



Hear how student expectations are transforming

Secure your spot

technologyone

SHOWCASE

# CAMPUS REVIEW



Home | Industry & Research | Dual-sector unis call for major reforms of higher education and VET



By: Nicole Madigan in Industry & Research, Top Stories April 12, 2019 0

Australia's six dual-sector university vice chancellors have called for a common policy framework and a suite of major reforms of the country's fragmented higher education and vocational training systems, via a new report.

The report, Reforming Post-Secondary Education in Australia, highlights the need for change to the Australian Qualifications Framework, particularly to support learner centred pathways across the continuum of AQF qualifications.

A common policy framework would better meet the needs and opportunities of Australia's learners and workers in future, the report says, as well as replace sectors and institutions that have been historically separated by policy, jurisdiction and tradition.

The report also calls for:

- modernisation of VET qualifications so competencies focus on broad and future skills requirements
- a coherent funding framework for higher education and VET, spanning the roles of the Commonwealth and states and territories
- extension of work-based learning, including apprenticeships, into new industries and occupations in both VET and higher education through partnerships with firms, industries and the labour movement.

"Australia's current post-school education system, encompassing vocational education and training (VET) and higher education, is fragmented, inflexible, contains inequities and is not delivering all that it could for current and future students, business and our increasingly complex society," says the vice-chancellor of Charles Darwin University, Professor Simon Maddocks.

"This fragmentation, coupled with two rigid systems of accreditation, funding and regulation, differences between VET and higher education represent significant impediments to Australia having an agile, relevant and cost-effective tertiary education sector."

Welcome **Richard Garfield!**

[Change Password](#)

[Logout](#)

**UniBank**  
Know more

Banking\* for staff, students and graduates of Australian Universities and their families.

[Know more](#)

\*Conditions apply. Membership eligibility criteria apply to join UniBank.

**Bonus Saver Account**

**2.85% p.a.**

Promotional interest rate\*  
Amounts \$0-\$149,999

[Start Saving](#)

Click for General Advice Warning and T&Cs

**bankfirst**

AS#404: NO AD FOUND IN ROTATION

The common policy framework being proposed by the six dual sector universities focuses on better meeting the future needs of students, and better positioning the tertiary education sector to respond efficiently and effectively to changing needs in the labour market.

"A more coherent post-school education system would include, for example, a funding framework for tertiary education that would extend HECS-type loans to VET so that no students would be required to pay upfront fees," says Maddocks.

"This would reduce one significant barrier to participation.

"We want to create a fairer tertiary education system and produce graduates who are better prepared for the job market into the future."

Modernising VET qualifications is also central to a new, streamlined system so that the competencies being taught mirror the needs of employers, he says.

"Currently the VET competency model focuses on narrow, prescribed occupational tasks that have grown out of dated workplace requirements.

"Increasingly, employers are calling for VET graduates to have more generic skills, such as thinking skills.

"Similarly, employers are calling for greater and more sustained work-based learning for higher education students, so they are better prepared to join the workforce.

"A new integrated framework would allow students to co-enrol in higher education and VET without financial penalties."

More than 10 years after the Bradley Review of Australian Higher Education proposed a more coherent tertiary education system, the new report says connections between the vocational and higher education sectors have in fact weakened due to increasingly entrenched differences between systems of governance, funding and regulation.

But Australia's dual-sector institutions are uniquely positioned to contribute constructively to the next stages of this shared agenda, says the report.

Using the unique experiences of dual sector universities to understand Australia's tertiary system, the report features a range of case studies from each university demonstrating collaboration in qualifications design, delivery and assessment requirements, accreditation standards, system regulators' approaches, public funding, income-contingent loans, and government accountability.

"This report highlights how Australia's fragmented higher education and vocational training systems could each be strengthened with a common policy framework and a suite of major reforms to post-secondary education," says Federation University vice-chancellor and president Professor Helen Bartlett.

"This includes putting students at the heart of the system by supporting learner centred pathways across the Australian Qualification Framework, modernising VET qualifications so that competencies focus on broad and future skills requirements and ensuring funding is better coordinated between the Commonwealth, states and territories for both higher education and TAFE.

"We also need to ensure students are equipped with the skills they need for the workforce by extending work-based learning, including apprenticeships, into new industries and occupations.

"Doing this across both VET and higher education through partnerships with firms, industries and the labour movement will help make sure students are job-ready when they graduate."

Bartlett says for too long different sectors and institutions have been operating separately with different policies and jurisdictions.

"This lack of coordination in policy, funding and governance has contributed to the weakening of connections between vocational and higher education, when in fact they should be linked by pathways for students and cross collaboration between the institutions themselves and industry partners.

"Dual-sector institutions like Federation University are uniquely positioned to help shape and inform a joined-up approach that is centred on the needs of students and better supports industry and the needs of the Australian workforce into the future.

"The various initiatives outlined in this report show what has been achieved by the dual-sector institutions and suggest there are even greater opportunities ahead if VET and higher education were better connected.

"That's why the dual-sector institutions came together to produce this report and contribute to the discussion about the future of post-secondary education in Australia."

Australia has more than 4000 registered training organisations that delivered VET training to more than 4 million people in 2017, while its 39 public universities (and about 100 non-university higher education providers) delivered courses to 1.5 million domestic and international students.

The report was developed to contribute to discussion about the future of Australian post-secondary education.

"Why shouldn't students have the freedom to choose units from both higher education and VET to ensure that they have all the skills, knowledge and experience they need to join the workforce after graduation?" says Maddocks.



May 10, 2019



Keeping it in the family: mother, daughter graduate with nursing degrees

May 10, 2019



Morrison promises \$30m school for mining, manufacturing

May 10, 2019



Curtin Singapore comes out on top

May 9, 2019



International student association blasts Four Corners coverage

May 8, 2019

Global Search for Chair Professor / Professor / Associate Professor / Assistant Professor  
Kowloon, Hong Kong > The Hong Kong Polytechnic University > [Full Time](#)



eMag archive

"In the new economy, all workers will need a broad range of skills regardless of which sector they were educated in; a new tertiary framework is critical in gaining the flexibility required to meet the needs of the emerging economy.

"Naturally, the benefits of more well-rounded graduates would have flow-on benefits for the quality of future postgraduate students."



**Do you have an idea for a story?**

Email [dallas.bastian@apned.com.au](mailto:dallas.bastian@apned.com.au)



## Get the news delivered straight to your inbox

Receive the top stories in our weekly newsletter [SIGN UP NOW](#)

Post Views: 524

Share this:



Edit

Tagged with: [REFORMS](#) [VC](#) [VET](#)

Logged in as Richard Garfield. [Log out?](#)

Post Comment

[Contact Us](#)

[Advertise with us](#)

[Subscribe](#)

[Editorial guidelines](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Terms of use](#)

Email Address\*

First Name\*

Last Name\*

Company Name

Please select which forms of communication you would like to receive from us

E-newsletters  Partner messages

Submit