACPET’s auditors for 2013.

Reviewing Board Performance

ACPET’s Corporate Governance Policy requires that the Board review itself every year, and that every second year the review should be a formal review undertaken by an independent governance expert. As a result, in February 2013, Alan Read (ACPET’s legal adviser who has extensive corporate governance experience) undertook a review of the Board.

Major issues identified by the Board were:

- the effectiveness of the current Board structure
- communication from the Board to the CEO, and
- time expectations of the Chair and Directors.

To remedy the issues identified the Board agreed to consult with members on a change to the composition of the Board at the 2013 AGM, to amend the Corporate Governance Policy to strengthen and clarify communications between the Board and CEO, and to assist Directors with no prior Board expertise by supporting them to undertake a company director’s course (e.g. through the Australian Institute of Company Directors).

Lifting the Quality Bar

The Board was very aware of member feedback in 2012 that getting rid of ‘rogue’ members remained a key priority for ACPET. In 2011 ACPET introduced a formal ‘show cause’ process to ensure it could follow-up on complaints about its members in a fair and balanced manner and take action, including termination of membership, where required.

In 2012-13 the ‘show cause’ process continued to operate, with ACPET receiving 43 complaints about its members and investigated all of them. As a result of either these investigations or the failure to pay membership fees, 57 members had their membership terminated by the Board in 2012-13.

At 30 June 2013 there were seven outstanding complaints still under a ‘show cause’ process.

Financial Performance

The Governance, Audit and Risk Committee and its Finance Working Group focused considerable attention on ACPET’s financial performance in 2012-13, with the withdrawal of ACPET’s OSTAS, a key source of revenue for ACPET over the past decade.

ACPET’s audited financial statements for 2012-13 show the organisation has delivered a financial result which was in line with expectations at the end of 2011-12. ACPET’s three year plan to adjust to the loss of the significant OSTAS revenues and generate increased revenues from a broader range of services and offerings was, at 30 June 2013, well on track.

Expenditure was reduced in all areas including salaries, travel and accommodation, use of external consultants, and administrative expenses.

Despite the loss of the OSTAS revenue in 2012-13, the organisation was in a strong financial position at the end of the year, with healthy levels of retained earnings.

Risk Assessment of ACPET Members for Tuition Assurance Scheme (TAS) Coverage

The risk assessment of members for ACPET’s Tuition Assurance Cover (for providers with FEE-HELP and VET FEE-HELP approval) continued in 2013. The risk profile of ACPET’s members with TAS protection improved in 2012-13, with 80% assessed as low risk compared to 73% in 2011-12. This is a result of the OSTAS changes with CRICOS institutions typically having a slightly higher risk profile than providers with FEE-HELP/VET FEE-HELP approval. A further 18% of applications were assessed as medium risk and 2% as high risk in 2012-13 (compared with 22% and 5% respectively in 2011-12). ACPET continued to work closely with those identified as high risk to ensure they did not enter provider default and trigger a call on the ASTAS.
Corporate Governance

Further Changes to the Constitution

Following the Board’s review of its performance and previous consultations with members, in 2012-13 the Board consulted with members on further changes to the Constitution. The proposed changes include:

- changes to the composition of the Board
- the shift of ACPET membership from state-based to national membership, and
- changes to affiliate membership.

Composition of the Board

In the first half of 2012, as part of consultations with members about other changes to the Constitution (agreed at the August 2012 AGM), the then Chair of the Governance, Audit and Risk Committee and the then Company Secretary led discussions with members about the composition of the ACPET Board. Members expressed an ongoing concern that all states and territories should have ‘representation’ on the Board but did not believe the current Category B Director positions were as useful and indicated some support for the Board to be able to select Directors with specific skills and expertise.

The Board’s Governance Working Group provided advice that the election of Directors from all states and territories was important given the number of issues affecting members which were the responsibility of state and territory governments. However, the Working Group had reservations about the effectiveness of the three national Director categories. Instead they recommended replacing them with independent Directors selected by the Board.

The Board agrees with the views of members and recommendations of its Governance Working Group and at the end of the year in review was preparing to ask members at the 2013 AGM to replace the three existing Category B positions (small, medium and large providers) with three Board appointed positions to strengthen ACPET’s corporate governance. If agreed, it is envisaged that:

1. At the first Board meeting after each AGM the Board would undertake a review of the skill set on the new Board. It would then consider how the skill set matches the skills required to effectively operate the Board given the type of issues currently on the Agenda or likely to come to the fore in the next 12 months.

2. The Board would develop a plan regarding how it will best meet any perceived skill shortage. The options could include:
   - seeking expert advice from a Consultant
   - appointing an independent Board Director if there are vacant positions
   - asking a current Board Director to undertake the role of being a champion for the skill area in question. This may require some up skilling or information gathering, and
   - request the CEO to provide the cover for the skills gap by whatever means is deemed appropriate.

3. If the Board seeks to appoint a Director the following guidelines would be followed:
   - at no time should there be more than one Director from any member
   - the balance of State representation would be considered
   - the Director would need to meet all the usual Conflict of Interest tests that any other Board Director is bound by, and
   - where the necessary skill set is available within a Member’s organisation the Board should attempt to source the Director from there in the first instance.

In proposing these changes the Board had researched the issue of good corporate governance and independence on Boards. In particular it noted that its proposed changes reflect the views of the Australian Securities Exchange (ASX), that:

*Fundamental to any corporate governance structure is establishing the roles of the board and senior executives – with a balance of skills, experience and independence on the board appropriate to the nature and extent of company operations.*

Shift of ACPET Membership from State-Based to National Membership

Historically ACPET has offered membership at the state level. This was due to the original requirements under the ESOS Act that a provider needed a separate CRICOS registration in each state they operated in, and the close links between ACPET membership and OSTAS cover.

Given the establishment of national regulators for higher education (TEQSA) and VET (ASQA), as well as the changes to the ESOS Act which introduce national CRICOS registration the reasons for the state-based membership no longer exist.

In all of the consultations conducted in 2012-13 there were no dissenting voices on this issue. All members involved in the consultations considered this to be a logical change to make. As such the Board will recommend it to the 2013 AGM.

Change to Membership Classifications

In recent years there has been some discussion about the appropriateness of some of ACPET’s membership definitions. One of the most hotly debated issues has been how to treat public RTOs and other public institutions.

Within the ACPET membership are a couple of very obvious public providers where the member is a TAFE institution. Less obvious are members which are wholly owned subsidiaries of public universities. Also amongst the membership are several government departments or agencies. A further area of debate centred on how to treat overseas organisations wishing to become members of ACPET. To date these overseas organisations have been either training providers or peak bodies similar to ACPET.

The Board has also had to deal with potential risks to ACPET’s brand where some affiliate members offer only non-accredited training. To mitigate this risk in the short term, the Board approved the use of a separate affiliate logo which has recently been rolled out to affiliate members.

What has become clear is that the current definitions and categories of membership in the Constitution do not accurately reflect the diversity of independently owned providers in the tertiary education sector.

After consultation and considerable deliberation the Board will propose at the 2013 AGM that the definition of Affiliate Member should be tightened. The Board will also seek member approval to introduce a new category of ‘member’ to allow public entities and overseas organisations which may wish to continue a close relationship with ACPET, or wish to establish one, to become Partners in Education. Any such organisations would need to agree to abide by ACPET’s Code of Ethics and support the operation of a competitive education and training market. Importantly the Board will propose to members that ‘Partner in Education’ members will not be entitled to vote.
ACPET Board Sub-committees and Working Groups

Governance Audit and Risk Committee
Mel Koumides (Chair), Academia International
Martin Cass (ex-officio), JMC Academy
George Markakis, JMC Academy
Dr Peter Ryan, Consult Ed
Larry Davies (former Chair), Windmill Tilter Consulting Services (retired)

Finance Working Group
Mel Koumides (Chair), Academia International
Martin Cass (ex-officio), JMC Academy
George Markakis, JMC Academy
Dr Peter Ryan, Consult Ed
Larry Davies (former Chair), Windmill Tilter Consulting Services (retired)

TAS Working Group
David Windridge (Chair), MEGT
Martin Cass (ex-officio), JMC Academy
Warren Walmsley, THINK Education Group
Russell Welch, John Paul International College

Governance Working Group
Mel Koumides (Chair), Academia International
Martin Cass (ex-officio), JMC Academy
Gurdeep Dhillion, Australian Institute of Technical Training
Selena Hooper, Kenvale College
Larry Davies (former Chair), Windmill Tilter Consulting Services (retired)

Higher Education Committee
Dr Andrew Dawkins (Acting Chair), Navitas University Programs
Martin Cass (ex-officio), JMC Academy
Pro Joo-Gim Heaney, AIH Higher Education
Dr Peter Ryan, Consult Ed
Ian Tudor, Whitehouse Institute of Design
Selina Underwood, Carnegie Mellon University – Australia
Rose Vallen, Australian Institute of Technology
Dr Maria Fiocco (former chair), Curtin College (resigned)

VET Committee
Richard Finlayson (Chair), Quality Training & Hospitality
Martin Cass (ex-officio), JMC Academy
Jenny Field, Prime Learning
Nicolay Gayewski, MEGT (Australia) Ltd
Ron Maxwell, Western College Dubbo
Steve Pasfield, Access Training Institute
Terrence Richards, Australian College of Training
Elaine Robb, Encompass Community Services
Brett Schimming, Construction Skills Queensland

International Education Committee
Gurdeep Singh Dhillion (Chair), Australian Institute of Technical Training
Roger Bendall, StudyLink (retired)
Chris Eason, International Education Services
Peter Gainey, JMC Academy
Mark Hopkins, Hillsong International Leadership College
Gerald Lipman, ICHM
Mel Koumides, Academia International
Sean Mahoney, International College of Advanced Education
Parampreet Singh, College of Innovation & Industry Skills
Russell Welch, John Paul International College

NSW State Committee
Martin Cass (Chair), JMC Academy
Bruce Callaghan, B.C.A. National Training Group
Dr Andrew Dawkings, Navitas University
Programs Sydney
Mark Hopkins, Hillsong International Leadership
Ron Maxwell, Western College Dubbo
Robert Parsonson, Redhill Education
Stephen Pasfield, Access Training Institute
Cristine Russell, International Training & Career College
Sue-Ann Stanford, Kaplan on Line Professional Education
Ian Tudor, Whitehouse Institute of Design

Northern Territory
Sean Mahoney (Chair), International College of Advanced Education (ICAE)
Olivia Phillipps (Deputy Chair), B.C.A. National Training Group
Lisa Collins Group Training
Cos Russo, Transforming Training/NT
Christian Schools Association
Dr Jude Long, Nungalinya College

Queensland State Committee
Jenny Field (Chair), Specialised Training Services
Kim Edwards, Sea English Academy
Sue Freeman, First Impressions Resources
Paul Lange, Accredited Online Training
Greg Quigley, Jazz Music Institute
Brett Schimming, Construction Skills Queensland
Errol Thomas, Performance Training
Jennie Wallace, Study Group Australia
Warren Walmsley, THINK Education Group
Russell Welch, John Paul International College

South Australia State Committee
Richard Finlayson (Chair), Quality Training & Hospitality
Trisch Baff, FCTA – Building Careers
Julie Clifford, Carrick Institute of Education (resigned)
Harry Ennis, Construction Industry Training Centre Inc
Di Fieleg, Community Services Training & Development Centre
Chris Holmes, IBF Healthcare College
Brett Hopkins, Australian Institute of Fitness
Katina Jones, Equals International
Ken Montgomery, Eynesbury Institute of Business & Technology
Rose Vallen, AIM
Alexis Watt, RDNS Education Centre

Victorian State Committee
Mel Koumides (Chair), Academia International
Melinda Burgess, Skills Training Australia
Gurdeep Dhillion, Australian Institute of Technical Training
Michael Grogan, FGM Consultants Pty Ltd
Bill Hamill, Rural Industries Skills Training
Liz Hoffman, Australian College of Applied Animal Studies
Vanessa Hoppe, MEGT (resigned)
Peter Jasonides, ITHEA
Paramjit Jaswal, Imperial College of Technology & Management
Nic Marding, Student Training Hospitality Services
Jo Mithen, Monash College Pty Ltd
Daryl Neilson, Employ-Ease Pty Ltd
Elaine Robb, Encompass Community Services

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