

ERTO A member briefing #09/01

Activity: National Quality Council and COAG Joint Steering Committee
VET Training Products for the 21st Century

Background: In November last year ERTOA was contacted by Megan Lilly Chair of the NQC/COAG Joint Steering Committee (JSC), regarding two research projects that would look at the VET products for the 21st Century.

In the first short project the JSC had engaged Peter Noonan Consulting to assist in developing a draft policy framework which will be refined through a two stage consultation process. The first stage involved targeted consultation with a limited number of key stakeholders and Peter Noonan spoke to ERTOA President Chris Butler.

The second project was contracted to a consortium led by NCVER to undertake the broader stakeholder consultations on *VET Training Products for the 21st Century*. Again ERTOA was asked to be involved and Anthony Tyrrel met with Hugh Guthrie from NCVER on February 26.

The second project also includes public forums and details of these have been sent to all members. The basis for the discussions is a Consultation Paper: VET Training Products for the 21st Century (February 2009) and that paper is attached separately to this email.

Details: To date a number of members have attended the public forums and several have expressed strong concerns about the options discussed in the Consultation Paper. Anthony has also met with ACCI and has a copy of their submission to the researchers. ACCI has listed a number of concerns that will echo ERTOA member concerns. If you want to see the ACCI paper it is available at: www.acci.asn.au/SubmissionsMain.htm

In order to ensure that ERTOA member's views are clearly tabled in this process (rather than just aired at public meetings or in one on one discussion with the researchers) ERTOA has agreed to provide a written submission.

To do this we need your help!!

Action needed: The Consultation Paper is attached separately. A draft ERTOA response is attached below. If you have strong feelings about this review can you please add your comments to the draft ERTOA response below and return it to Anthony at anthony.tyrrel@performancefirst.com.au by COB Friday 13 March?

Further information: Contact Anthony Tyrrel (0433044116)

ERTO A response to Consultation Paper VET Training Products for the 21st Century (February 2009)

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION ONLY

ERTO A:

The Enterprise RTO Association was formed in late 2006 and represents enterprises with embedded RTOs. The Association has two broad aims:

1. Support and assist the member enterprise RTOs and their staff to operate effectively and efficiently by enabling members to:
 - seek advice, exchange ideas and experiences with colleagues from other organisations on all aspects of setting-up and running an enterprise RTO;
 - participate in regular meetings with colleagues from other enterprises to discuss issues of concern, exchange ideas and give and take advice; and
 - participate in, and contribute to an association that has a mandate to commission and publish research on specific issues facing enterprise RTOs.
2. Provide formal representation and promote the interests of member enterprise RTOs by:
 - interacting as an association, and in a coordinated way, with State Training Authorities, Industry Skills Councils, Department of Education Science and Technology and other Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) players, on the issues faced by enterprise RTOs in order to promote greater recognition of enterprise RTO activities and interests;
 - participating as a formal association with a 'seat at the table' whenever discussions occur, and decisions are made, affecting enterprise RTOs; and
 - influencing the Australian VTE sector regarding enterprise RTO issues and interests.

The membership of ERTOA has grown since it was formally incorporated as an association and at March 2009 stood at 35. These 35 members employ nearly 1 million Australians or 1 in 10 working Australians. More information and a full list of members is available at: www.ertoa.org.au

Background:

ERTO A members are involved with the National Training Framework as an enabler for them to do their business better. Most members have a limited scope of registration closely linked to the main job roles their staff perform. A small percentage of ERTO A members are engaged with the NTF because of compliance needs (For example members from the Financial Services Sector) or to assist them in employing trainees.

The majority of ERTO A members receive no government assistance in providing training to their staff and to move staff toward nationally recognized qualifications.

Comments:

A flexible VET sector with a range of industry focused VET products best meets the needs of ERTO A members. Whilst the flexibility in the current system suits ERTO A members there are areas where there can be substantial improvement. In general terms members want to see:

- ✓ Acknowledgement that ERTOS operate in a separate way to other RTOs. With a few exceptions, ERTOS do not build their training pathways from Training Packages. They build training from the business needs of the enterprise and map assessment of skills to Training Packages,
- ✓ Acknowledgement of the contribution (mostly un-funded) ERTOS make to skilling Australian workers,
- ✓ A review process for Training Packages that is swift and reflects current and future jobs,
- ✓ Closer alignment between Training Packages and the actual work their staff do,

- ✓ Greater flexibility in packaging rules to allow a greater customization of competency clusters,
- ✓ A removal of the complex layers of bureaucracy that impact on national businesses operating across States,
- ✓ A closer alignment between the work done in enterprise HR and HRD sections and the use of Training Package competencies (A good example would be in the development of Position Descriptions)
- ✓ **Others???**

Additionally ERTOA members acknowledge some considerable developments in the past few years:

- ✓ The development of AQTF 2007 has allowed members to utilise existing and standard business processes to meet compliance needs,
- ✓ The associated implementation and audit response to AQTF 2007, with the exception of the implementation of the Quality Indicator tools, has been an empowering experience for ERTOA members and their businesses,
- ✓ **Others??**

Comments related to VET Training Products for the 21st Century, Consultation Paper, February 2009.

There are a number of direct comments on the consultation paper:

The ERTOA model of work-base training and associated assessment can be applied across enterprises with no current commitment to accredited outcomes for staff, to substantially increase the number of Australian workers holding qualifications. The ERTOA models look at staff members being able to show they do their jobs well. (Page 4)

ERTO A members disagree with the fundamental assumption in the paper that underpinning skills and higher level skills are not developed in work-based training and assessment. (Page 9) ERTOA members ensure that workplace competency includes broad literacy skills applicable to the job role.

Our members are engaged with VET learners who are in jobs. They do not see the VET system in a wider context. (Page 6)

Others??

Recommendations:

ERTO A recommends:

1. Industry is the driver of the VET sector
2. Industry needs determines the make up of Training Packages and competencies
3. Competency needs to be demonstrated in the workplace
4. That the ACCI definition of competency as ‘...consistent application of knowledge, skills and attitude to the standard of performance required in the workplace’¹ be accepted.
5. Training Packages need to focus on the needs of industry and enterprises and not the needs of other training situations.
6. **Others???**

¹ Next Generation of Training Packages. An Industry Response. ACCI, Submission to the COAG / NQC Joint Steering Committee, February 2009