



Addressing barriers for skilled migrants to become vocational educators

An inclusive and equitable Vocational Education and Training (VET) system

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Victorian Skills Authority Fellowship, 2024

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Table of contents

01	Acknowledgements	1
02	Executive summary	3
03	Acronyms	5
04	Fellowship Background	6
05	Methods	10
06	Fellowship Learnings and Findings	11
07	Considerations and Next Steps	15
08	Impacts of the Fellowship	17
09	Sector Engagement (Dissemination)	18
10	Conclusion	20
11	References	21

01

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The Victorian Skills Authority works in partnership with the International Specialised Skills Institute by funding the VET International Practitioner Fellowships. The Fellowship program focuses on developing opportunities within the VET sector to assist in building an Education State in Victoria that produces excellence and reduces the impact of disadvantage. In addition, the program is funded to support the priorities of Skills First, including developing capacity and capability, innovative training practices and increasing teacher quality within the VET sector as well as building industry capability and developing Victoria's current and future workforce.

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02

Executive summary

Australia is a diverse nation with at least a third of us born overseas (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2021). However, individuals from migrant backgrounds—particularly those who have arrived in the last four years (newly arrived) — are disadvantaged and face barriers which lead to poorer education outcomes (ABS, 2020). An inclusive and equitable vocational education and training (VET) system can help address some of these barriers (Victorian Skills Authority, 2022) and enable skilled migrants the opportunity to become vocational educators.

This research project explores strategies undertaken by VET systems in some countries that have comparable migration patterns to Australia and have had varying success in being more inclusive and supportive of newly arrived migrants to become vocational educators.

The countries chosen for this research included – England, Scotland and Spain as these countries have similar migration patterns to Australia. These countries also have a comparable vocational education sector to Australia and have been facing similar challenges such as utilising existing skills and knowledge possessed by skilled migrants and encouraging them to enter the VET workforce.

Currently, there are significant barriers to the entry of newly arrived migrants into the VET system. One such barrier in Australia is the requirement to hold a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, to gain employment as a vocational educator.

Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) have inaccurate interpretations of the entry requirement that pose a barrier to enter the VET sector for newly arrived skilled migrants who may not hold an Australian qualification or unit of competency. This systemic barrier does not allow recognition of their former overseas qualifications and international industry experience that these migrants may offer as vocational educators.

Additionally, the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) pathway is also not a suitable alternative for them as again, overseas qualification and experience are not taken into consideration during the RPL process. Further explorations of the RPL process are warranted.

These requirements go against an inclusive and equitable quality education – one of the key indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that are supported by the Australian Government (Australian Government, 2023 and UN DESA, 2023).

Upon further dwelling into this area, it became clear that there is not much known about these barriers faced by newly arrived skilled migrants within the Australian context.

In Australia there is a dire shortage of qualified and experience vocational educators for which the Department of Education (DET) provides incentives to attract industry specialists to become vocational educators. The research conducted through this Fellowship sheds light on the barriers and

facilitators that skilled migrants may face to pursue a career as vocational educators. This will help alleviate the pressure on the DET and address the existing workforce gap within the VET system.

It is imperative that more research is conducted in this area to make education and future employment, more inclusive and accessible. This may also include recommendations for policy and guidelines that vocational organisations may consider to make our VET sector more equitable.



03

Acronyms

List of acronyms used in the report:

ABS:	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ASQA:	Australian Skills Quality Authority
ISS Institute:	International Specialised Skills Institute
DET:	Department of Education
DEWR:	Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
DFFH:	Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
DIAC:	Department of Immigration and Citizenship
RPL:	Recognition of Prior Learning
RTO:	Registered Training Organisations
SDG:	Sustainable Development Goals
TAE:	Training and Education Training Package
TAFE:	Technical and Further Education
TUS:	Trainers Under Supervision
UK:	United Kingdom
VCE:	Victorian Certificate of Education
VET:	Vocational Education and Training
VPC:	Victorian Pathways Certificate
VSA:	Victorian Skills Authority

04

Fellowship Background

In Australia, currently there is shortage of qualified and experienced vocational educators. Tyler and Dymock (2021) mention that the Australian VET sector faces several workforce problems including an ageing workforce, high casualisation, limited capacity of trainers, and maintenance of industry currency. One strategy undertaken by the Department of Education (DET) in 2021 to address some of these shortages has been to provide monetary incentives to attract industry specialists to undertake Training and Assessment (TAE) qualification, a compulsory qualification required to practise as a vocational educator and continue working in the sector as vocational educators (Job at TAFE, 2023 and Victorian Government, 2023a).

Similarly, another DET funding initiative has a focus on attracting more school teachers to fill hard-to-staff positions in government schools across Victoria (Victorian Government, 2023b). This particular investment incorporates and builds on previous Victorian Government schemes to:

- improve educational outcomes for rural and regional students
- better support students in these areas
- address the disparity between regional and metropolitan schools.

It also includes incentives for:

- certain hard-to-staff subjects
- positions in rural and metropolitan areas, and/or
- positions in schools with a high proportion of disadvantaged students.

Such initiatives should also be included within the VET sector. There is clearly action being taken by the Department of Education to meet the skill shortage in the VET workforce. However, there needs to be more concerted action taken to utilise our existing skilled migrants who might already possess some of these in demand skills and knowledge. Many of these issues may also be addressed by training and employing more newly arrived skilled migrants as VET educators.

Australia is a diverse nation with at least a third of the population born overseas (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2021). However, individuals from migrant backgrounds—particularly those who have arrived in the last four years (newly arrived), are disadvantaged and face barriers which lead to poorer education outcomes (ABS, 2020). An inclusive and equitable vocational education and training (VET) system can help address some of these barriers (Victorian Skills Authority, 2022) and enable skilled migrants the opportunity to become vocational educators.

Currently there is a dearth of research conducted around skilled migrants and pathways to becoming vocational educators. Data from the 2021 ABS census data suggests that of the three million permanent migrants who have arrived in Australia since 2000, 59% of them (1,761,000 people) were skilled migrants, over 96% of them spoke English and just over half (1.53 million) held a Bachelor's degree or higher. Contrastingly, this is higher in comparison to the Australian-born population of whom only 29% of people aged 15 years and over

held a Bachelor's degree or higher. Interestingly only 3.2% of the permanent migrants have an occupation listed under Educational professionals. This data suggests that this skilled and educated population is an untapped resource that the Victorian VET workforce can maximise to benefit the community and the VET sector.

However, newly arrived migrants often face systemic barriers with the entry requirements for the Training & Assessment (TAE) qualification (Victorian Government, 2023a). One such barrier is for them to hold the Certificate IV in TAE. Registered training organisations (RTOs) across Victoria demonstrate inconsistencies in the entry requirements for the TAE qualification which may lead to confusion and hinder skilled migrants from enrolling and attaining these qualifications. This suggests a failure of VET policies.

The entry requirement for the vocational teacher qualification (Certificate IV in Training and Assessment) in Australia states: "those entering this program must be able to demonstrate vocational competency in their proposed teaching and assessing area. Vocational competency is defined as broad industry knowledge and experience, and may include, but is not limited to, holding a relevant unit of competency or qualification" (PwC's Skills for Australia, 2016). This requirement often is interpreted by training organisations as that "the applicant should hold an Australian qualification or a unit of competency".

Some examples from various RTOs demonstrating the ambiguity and lack of consistency of entry requirements, are shown below. Please note that these are directly taken from the RTO websites and a numbering convention such as, RTO 1, RTO 2 etc. has been used to refer to them.

- All students are required to have an Australian recognised vocational qualification or statement of attainment for at least one unit. (RTO 1)
- You must have broad industry knowledge and experience in your proposed teaching and assessing area. This means at least two years recent industry experience and ideally (though not mandatory) a qualification related to what you plan to teach. (RTO 2)
- Applicants must demonstrate vocational competency in their proposed teaching and assessment area. Vocational competency is defined as broad industry knowledge and experience, and may include, but is not limited to, holding a relevant unit of competency or qualification. Applicants must have recent industry experience within the last 2-5 years. (RTO 3)
- Applicants must demonstrate vocational competency in their proposed teaching/ assessing area. Vocational competency is defined as broad industry knowledge/ experience, and may include, but not limited to, holding relevant unit of competency or qualification. (RTO 4)
- Those entering this program must be able to demonstrate vocational competency in their proposed teaching and assessing area. Vocational competency is defined as broad industry knowledge and experience, and may include, but is not limited to, holding a relevant unit of competency or qualification. To enable successful completion of the program, students are advised prior to enrolment to have at least 3 years' experience in a vocational area they intend to teach. (RTO 5)
- Entry to this course requires you to have vocational competency in your proposed teaching and assessing area. Vocational competency is defined as broad industry knowledge and work experience; this may include, but is not limited to, holding a current relevant unit of competency or qualification in the vocational area. (RTO 6)
- Be able to demonstrate vocational competency (from within the last 5 years) in their proposed teaching and assessing area. Vocational competency is defined as broad industry knowledge and experience, and may include but is not limited to, holding a relevant unit of competency or qualification. (RTO 7)
- Applicant must demonstrate vocational

competency in their proposed teaching and assessing area. Vocational competency is defined as broad industry knowledge and experience, and may include, but is not limited to, holding a relevant unit of competency or qualification.

Additionally, the applicant is also required to provide:

- A personal statement outlining their proposed teaching and assessing area.

AND

- Supporting evidence demonstrating vocational competency in their proposed teaching and assessing area. Supporting documents may include:
- Statement of Attainment or transcript of results showing successful completion of previous vocational education studies Certificate II or above.

OR

- A letter of support from an employer outlining experience and/or requirements to provide training.

OR

- Sufficient work experience in nominated teaching and assessing area as demonstrated by a detailed curriculum vitae. (RTO 8)

From a newly arrived skilled migrant perspective the above varied entry requirements for different RTOs are difficult to comprehend and there is a lack of standardisation in the process. Navigating the entry requirements for the TAE qualification to become a vocational educator, becomes onerous. Anecdotally, many newly arrived migrants have mentioned that these barriers are too difficult to overcome or understand with many deciding to not pursue careers in vocational education. Given the numbers of skilled migrants we have in Australia, this community is an untapped resource and by providing them with more opportunities for a smoother entry into the VET system to take up roles as vocational educators, not only do we

support their settlement into a new country but also address the skill gap in Australia.

Internationally there has been some research in the space of migrants and their teaching careers. For example, in Sweden, Economou (2021) considered fast track courses aimed at newly arrived migrant teachers wishing to continue their teaching career. However, in her findings she noted that whilst the education the participants received through these fast-track courses may have been useful in order to understand the Swedish educational system, many were disappointed to find that fast track courses did not give them a clear advantage in terms of finding a faster way into the Swedish labour market. In addition, there were tendencies for local teacher communities to devalue the qualifications of this group, which was perceived to be a barrier for the migrant participants in the study.

Other research conducted in Europe reviewed national practices against modern labour market requirements and differing needs of various migrant skill groups (Desiderio & Urso, 2013). They considered policy approaches to counteract brain waste amongst migrant populations in the European Union by reviewing skills assessment procedures, various recognition frameworks and introduction of pre-migration measures (Desiderio & Urso, 2013). Such considerations must be deliberated in the increasingly diverse Australian society to assist with a more positive settlement experience.

It is imperative that more research is conducted in this area to make education and future employment more inclusive and accessible as has been stipulated in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) that Australia is committed to achieving. The SDG Goal 4 on Quality Education specifies that to have a progressive and healthy society, efforts must be made to ensure: i) equal access to affordable and quality vocational education, ii) elimination of all discrimination in education by providing equal access to vulnerable community members (in this case the newly arrived migrant community) and iii) more people have skills, including technical and vocational

skills, for employment and decent jobs as well as entrepreneurship (UN DESA, 2023).

Learning from strategies implemented within the VET sector domestically and also internationally with countries that have comparable migration patterns to Australia may provide us insight on how

best to address these challenges and implications for practise with the Australian context. The aim of this Fellowship was therefore to engage with various domestic and international stakeholders to gain insights on how RTOs engage with newly arrived migrants wanting to pursue a career in vocational education.



05

Methods

To meet the aim of this Fellowship, a qualitative research design was incorporated. Online/face to face semi structured in-depth interviews were carried out with members from the VET sector involved in working with newly arrived skilled migrants. The interview topics included eliciting information on the participants' involvement in the VET sector, their involvement with newly arrived skilled migrants, and supports and tools that may be useful for this population. This approach allowed for gaining insight and understandings of experiences and VET practices undertaken to address barriers faced by the newly arrived skilled migrants in becoming VET educators.

Ethical permission to conduct this research was sought from Melbourne Polytechnic Applied Research Ethics and Development Group and the project proposal was also reviewed by Australasian Human Research Ethics Consultancy Services Pty Ltd (MelbPoly 006-V2 A-EV).

The interviews were conducted at a mutually convenient time/location, were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim and a summary of the interview was sent to the participants for review and for them to provide suggestions. The principles of theoretical saturation were applied, and interviews were stopped once saturation was reached (Mays & Pope, 1995). All interview data was de-identified and the transcripts analysed thematically.

Purposive sampling was undertaken, and the Department of Education was approached to assist with recruiting potential participants involved in the Reconnect Program. Potential participants were also identified through the researcher's personal network, reviewing LinkedIn profiles and contacting authors of published studies who have carried out research with migrants and with migrants' engagement in and experiences with the VET sector. In addition, snowball methodology was employed as a non-probability sampling method through which existing participants were asked to share the details of the project. Various stakeholders both domestic and international were recruited based on their expertise in VET and skilled migrants for a semi-structured interview to gain in-depth research.



06

Fellowship Learnings and Findings

Interviews were carried out with a total of 12 participants (six Australian and six international participants who were from England, Scotland and Spain). These participants came from varied backgrounds within the VET sector both within Australia and overseas with extensive work and research experience. Majority of the participants had worked with newly arrived skilled migrants within the VET sector and provided insights into the barriers faced by this population.

Key overarching themes that emerged from the thematic analysis included both the challenges and facilitators newly arrived skilled migrants faced in pursuing a career in vocational education including.

CHALLENGES IN PURSUING A CAREER IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

In addition to challenges faced by newly arrived skilled migrants in becoming a vocational educator, there were many other concurrently occurring hardships noted by the participants. These related to the broader settlement experience of newly arrived migrants such as finding a house to live in (given the current housing market, finding a place to buy or rent is even more difficult); finding suitable schools for their children; getting to know the surroundings; adjusting to the change in culture and so forth. It can be hard to prioritise these hardships however, for the purposes of this Fellowship, the focus has been on pursuing a career within the VET sector. The challenges within this context have been noted under systemic problems, and costs and prior skills assessments.

SYSTEMIC PROBLEMS

Requirement to have the TAE qualification: In Australia it is a requirement to hold the TAE qualification in order to work as a Vocational Educator. For the newly arrived skilled migrant who already possess teaching experience and qualification overseas this requirement seems to be a barrier to become a VET educator. As one of the international participants stated in their interview, - *“The actual teaching qualifications recommended for the role - the sector is not regulated in England and it is up to providers what qualifications they actually require.”* This comment from the international participant in England raised further question about the requirements for the VET educators in Australia.

Contrary to this another participant in Australia said, *“So basically, regardless of what education qualification they’ve got overseas, they’ve got to come in and they’ve got to complete it (TAE). So, and I think that’s one of the biggest barriers too. Yeah, because they don’t want to come back after they’ve got a PhD in, you know, a Masters of Education to come down to do a set for them to teach in VET in Australia”.*

What additional value does the TAE qualification bring to someone who already has years of teaching experience and qualification. Upon reviewing the TAE qualification closely, it can be seen there are only few Unit of Competencies that directly relate to the Australian VET sector and the remainder are more generic in nature. Newly arrived skilled migrants who possess teaching

experience and qualification should be able to obtain recognition towards these generic unit of competencies. However, the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process isn't always easier to implement.

Standardised Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process: Many participants noted that in Australia there is no national standard RPL process for overseas skilled migrants which makes it hard for them to have their prior experience recognised. They suggested that this may be perhaps due to lack of evidence the migrant may have or not. This poses a significant barrier for them to enter the VET sector as they do not know where to turn to or how to navigate the system.

The standardised RPL process was also found to be missing in countries participants came from. However, the participant from England working on the project to find ways of identifying, encouraging and supporting individuals to fill gaps in the market stated - *“there are plans to introduce a standardised skill recognition tool that would be embedded on a central website open to public”*.

Currently, in Australia the RPL process is decentralised and sits with individual RTOs. Each RTO would have their own evidence collection mechanism for recognising skills for all applicants including newly arrived skilled migrants. There needs to be a centralised and standardised RPL process owned and managed by DET or another central government body to assist newly skilled migrants in obtaining recognition for their experience and qualification.

An Australian participant said, *“Again, a lot of these skilled migrants don't understand the time-consuming process so that sometimes a cost to that in some of the industry areas and the amount of documentation that they actually need to provide because they not only need to, you know provide the documentation that they actually have the knowledge, but it's the skills and it's the skills within the Australian context.”*

Clear and trusted information: In the UK it was noted that there was a lack of clear and trusted

information on careers and education choices to become vocational educator. The participant in England discussed how they are developing the one stop government backed website with all the relevant information. They said, “we are currently developing a website with relevant details for Further Education in UK which will include details such as requirement to become FE teacher, courses, cost, skills recognition and possible available jobs”. The website will provide clear, trusted and detailed information on careers and education choices within the VET sector. This was similarly noted by participants in Australia suggesting that this information is critical for newly arrived skilled migrants to find impartial and accurate career focused information for the VET sector. Currently in Australia, there is no single point of information that is backed by the government that may be impartial, accurate and comprehensive. This lack of information was noted to be an obstacle for the newly arrived skilled migrants.

Few comments from Australian stakeholders regarding information available to the newly arrived skilled migrants are listed below, this shows how lack of information and clarity of information available to them is only fuelling the barriers.

“One of the newly arrived migrants they know, holds an administrative qualification who found it very, very difficult just to get, find employment, even though the qualification is recognised. And it took some time before they got into a government organization who put them into a role and saw their work in that role and then they were able to then move to the level that they had been working at previously. So, it's about again not having those contacts, not having those references and not having that track record and that that was like nearly a 12-month process for this person to be recognised to be able to work at the level because they had to kind of come in and prove that. So again then, obviously needs to be wider governmental programs that support skilled workers into organisations, larger organisations and companies who can then come in and pick up those roles that they're actually able to do and

that they're skilled to do. But because they've got no history here in Australia, they're not given the opportunity to do."

"We were taken to Centrelink initially as migrants and at the Centrelink they take you through your Medicares and other processes and then to look for jobs. There's that computer, go and sit on the computer #3 and you can search for jobs. That is all the help I got. I wasn't told what job websites to navigate. How do I look? I had no idea if there was a Seek or whatever and so I think there was a lot of lack of information and guidance in those early days and that is the case for a lot of new migrants. There is no central source of information and truth to guide them. Therefore they're lost and then they pick up whatever they will find convenient or easy. It's just easy to go to a local store from you know. Whether it's a Chinese migrant will walk into a Chinese store do you want me to do, pick up boxes for you. Yes, OK fine. Indian store or at the garage do you need a helping hand or whatever. So that is one reason, that lack of guidance and information, that hand holding to new migrants."

Inflexible funding model: In Australia participants mentioned, that the current funding model does not support RTOs to be flexible to engage Trainers Under Supervision (TUS), many of whom may potentially be newly arrived skilled migrants. One of the local Australian participants suggested that the funding model needs to consider areas of vocational educator shortage and provide flexibility to RTOs to allocate TUS and/or mentors. This was contrasting to international locations where the VET sector does not have comparable funding to Australia. It is recommended that DET consider additional funding and strategies to support RTOs to employ and engage more TUS, especially from the newly arrived skilled migrant communities.

Targeted initiatives: There is a lack of targeted government initiatives to engage with the newly arrived skilled migrants to become vocational educators. A key leader in the area who was interviewed in Australia mentioned that not much is being done with newly arrived skilled migrants and that more effort needs to be put in the area.

Importantly, the participant mentioned, that this population group has not been considered a priority and is not included in any of their upcoming projects or ones that they were aware of.

In contrast, they mentioned that DET has targeted continuous initiatives to address the schoolteacher shortages. However, there are no such initiatives addressing vocational educator shortages. All Victorian government secondary schools are expected to provide the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) Vocational Major and Victorian Pathways Certificate (VPC). This policy has and will continue to push additional pressure to engage additional vocational educators. There needs to be targeted initiatives nationally to support and enhance participation of newly arrived skilled migrants to become vocational educators.

Inconsistent entry requirements: There is lack of consistency within the RTOs course entry requirements. There needs to be consistency in the entry requirement that are listed on the national register of VET - Training.gov.au and RTOs who deliver the TAE qualification. This inconsistency in the information between the national register and the RTOs makes the VET landscape confusing and unclear for the newly arrived skilled migrants adding a layer of complexity to the whole process. Internationally participant mentioned that the entry requirement to become a vocational educator is being phased out and the onus is shifted to the RTOs to recruit qualified educators rather than being a centralised process.

COST AND PRIOR SKILLS ASSESSMENT

Cost for the RTO: Previously, students enrolled in the TAE qualification were unable to simultaneously study and work within the VET sector. This was because not all RTOs offered the selection of the unit of competencies required to work as a Trainer Under Supervision (TUS). The TUS program can be a costly process for the RTOs to implement as it requires an additional educator to supervise the candidate and hence becomes a costly obstacle to implement. For example, in a classroom where a TUS has been allocated to train, the RTO must

also allocate a qualified vocational educator to supervise the TUS. This means that two equally paid vocational educators are allocated to the same class which becomes financially unviable for the RTO. Overseas, none of the participants mentioned any such programs.

Cost for the newly arrived migrants: Newly arrived migrants face a time and monetary cost when trying to get their overseas qualifications and experience assessed. VETASSESS, Australia's largest skills assessment provider, carries out this process however, the migrants incur a charge and there may be delays due to the onerous process. One participant in Scotland mentioned that they do not have the same influx of migrants as Australia and hence they do not have the same level of demand for skill assessment.

FACILITATORS THAT SUPPORTED NEWLY ARRIVED MIGRANTS IN PURSUING A CAREER IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Release of TAE40122: The new TAE qualification released in December 2022 was noted as a facilitator. The new qualification provides RTOs the flexibility to choose from six elective unit of competencies giving more flexibility to learners to undertake and the RTOs to deliver the qualification that might suit their needs. An RTO can choose to deliver the required skill set from the TAE training package (release 5.0) giving newly arrived skilled migrant an opportunity to work as TUS. (Australian Skills Quality Authority, 2023).

TAFE Teaching incentive: DET initiated the TAFE Teaching Incentive Program. The TAFE Teaching Incentive Program aimed to attract and support people with relevant industry experience to reskill as teachers in areas of teacher shortage at Victorian TAFEs. It offered 200 scholarships as part of a \$6.5 million investment in TAFE teacher training over three years. The Program aimed to build the capacity and capability of the TAFE teaching workforce and reduce the costs associated with the career change (Jobs at TAFE, 2023). No such program was mentioned by the international participants.

One stop shop: One of the international participants from UK discussed the importance of the government backed one point of information dissemination. This one point of information dissemination is missing in Australian VET sector.

Mentors – Mentorship was another point discussed by an international participant from Spain. She mentioned that having mentors for newly arrived skilled migrants was important to their success in finding suitable opportunities. Mentors can provide guidance, information and support.



07

Considerations and Next Steps

This Fellowship has taken approximately 12 months from the inception, during which time the entry level qualification to become vocational educator has been updated. It will now be interesting to see how the training organisations will manage to keep the consistency for the entrants. These inconsistencies have had varying success in being more inclusive and supportive of newly arrived skilled migrants to become vocational educators. This Fellowship has only been able to scratch the surface in this area due to time and monetary constraints. There might be further in-depth research undertaken to obtain more accurate and insightful results, which can drive further action. Further research and interviews should be conducted with overseas skilled migrants and what barriers they see needs to be addressed.

Based on the findings from the research carried out through this Fellowship, and to streamline the process for the newly arrived skilled migrants to become vocational educators, there are few considerations that should be taken moving forward. This will not only alleviate barriers for them to become vocational educator but will also help the VET sector in addressing workforce demand. Victorian Skills Authority in Victoria and DET nationally will need to work on some of the recommendations to ensure these barriers are addressed ensuring that the VET workforce demands are met. Victoria is the education state of Australia and hence VSA needs to be a catalyst in these changes. Below are some recommendations based on the findings of this report:

- RTOs and relevant VET organisations to work cohesively, have greater clarity and consistency regarding the entry requirements for Certificate IV in Training and Assessment in line with the Training and Education TAE qualification requirements. Any additional requirements added by the RTOs should be removed if they are not in line with the training package entry requirements. This will alleviate some barriers for the newly arrived skilled migrants and other applicants. VSA along with Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) need to regulate this process and to ensure RTOs follow this policy nationally to ensure there is consistency across RTOs. It is imperative that the entry requirements to the qualification are same for every RTO nationally.
- Based on the findings from overseas, it is important and beneficial to have one single source of accurate information for all stakeholders. It is recommended that DET's VET workforce team takes on the responsibility to design and develop a dedicated national website on VET workforce that is easily accessible by the community. The website should include information pertaining to - requirements on how to become a vocational educator, skills mapping for skilled migrants and possible job opportunities. A guideline or an infogram to support this resource would be very helpful. In addition, this website needs to be shared with the newly arrived skilled migrants through different stakeholders and channels such as DIAC, DEWR, DET, VSA, RTOs and

community organisations. This website should be a key resource providing accurate and current information to all involved stakeholders and updated regularly.

- Further funding is required to undertake the below mentioned research projects –
 - There should be further in-depth research undertaken to obtain more accurate and insightful results, to drive further action. Recruitment of further stakeholders across Australia should take place with the view to understand and get a clearer picture whether the barriers are localised (considering metro and regional areas) or nationwide. Based on the outcome the policy should be reviewed nationally to ensure equity and fairness is strengthened. VSA, DEWR, VETASSESS, DET and Jobs and Skills Councils need to be included in further research and come together to design the VET Workforce planning.
 - Further research and interviews to be conducted with newly arrived skilled migrants who aspire to become vocational educators to understand what other barriers they face and what solutions they may suggest. This Fellowship has only scratched the surface by interviewing a few stakeholders in Australia and overseas, however, it will be important to hear from the newly arrived skilled migrants. This might be done through a questionnaire or semi-structured interviews. Once further research has taken place with the newly arrived skilled migrants, an informed decision can be made on how we can alleviate these barriers through policy and process changes.
 - As found in UK, a nationally accepted and standardised RPL tool is essential for consistency in the sector. One recommendation would be the development of an Australian nationally recognised RPL tool focussed on the TAE qualification that caters to the needs of skilled migrants and maps their overseas qualification and teaching experience against the TAE qualification. This RPL tool should be

free to use by the newly arrived skilled migrants and available on the above-mentioned website. It is highly recommended that organisations such as VETASSESS are involved in this project to create this nationally recognised RPL tool given they have experience in assessing the qualifications and work experience of prospective migrants, and supports individuals' applications for employment, course entry and industry membership in Australia.

- As a national policy with targeted initiatives should be considered by DET or another relevant organisation to engage and encourage newly arrived skilled migrants to become vocational educators and alleviate barriers they face. This should take place in partnerships with Migration centres, community organisations and Department of Immigration and Citizenship.
- There have been a number of research papers written around mentorship of educators and how it is beneficial to attract and retain quality educators in the industry. As a national guideline, DET should initiate mentorship model to support newly arrived skilled migrants for appropriate guidance in successfully entering the VET workforce. DET, DEWR and TAE Jobs and Skills Council to work in partnership with RTOs to offer mentorships to the newly arrived skilled migrants to become VET educators, this will require some additional funding for the RTOs.



08

Impacts of the Fellowship

Personally

This Fellowship has strengthened the author's desire to do good for the community, especially to support newly arrived skilled migrants who face numerous challenges. The Fellowship has boosted his confidence, belief and encouraged him to engage in further in-depth research. The Fellowship has given him the opportunity to think outside the box and see the sector and world through new perspectives.

Professionally

The Fellowship has encouraged him to find new professional ways to make the difference. The Fellowship has given him the exposure to research and shown how important it is. Any change has to start from research, evidence, critical thinking, initiatives and confidence. Through this Fellowship journey, he has unveiled partnerships, opportunities and key stakeholders who share similar interests and are willing to work together in this area. He would engage in further research in this area with an organisation who can support such initiatives.

Organisationally

The Fellowship should hopefully encourage organisations to update the entry requirement for the TAE qualification to start with. This can then be followed by funding and developing a specific team/department dedicated to RPLs to support newly skilled migrants.

Broader VET Sector

The Fellowship can and should allow for the entire VET sector to have more equitable and inclusive strategies supporting newly arrived skilled migrants. These migrants bring along with them international experiences, different perspectives and teaching styles. As a VET sector we should embrace and utilise such knowledge and skills for the betterment of society rather than create barriers and obstacles.

RTOs should be more open to work with newly arrived skilled migrants supporting them through the RPL process rather than try to re-train them.

Being further involved in this area the Fellow would work sector wide to find solutions to alleviate barriers and make the sector more inclusive and fairer.

09

Sector Engagement (Dissemination)

Dissemination of this report with key findings is crucial for the success of this Fellowship. Organisations such as VSA, DET, TAFEs, VETASSESS will be contacted as per the table below to engage in a dialogue discussing some of the recommendations. VSA is the key body in Victoria to support some of the recommendations that will push the change nationally. There needs to be a multi-pronged plan to achieve the desired outcomes.

Meeting with the VSA stakeholders will be crucial to obtain additional funding for further research and to start implementing some of the recommendations locally which then needs to be supported by DET nationally. At the time of the report a specific Jobs and Skills Council (JSC) has not been nominated for the TAE sector, however as soon as that is done that specific JSC will have another important role to play in addressing some of the barriers.

It is recommended that meetings with various TAFEs and private RTOs are conducted along with VSA representation to ensure everyone has the consistent and accurate entry requirements as per the TAE training package. It is imperative that every RTO has the same entry requirement to remove any ambiguity for the new entrants. The entry requirements are already stated in the TAE training package that should be used by every RTO rather than having their own specific entry requirement.

Meeting with Dr Juliana Mutum at the Victorian Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) will be another key engagement in the

dissemination process. Her current role as the Senior Advisor at DFFH and ongoing engagement with the migrant community is commendable.

Additionally, a meeting with VETASSESS to discuss how the newly arrived skilled migrants are currently assessed to become vocational educators should be organised. There may be some room to make this process quicker, cheaper, fair and equitable for all stakeholders. This RPL process could also be used as a national benchmark and assist in designing the appropriate tool.

DEWR will be yet another key stakeholder in this dissemination process especially as they work on the VET workforce blueprint. The synergies in this Fellowship and the findings from the DEWR - VET workforce will need to be worked on together. Any one-way approach will not alleviate the barriers for the newly arrived skilled migrants. In the given environment where there is a shortage of workforce in the industry it is important to open as many doors as possible for already skilled newly arrived migrants. The VET sector needs to embrace and utilise the existing skills in the country by reducing the barriers they face and encourage them to engage in the VET workforce.

Organisation / stakeholders	Event/Activity	Nature of presentation (workshop, presentation, webinar etc.)	Key contacts
Melbourne Polytechnic	Learning and Teaching Quality Committee	Presentation	Cheryl Wilson
DEWR – VET Workforce	Meeting	Presentation	
VET Practitioners' Network.	Network meeting	Presentation	
Executive Director – Academic Operations - Melbourne Polytechnic	Meeting	Presentation	Marc Blanks
VETASSESS	Meeting	Submission of report followed with Presentation (if required)	Dr Mamta Chauhan
Victorian Skills Authority	Meeting	Submission of report followed with Presentation (if required)	Anne-Maree Butt
Jobs and Skill Australia	Meeting	Submission of report followed with Presentation (if required)	
Melbourne Polytechnic	Staff Professional Development	Workshop	
World Federation of Colleges and Polytechnics (WFCP)	Meeting	Presentation of report	Network group members
The Education and Training Foundation (ETF) - London	Meeting	Presentation of report	
Victorian Department of Families, Fairness & Housing	Meeting	Presentation of report	Dr Juliana Mutum

10

Conclusion

Newly arrived skilled migrants with vast teaching experience and qualification are essential to consider for the future VET workforce. The partnership between DET, RTOs, Migration centres, community organisations, VSA and other stakeholders including the newly arrived skilled migrants is paramount in the current context of labour shortage. We need to work together to ensure we alleviate barriers for these migrants rather than adding more fuel to those barriers.

It is all about partnering together to find and implement solutions. The entire VET sector and our communities will benefit only if we can provide this support to them.

The partnership needs to be open, transparent, honest, inclusive, fair and future driven that can provide and create pathways for the coming generations.

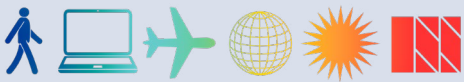


11

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