

Client & Student Voice Action Group

General Equity Sub-group

CONSULTATION PAPER

A consultation with stakeholders of the National Training System on new national Client Advisory Arrangements

January 2006
Endorsed for release for public consultation

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TOWARDS NATIONAL CLIENT & STUDENT ADVISORY ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE NEW NATIONAL TRAINING SYSTEM

CLIENT & STUDENT VOICE ACTION GROUP- GENERAL EQUITY SUB-GROUP CONSULTATIVE PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

Following the Prime Minister's announcement of the transfer of the roles and responsibilities of the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) to the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST), a new national training system has been established. The system builds on the strengths of past arrangements and is forward looking to ensure a high quality, flexible and responsive training sector delivers genuine competency based qualifications to provide the skilled people required by industry and business, now and into the future.

In February and March 2005, during consultations held to develop new directions for the national training system, stakeholders agreed that a responsive national training system must take account of the views of all students and clients. There was support for client advisory arrangements to be maintained – particularly for Indigenous students and students with a disability. There was also strong support for considering the views of all students, particularly disadvantaged students. However, there was no consensus on the form that such arrangements may take.

This paper is the first phase of a two-staged consultation process for establishing a national advisory arrangement that can provide advice to the training system on better meeting the needs of clients and students, particularly those who are considered disadvantaged (i.e. client groups whose participation and training and employment outcomes are poorer than for other groups).

This consultation paper is aimed at canvassing input from a broad range of peak bodies and other stakeholders including:

- Equity sectors;
- Industry sectors;
- Registered training providers and teachers;
- Employers and employment agencies;
- State and Commonwealth government bodies; and
- Individuals in, or who have an interest in, vocational and technical education.

This document is intended to guide feedback. It outlines and seeks comment on:

1. The objectives of the advisory arrangement;
2. Proposed principles for the new advisory arrangement; and
3. Possible advisory models.

To maintain the momentum in improving training and employment outcomes for students, the Action Group is working quickly and collaboratively to put national advisory arrangements in place by June 2006.

MAKING A SUBMISSION

Respondents are asked to reply to all or some of the questions posed in the paper. Other comments may also be included in submissions.

Closing date for submissions is COB Friday 17th February 2006.

Submissions should be provided as Microsoft Word document or in Portable Document Format (PDF). Alternatively please type or write the response clearly in black ink on A4 paper. Submissions should not be bound and only one copy is required.

Submissions must be signed and, if from an organisation, the appropriate authorisation should be made clear. Emailed submissions should include name, phone number and postal address.

The preference is for submissions to be forwarded by email to:
pearson.rebecca@saugov.sa.gov.au

Alternatively submission can be provided:

By facsimile to:**08 8226 3383**; or

By post to: **Attention Rebecca Pearson
Department of Further Education, Science & Technology
Strategy Branch
GPO Box 320
Adelaide SA 5001**

Any interested parties that may not have been directly sent this consultation paper can download the consultation paper from:

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/training_skills/policy_issues_reviews/key_issues/nts/action/csvag.htm

A further two consultation papers – from the Indigenous Sub-group and the General Equity Sub-group can also be downloaded from this site.

Forums

In late February and early March, targeted stakeholders will be invited to participate in consultation forums to further discuss, develop and refine ideas proposed in submissions. It is anticipated that a total of five forums will be held in Western Australia, Northern Territory, far-north Queensland, New South Wales and South Australia. Please indicate your interest in attending one of these forums by email to the address above. Participants will be required to fund their own attendance to the forums.

Updated information about the consultation process will be available at

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/training_skills/policy_issues_reviews/key_issues/nts/action/csvag.htm

BACKGROUND

At the 10 June 2005 Ministerial Council Meeting, Ministers endorsed a proposal to immediately set up an Action Group to develop recommendations on the best arrangements to support ongoing high level advice on the needs of all learners.

The Client and Student Voice Action Group has been established to undertake this work. The Action Group's Terms of Reference and membership is available at

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/training_skills/policy_issues_reviews/key_issues/nts/action/csvag.htm

The Action Group's General Equity Sub-group is responsible for developing advisory arrangements for all clients, particularly disadvantaged clients, and has prepared this consultation paper.

A further two sub-groups, the Indigenous Sub-group and Disability Sub-group, are developing specific arrangements for their respective client groups.

The Equity Sub-group includes diverse industry, government and client group representatives a list of which can also be found at the link above.

A THOUGHT STARTER - towards a client advisory arrangement for all students and clients

This document is intended to be a 'thought starter' to guide consultations.

The paper outlines the objectives of the advisory arrangement (1) and seeks comment on:
(2) proposed principles for the new advisory arrangement, and
(3) possible advisory models.

The questions are not intended to be exhaustive but aim to stimulate discussion and debate. Stakeholders are welcome to answer some or all questions and/or provide general comments.

Further information attached to inform discussion about the arrangement's operation includes:

- A diagram of the new national training system with which the advisory arrangement will interact (**Attachment A**).
- Some existing national advisory arrangements for other sectors (**Attachment B**).

1. Objective of the advisory arrangement

The agreed *Framework for the New National Training System* states that mechanisms for engaging students will be built into the national training system. It proposes that client and student advisory arrangements be established to:

- Engage with students;
- Ensure the views of all students, particularly disadvantaged students, are considered in training planning and delivery; and
- Support ongoing high level advice on the needs of all learners, particularly people with a disability and Indigenous Australians, towards improved training outcomes.

The *Framework* is available at:

www.dest.gov.au/sectors/training_skills/publications_resources/agreement/default.htm.

2. Principles for the national advisory arrangement

The agreed principles of the new national training system are:

1. Industry and business needs both now and for the future, drive training policy, priorities and delivery;
2. Better quality training and outcomes for clients through more flexible and accelerated pathways, are assured;
3. Processes are simplified and streamlined and enhance national consistency;
4. Young people have opportunities to gain a wide range of lasting skills that provide a strong foundation for their working lives; and
5. Training opportunities are expanded in areas of current and expected skill shortage.

Taking the above principles for the training system as a base, the following proposed principles have been developed to guide thinking about the scope, activities, linkages and operation of the new national client advisory arrangement:

1. The activities of the new advisory arrangement will be consistent with the principles of the *Framework for the New National Training System*.
2. The new advisory arrangement should:
 - a. Have a clearly defined scope of activity;
 - b. Adopt an evidence based approach to providing advice;
 - c. Provide advice that is action oriented and leads to tangible training and employment outcomes;
 - d. Be credible with the client group through appropriate, transparent and accountable processes;
 - e. Be well connected to the national training system with the capacity to influence training planning and delivery;
 - f. Recognise and be responsive to other initiatives impacting on the national training system; and
 - g. Be innovative and flexible.
3. Recognise that much work has already been done and build on our achievements to date.¹

2.1 Are the above principles for the advisory arrangement appropriate? Are there other principles which should be considered?

3. Possible advisory models

The General Equity Sub-group do not yet have a national advisory model for the training sector in mind – a clearer picture will be developed during the consultation process. Summaries of some existing advisory models in education, training and related sectors are included at Attachment B to stimulate ideas and inform discussion.

Scope

The scope of the clients, students and work of the advisory arrangement will need to be clearly defined. The breadth of potential activities and responsibilities undertaken by the arrangement must be balanced with the need to focus on influencing the system to achieve tangible and specific outcomes.

The following target client groups are reflected in *Shaping our Future: Australia's National Strategy for VET 2004-2010*:

- Indigenous Australians;
- People with a disability;
- Women;
- Regional and remote learners and communities;
- People in correctional facilities;
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;

¹ For example, *Women: Shaping our Future* is the nationally agreed framework for progressing the agenda for women in training. This document can be viewed and downloaded at: http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/training_skills/policy_issues_reviews/key_issues/nts/dap/women.htm

- Socio-economically disadvantaged learners and communities;
- Mature aged; and
- Disadvantaged youth.

Work to improve participation and training and employment outcomes may be conceptualised on three levels:

- (i) Work to address issues common across client groups aimed at improving the inclusiveness and responsiveness of the training system generally (including intersecting issues of disadvantage that many people in target client groups experience);
- (ii) Work to address issues that are unique or specific to target client groups; and
- (iii) Work to identify and address emerging client groups and/or issues.

- 3.1 *What would be an effective and productive way for an advisory arrangement to prioritise its work between these three levels?***
- 3.2 *How can we ensure the arrangement is flexible enough to adapt to emerging needs?***
- 3.3 *How could the arrangement play a part in the identification of emerging issues/target client groups?***
- 3.4 *Who should the advisory arrangement engage (eg students, community, teachers, employers, industry, advocacy groups, representative bodies, researchers etc)***
- 3.5 *How can existing advisory mechanisms (including industry) at state/territory and national levels inform the work of the advisory arrangement?***
- 3.6 *How can the advisory arrangement address a specific focus on training outcomes within the context of the broader Australian Government reform agenda impacting on clients and on the national training system?***
- 3.7 *How could the advisory arrangement be responsive to other initiatives in the broader whole-of-life contexts that impact on the national training system?***

Initiatives

- 3.8 *What work should the advisory arrangement undertake to enable it to deliver high level advice on the needs of all learners? (at the three levels outlined above on this page)***

To start discussion, some thoughts are set out below about potential initiatives the advisory arrangement could undertake, namely:

Engaging and considering the views of all students

This could include:

- Undertaking consultations with representative and advocacy bodies who represent equity client group learners;
- Providing students and representative bodies with structured opportunities to raise and discuss emerging issues;
- Providing students and representative bodies with the opportunity to focus-test priorities, strategies and/or proposed policy (identified by researchers, industry, government etc.); and
- Initiating and sustaining a dialogue with students to ensure they are well informed of their choices, possible pathways and policy parameters.

- 3.9 What is/are the best mechanism/s to engage with clients identified above? (eg. roundtables, surveys, focus groups, forums, consultations with representative bodies)?**
- 3.10 How will gaps between client aspirations/expectations and what is deliverable be managed?**

Operating as a Knowledge Broker

To ensure there is strong evidence to support the achievement of improved training and employment outcomes for all learners, the arrangement could play a role in:

- Recommending and overseeing research on best practice approaches;
- Recommending and overseeing literature reviews to collate the extensive work already undertaken in the field and internationally to inform the way forward;
- Synthesising and analysing information (eg. monitoring performance measures, project/programme outcomes, research, data);
- Focus testing issues/recommendations; and
- Providing advice and recommending action.

- 3.11 In what ways can the advisory arrangement add value to work that already takes place and has been undertaken in relation to some target client groups?**
For example:

- **Building on and recommending implementation strategies for policy work already developed through extensive and recent consultations to develop Women: Shaping Our Future.**
- **Linking to current Government initiatives and priorities in place to identify and support employment and skills development for the existing target client groups.**

- 3.12 How could the synthesis and analysis of existing information best take place?**

Developing High Level Advice

The purpose of engaging with clients is to inform, influence and improve training planning and delivery by providing advice into the national training system, including recommendations for action.

- 3.13 What kind of support structures would need to be in place to assist the advisory arrangement to formulate high level advice?**
- 3.14 How will the advisory arrangement ensure actions proposed are practical and achievable?**
- 3.15 Who would the arrangement report to? (eg. NSOC and MCVTE and/or other levels)**
- 3.16 What processes could be put in place to ensure that advice once endorsed is actioned by all appropriate levels of the training system?**
- 3.17 How will outcomes be monitored and measured?**

Influencing Training Planning and Delivery

- 3.18 How could the advisory arrangement inform and influence training planning and delivery?**
- 3.19 Are there other connections and influencing relationships that the Arrangement should have in the training system (eg. NQC, NISC, ISCs, RTOs).**
- 3.20 How could the arrangement draw and build on established networks?**
- 3.21 How could the arrangement most effectively link to the greater national training system governance structure?**

Other

- 3.26** *What other activities could the advisory arrangement engage in to improve access to training and outcomes for all students? (eg. forming partnerships; identifying, promoting and rewarding best practise).*

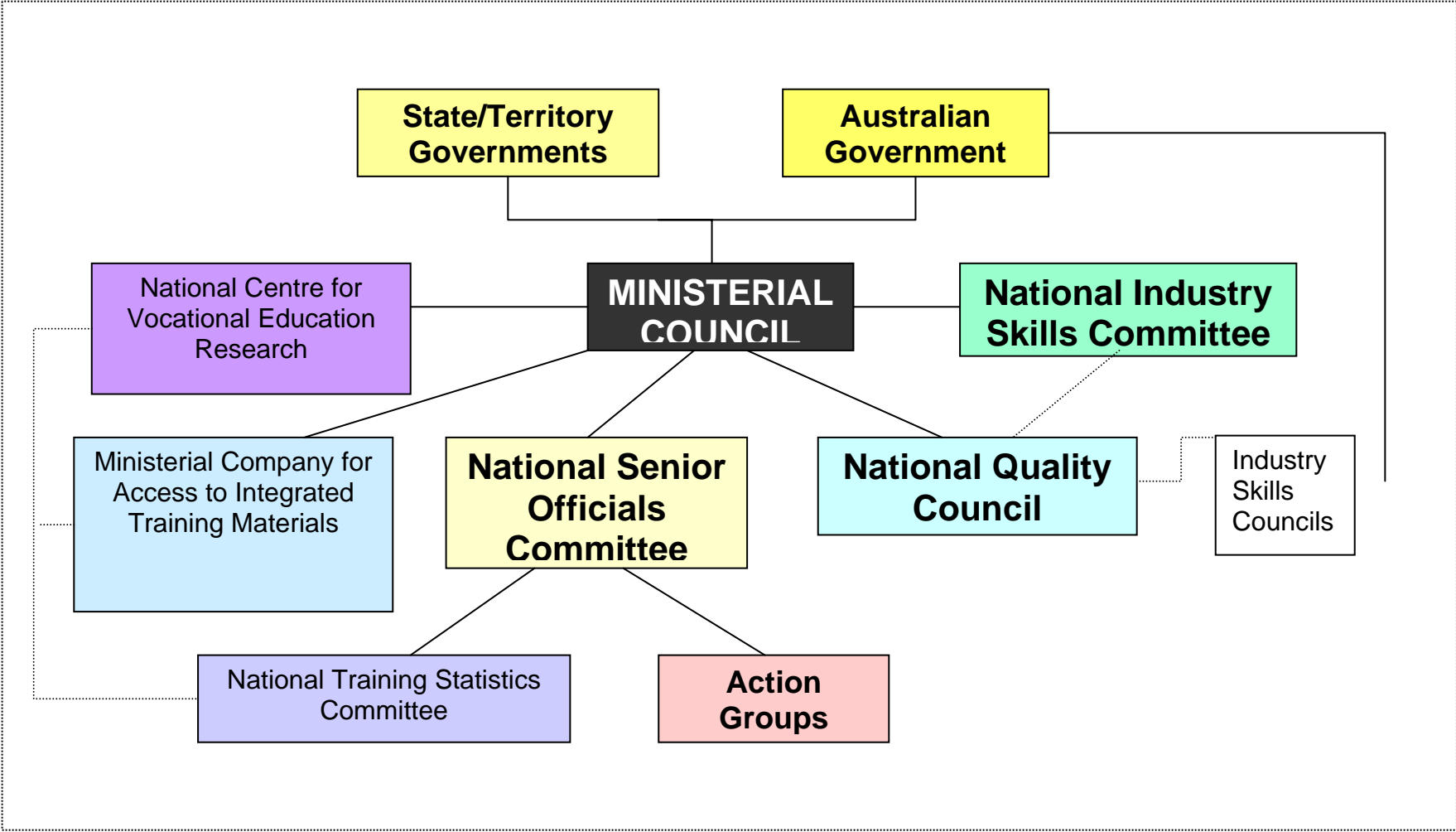
Operation

- 3.22** *How will the arrangement's operation fit with existing planning/governance cycles?*
- 3.23** *What innovative, cost effective and outcome focussed arrangement could best link existing and emerging networks with the national training system?*
- 3.24** *Who could be involved in the advisory arrangement?*
- 3.25** *What could the reporting arrangements be?*

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

CSVAG	Client and Student Voice Action Group
ISCs	Industry Skills Councils
MCVTE	Ministerial Council for Vocational and Technical Education
NISC	National industry Skills Committee
NSOC	National Senior Officials Committee
NQC	National Quality Council
RTOs	Registered Training Organisations

Attachment A
The National Training System



Attachment B

Some Existing National Client Advisory Arrangements

NATIONAL YOUTH CAREERS AND TRANSITIONS ADVISORY GROUP (NYCTAG)

Purpose

- The Minister has the opportunity to hear from a broad cross section of stakeholders, who provide independent advice on the transition of young people from school to further education, training and employment, and champion the national agenda for young Australians.

Activities

- Development of advice on strategic issues including:
 - matters affecting young peoples' successful transitions to learning and education,
 - identified priority issues regarding enterprise, vocational and career education, and
 - identifying opportunities to establish links between transition programmes and other initiatives, including developing effective local partnerships and strategic alliances between government, business and community.

Membership

- 16 high profile members represent a broad cross section of society and have the ability to offer fresh perspectives.
- The Group Chair is Ian Spicer (National Disability Advisory Council).
- Members are drawn from students, principals, Indigenous Australians, the National Training Quality Council, health specialists, journalists, and industry etc.
- Members are appointed by the Minister, generally for a two year term.
- Members are paid sitting fees and allowances.
- Observers may attend meetings subject to the approval of the Chair.

Operational and Administrative Arrangements

- The Chair and the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) determine the frequency and dates of meetings.
- The Group reports directly to the Minister.
- The Chair may establish working groups - a convenor for each group is chosen from the members.
- DEST manages the Secretariat which:
 - provides support to the Chair, Deputy Chair/s and Members,
 - manages the work plan and business between meetings,
 - develops, prepares and distributes agenda papers for each meeting,
 - arranges travel, accommodation, venue and catering for meetings, and
 - makes payments of fees and allowances.

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/career_development/policy_issues_reviews/key_issues/nyctag/default.htm

INDIGENOUS HIGHER EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL (IHEAC)

Purpose

- A formal arrangement for the Australian Government to receive Indigenous advice on higher education issues.

Activities

- Provides policy advice to the Minister for Education, Science and Training aimed at producing successful outcomes for Indigenous students and staff in relation to their participation, progression and retention in both study and employment in higher education.
- Develops strategies.
- Promotes best practice.
- Monitors student academic outcomes and staff participation.
- Makes recommendations regarding awards.
- Convenes an annual conference.

Membership

- There are 16 members (including professors, directors and deans of higher education institutions throughout Australia, as well as presidents of student bodies and a student).
- All members are appointed by the Minister (as individuals who do not represent organisations).
- Members are paid sitting fees and allowances.

Operational and Administrative Arrangements

- Terms of Reference were established through a roundtable discussion with key Indigenous higher education stakeholders.
- The Chair, with member agreement, may establish working groups, the convenor of which is chosen from members.
- The Council determines meeting frequency (approximately three meetings each year and an annual conference).
- DEST runs the Secretariat.

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/indigenous_education/programmes_funding/programme_categories/support_for_education_providers_staff/indigenous_higher_education_advisory_council.htm

NEW APPRENTICESHIPS ROUNDTABLE

Purpose

- New Apprentices have the opportunity to present their ideas to Australian Government as the national voice of New Apprentices.

Activities

- In 2005 roundtable participants undertook 5 projects and made recommendations on:
 - financial and other incentives for people to start a New Apprenticeship and for employers to employ New Apprentices,
 - effective information about New Apprenticeships for Careers Advisors,
 - standardising the quality of off-the-job training from Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) – with particular focus on motor mechanic and agriculture training,
 - duration of New Apprenticeships, and
 - promotion and marketing of New Apprenticeships - including improving the perception and benefits of New Apprenticeships.
- A discussion paper detailing the recommendations and findings from all five projects is currently being prepared by DEST.

Membership

- The New Apprentices Roundtable consists of 18 current and recently completed New Apprentices from all over Australia and from industries or occupations where skills needs have been identified, particularly in the traditional trades.
- Members were identified by New Apprenticeships Centres, RTOs and industry organisations.
- Both Ministers and industry representatives attended the Roundtable.

Operational and Administrative Arrangements

- DEST organises the roundtable and engages a facilitator for the event.
- New Apprentices attend a workshop where they have the opportunity to get to know each other, hear about how policy is developed and develop skills (eg presentation skills). At this workshop, they discuss training issues, which are distilled into a list of projects. New Apprenticeships Roundtable members then form teams to undertake this project work, which could include undertaking consultations, surveys, research and monitoring. They present their findings and make recommendations at the Roundtable to Ministers. DEST develops a discussion paper on how to progress these recommendations.

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/training_skills/publications_resources/trainingtalk/issue_19/default.htm#New_Apprenticeships_Roundtable_-_November_2005

NATIONAL DISABILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL (NDAC)

Purpose

- To provide expert advice to the Minister for Family and Community Services on disability issues and encourage consultation between the Australian Government and people with disabilities, and those who care for or support them, service providers and all other levels of government.

Activities

- Promotes Australian Government leadership through policy development, longer-term planning, promotion of applied research and fostering positive ideas for change and facilitating their implementation.
- Monitors and critically evaluates Australian Government initiatives; provides advice, identifies and develops strategies, and promotes best practise.
- Provides informed advice by consulting with groups and individuals in the development of its advice to the Australian Government. (i.e. consumer focused advice on matters referred by the Minister).
- Activities to improve public awareness and attitudes.
- At the Minister's request, participates individually on special working groups, or conducts consultations, on matters relevant to the portfolio.
- The Council holds community consultation forums to get first hand information on the needs of people with a disability in a variety of settings. People attending these forums include people with disabilities, their families and carers, as well as disability service providers and government officials.

Membership

- The Council has 15 members from diverse backgrounds, including people with personal experience of disability, family members and/or carers and service providers.
- Members are appointed by the Minister.
- Every two years half the Council's membership is changed.

Operational and Administrative Arrangements

- The Council holds four meetings annually.
- The Council works through various Working Groups covering a wide range of complex policy issues in the disability and carer arenas.

<http://www.facs.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/disabilities/representation-ndac.htm#whatdoes>