


**Welcome**

*Associate Professor Erica Smith, Convenor – RIVET*

The rate of change continues to accelerate in the VET sector. Apart from changes within the VET sector itself, proposed changes in industrial relations will impact upon training, particularly on apprenticeships and traineeships. As always, good empirical research will help policy makers and practitioners alike understand the impact of changes and improve practices. All those who work in or with the sector deserve a well-earned break over Christmas and New Year. The five members of RIVET – Erica Smith, Annette Green, Ros Brennan Kemmis, Richard Pickersgill and Peter Rushbrook extend good wishes to all our colleagues and readers.

**Report on RIVET Research Colloquium November 2005**

The fifth RIVET Community of Scholars research colloquium was held on the 11<sup>th</sup> of November 2005. The theme of the day was 'Responding to changing learning needs in your community' and the three presentations developed this theme in a variety of ways. The Colloquium was opened by Professor Chambers, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor. Ross spoke of both national and international changes in the research landscape and the effects these changes may have on the future of research activities and the ways they are funded and disseminated.

The keynote speaker, Dr Shanti Wong, presented a superb exploration of the Geelong Learning City project which showed an inspirational model of community involvement in learning opportunities and lifelong learning. Her presentation was very well received and encouraged some interesting discussion.

RIVET researchers Erica Smith and Annette Green then presented the findings from their NCVET funded research into School-leavers' career pathways. Opening with a re-enactment of two telephone interviews from their data, Erica and Annette gave life to the findings firstly through the words of a young woman from South Australia and her pathway to an Arts/Law degree and followed by a young man from Queensland whose School Based New Apprenticeship eventually led him to a degree in Marine Aquaculture.

The final presentation took the form of a panel of education and VET providers from our local area. Each speaker gave a brief overview of their provision, client groups and issues they face. This was followed by interactive questioning and discussion. The panel consisted of Rosemary Campbell (Riverina Institute of TAFE), Paul Galloway (Sureway Business Training), John Collins (Murrumbidgee College of Agriculture) and our keynote speaker, Dr Shanti Wong

(Brimbank/Melton LLEN). RIVET really appreciated the calibre and commitment of our panellists.

**Recent grants and other RIVET news**

RIVET has been successful in appointment to a panel of preferred suppliers of VET research to the NSW Department of Education and Training for two years to November 2007.

Ros Brennan Kemmis and Erica Smith are undertaking a consultancy for TAFE NSW International Centre for VET Teaching and Learning, undertaking literature reviews and commentary on VET pedagogy. The consultancy will complete in February 2006.

Erica Smith has been successful in gaining an ARC Linkage grant of \$94,000 over three years on 'Changing the way that Australians enter the workforce: part-time working careers of young full-time school and tertiary students'. The industry partners are McDonald's Australia, Bakers Delight, The Reject Shop and the Service Industries Skills Council, and Erica's co-researcher is Professor Wendy Patton from QUT. This project will build on three RIVET projects funded by NCVET.

Two RIVET members (Richard Pickersgill and Erica Smith) gave evidence in October to the Wagga Wagga hearing of the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry on skills shortages in rural and regional NSW, presenting points derived from RIVET research.

**Teacher training for VET practitioners**

As well our role as a leading VET research group, the VET team at Charles Sturt University also run the largest VET teacher-training courses in Australia. We are currently undergoing a radical overhaul of our Associate Degree in VET, Bachelor of VET and Graduate Diploma in VET courses. The new versions of the courses will be rolled out from February 2006.

The review has been taking place over the past eighteen months and has utilised a range of cross-sectoral advice. The initial consultations in late 2005 and early 2006 made use of expertise drawn from the VET sector (public and private RTOs), state and federal government TAFE and VET policy advisors and curriculum experts, other universities, enterprise RTOs, and former students. Further advice from large organisations such as NSW TAFE during this year related to ways in which partnerships could be forged in the delivery of customised programs to specific course cohorts.

During the course review a strong case was made for a subject to address explicitly the new range of skills needed in the VET sector. Much national research has been going on in this area over the past ten years. A new subject *Developing the VET Practitioner* recognises the increased need for on-going professional development of VET practitioners. The emphasis is on the critical evaluation and application of

lifelong learning principles to professional development activities in both organisational and individual contexts. The subject will also complement new units in the VET courses which cover the development of marketing and entrepreneurial skills for the VET sector.

The new Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (in the TAA04 Training Package) has been embedded in three CSU subjects at both the undergraduate and post graduate level. This carries on the CSU practice begun with the BSZ98 Training Package and allows students to graduate with both a CSU degree and a VET sector qualification via arrangements made with the University's RTO-CSU Training. The embedding of the Units of Competency into distance education subjects has been a complex and conceptually difficult activity as each subject explicitly deals with both the TAA04 and the University extension content.

Ros Brennan Kemmis and Erica Smith led a national workshop in November 2004, under the auspices of AVTEC the Australian Vocational Education and Training Teacher Educators' Colloquium, that brought together all universities considering embedding and articulation arrangements with the TAA04 training Package. The workshop was funded by ANTA in recognition of the pioneering nature of the national effort with this Training Package. A report of the workshop can be found on the AVTEC web site at <http://education.curtin.edu.au/avtec/avtec.html>

RIVET research adds considerably to the currency and relevance of the VET teacher-training courses. Our research activities keep us up to date with current practice and important issues, and ensure that we read the latest literature as well as contributing to it. Publishing in scholarly journals, writing reports that are freely available on the NCVET web site and RIVET colloquia are important means of disseminating our research. But we feel that teaching our 350 students is perhaps the most important means of disseminating our own and others' research.

The CSU VET courses web site is at <http://www.csu.edu.au/faculty/educat/edu/vetfolder/courses.htm> (Follow "VET information booklet" for 2006 information: the rest of the web site is currently being updated)

**Book Review: Andrew Brown-May and Shurlee Swain (eds), *The Encyclopedia of Melbourne*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 2005 (820 pages, rrp \$150)**

*Review by Dr Peter Rushbrook*

The physical statistics of the *Encyclopedia of Melbourne* suggest that it is indeed a 'weighty' tome. Weighing in at a healthy four kilograms it corrals the thoughts of 450 contributors spread over more than 800 pages. At the book's launch in Melbourne's Royal Exhibition Buildings on 24

October co-editor Andy Brown-May claimed it as a 'triumph of the professional historian' and a significant addition to global 'urban' history. Well known historians such as Stuart Macintyre, Greg Denning and Sara Wills contributed to the publication, along with Melbourne cultural icons Barry Humphries, Stephanie Alexander and Barry Dickins, to name but a few. Perhaps fitting to a book celebrating a sports-mad city, it was 'launched' by songwriter Mike Brady, best known for his penning of Aussie Rules' unofficial anthem 'Up there Cazaly'.

Among the amazing range of information presented, one might discover the following:

- That Australian Rules football, codified in 1859, is actually the oldest football code in the world?
- That Melbourne's Metropolitan Fire Brigade sold its last horse in 1918, making it among the earliest fire brigades in the world to become fully motorised?
- That in 1910, 20,000 people watched Harry Houdini jump manacled into the Yarra River, and survive?
- That Victoria produces 70 per cent of all Australian confectionery exports, and a partner of A W Allen Pty Ltd, one of Melbourne's earliest confectionery companies, was also a dentist?
- That early Melbourne played host to seventeen recorded duels, with pistol rather than sword the weapon of choice?

This information, drawn from the publicity blurb, however, fails to mention the book's excellent coverage of Melbourne's education institutions, including well researched articles on religious, public and private schools, and the systems that administered them. There are also comprehensive articles on adult education and TAFE, with two entries contributed by your reviewer.

**Proposed 2006 RIVET events (dates to be confirmed)**

'Twilight Colloquium' – April 2006

an interactive session, aimed at school staff, based on our recent research project *How school leavers' workplace experiences affect their career pathways*.

Research Colloquium – May 2006

Planned keynote speakers: Richard Sweet, who has returned to Australia after his time at OECD – Paris; and Louise Watson, University of Canberra, who is an expert in collaboration between VET and the university sector.

Communication workshop – June 2006

Planned keynote speaker: Neil Towne, US author of communication text *Looking out, looking in*. For University and TAFE teachers of communication.

Check our website in February next year for more details.

*Merry Christmas and a fruitful 2006  
to you all from the RIVET team*

To be put on the RIVET mailing list, email [vetresearch@csu.edu.au](mailto:vetresearch@csu.edu.au) or write to RIVET, School of Education, Charles Sturt University, Locked Bag 588, Wagga Wagga 2678, Australia

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