

# **Rebuilding lives: VET for prisoners and offenders**

*The implementation framework for the National Strategy for Vocational Education and Training for Adult Prisoners and Offenders in Australia*

## Acronyms

<b>ACEA</b>	Australasian Corrections Education Association
<b>AEVTI</b>	Adult Education and Vocational Training Institute
<b>ANTA</b>	Australian National Training Authority
<b>AQF</b>	Australian Qualifications Framework
<b>AQTF</b>	Australian Quality Training Framework
<b>AVETMISS</b>	Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard
<b>DEST</b>	Department of Education, Science and Training
<b>DEWR</b>	Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
<b>FLAG</b>	Flexible Learning Advisory Group
<b>IFECSA</b>	International Forum on Education in Correctional Systems
<b>NCVER</b>	National Centre for Vocational Education Research
<b>NTSC</b>	National Training Statistics Committee
<b>RCC</b>	Recognition of current competencies
<b>RPL</b>	Recognition of prior learning
<b>RTO</b>	Registered Training Organisation
<b>TAFE</b>	Technical and Further Education
<b>VET</b>	Vocational Education and Training

## Foreword

### ***Rebuilding lives: VET for prisoners and offenders***

*Rebuilding lives: VET for prisoners and offenders*, provides a framework for a national approach to the implementation of vocational education and training for adult prisoners and offenders who are in custody or serving community orders.

This implementation framework is a companion document to the *National Strategy for Vocational Education and Training for Adult Prisoners in Australia* and is referred to here as ‘the Strategy’ for the purposes of this document.

The Strategy was developed by the Australian National Training Authority in conjunction with state and territory correctional administrations, the federal Department of Education, Science and Training and state and territory training authorities. It was developed in response to a recommendation in the *Report of the inquiry into education and training in correctional facilities* from the Senate Employment, Education and Training Reference Committee in 1996. The Senate inquiry was initiated by the International Forum on Education in Correctional Systems Association, now known as the Australasian Corrections Education Association. The inquiry report recommended that prisoners be identified as a discrete target group which is under-represented in vocational education and training. The ANTA Chief Executive Officers’ Committee and the Corrections Administrators endorsed *the Strategy* in 2002.

The development of *Rebuilding lives* was managed by the TAFE Equity and Outreach Unit, TAFE and Community Education Strategic Support Services, New South Wales Department of Education and Training. The project steering committee drew its membership from correctional and education and training jurisdictions in each state and territory.

## Introduction

Adult prisoners and offenders in Australia experience cumulative social and economic disadvantage relative to the population as a whole. The average school education of offenders in Australia is Year 10 or below, and many have had no secondary education. People with an intellectual disability are also over-represented, as are particular ethnic groups. The number of women prisoners in Australia has increased significantly in recent years. In addition more than twenty percent of prisoners in Australia are Indigenous, and this proportion is increasing (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2003).

Many prisoners experience multiple disadvantage (for example, Indigenous women prisoners) which results in lower educational and employment outcomes (Dumbrell et al. 2004). Added to this are the systemic barriers which are part of the prison environment and in which VET must operate: prisoners have restricted choice regarding how, where and when they can be involved in training and in the type of training that is available to them.

There are compelling arguments for encouraging prisoners and offenders to engage with vocational education and training. A body of research is growing that indicates that prisoners and offenders who participate in VET are less likely to re-offend (Saylor & Gaes 1999; Steurer 2001; Callan 2005). Where recidivism is reduced, the economic benefits are substantial. A recent Australian study (Mayhew 2003) indicated that lost output, criminal justice, and associated medical expenses cost Australian society annually \$1.96 billion for drug offences, \$230 million for sexual assaults and \$600 million for robbery. The study estimates that the annual cost of crime is \$36 billion.

The social benefits associated with reducing recidivism are clear: fewer victims of crime, the breaking of generational criminal norms and fewer families dislocated by the loss of family members to prison.

In addition to assisting in increasing post-release employment prospects, prisoners and offenders with vocational skills are also more likely to be able to assist in the development of their communities. This can be particularly important for Indigenous prisoners and offenders returning to remote communities where employment options may be limited.

## The policy context

### *Shaping our future: Australia's national strategy for vocational education and training 2004–2010*

There is a close link between the objectives of the Strategy and *Shaping our future: Australia's national strategy for vocational education and training 2004–2010*.

*Shaping our future* is Australia's commitment over seven years to developing vocational education and training in a partnership between Commonwealth, state and territory governments, industry, education and training providers and other stakeholders.

Both the Strategy and *Shaping our future* emphasise the need to improve offenders' access to nationally recognised training and to increase their employment prospects post-release. Both documents highlight the need to build community capacity and acknowledge and respond to the needs of Indigenous Australians. *Rebuilding lives* has been prepared to develop the links between the Strategy and *Shaping our future* and to provide the necessary leverage points for implementing these strategies through VET and corrections sector planning and resource allocation.

In *Shaping our future* (pp 15-17), twelve strategies were presented to achieve the key objectives for VET to 2010. These are:

1. increase participation and achievement, particularly by existing workers
2. help clients navigate and interact with vocational education and training
3. improve the value, brand, language and image of vocational education and training and public recognition of its employment outcomes
4. take positive steps to achieve equality of participation and achievement
5. make a sustained investment in TAFE and other Registered Training Organisations
6. enable training providers and brokers to partner with industry to drive innovation
7. implement flexible funding models and planning and accountability approaches
8. develop a sustainable mix of funding
9. strengthen industry's role in anticipating skill requirements and developing products and services to meet them
10. make learning pathways seamless
11. improve quality and consistency
12. facilitate access to international markets.

### Other strategy documents that link to *Rebuilding lives*

Three other key strategy documents should be referred to when considering the strategies in *Rebuilding lives*. These are:

- *Partners in a learning culture, Australia's National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy for vocational education and training 2000-2005*;
- *Bridging pathways, the national VET strategy for people with a disability*; and
- *Women: shaping our future*, the national policy paper for women in vocational education and training.

### ***Partners in a learning culture***

It is vital that the needs of Indigenous Australians are addressed. As a group, they are significantly over-represented in Australian prisons, their recidivism rate is considerably higher than that of other Australians, and these rates continue to grow disproportionately (Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission 2002). *Partners in a learning culture* offers strategies to the VET system to provide a high quality service to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, with the aim of improving training and employment outcomes.

A significant finding of the mid-term review of the *Partners in a learning culture* implementation blueprint was that the strong emphasis on increasing opportunities for Indigenous prisoners has not translated into a series of actions or strategic partnerships. Action taken to improve access to and participation in nationally recognised training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples has the potential to reduce recidivism rates and assist in the transition from prison to work. The high level of Indigenous prisoners across Australia demands that urgent attention be given to their increasing participation in vocational education and training.

### ***Bridging pathways: national VET strategy for people with a disability***

People with a disability are under-represented in vocational education and training and are less likely than other students to achieve employment outcomes following training.

*Bridging pathways*, the national strategy for increasing opportunities for people with a disability in vocational education and training from 2000 to 2005, and its blueprint for implementation, contain strategies to ensure that VET delivers high quality training and employment outcomes for people with a disability. The mid-term review of the *Bridging pathways* blueprint found that most of the achievements to date have been at a policy level, with less evidence of improvements for people with a disability on the ground, especially in terms of employment outcomes.

Given the high numbers of people with a disability in custody, *Bridging pathways* can inform implementation of the strategies in this document.

## **Women: shaping our future: the national VET strategy for women**

While the proportion of women in Australia who are in prison is low compared with that of men, the rate of female imprisonment rose from 12 per 100 000 in 1995 to 19.2 per 100 000 in 2002. This sixty per cent increase in the rate of female imprisonment is four times that of males (Gelb 2003). This rise in numbers has significant implications for the provision of VET for female prisoners and offenders. *Women: shaping our future* seeks to redress the disadvantage experienced by women in the employment market by ensuring that VET provision meets the needs of a broad range of women and leads to sound employment outcomes. It aims to embed equity goals in VET so that the whole VET system will be capable of facilitating long-term, sustainable improvements for women.

The links between each of these strategies and *Rebuilding lives: VET for prisoners and offenders* are identified in the next section of this framework (pages 7 - 15).

## Making it happen

*Rebuilding lives: VET for prisoners and offenders*, was developed collaboratively between state and territory corrections and training authorities and ANTA. Advice on achieving the *National Strategy for Vocational Education and Training for Adult Prisoners in Australia* vision was provided by a range of stakeholders working in the provision of education, training and rehabilitation for prisoners and offenders.

*Rebuilding lives* will guide implementation of the Strategy until 2010. It has also been aligned with the implementation of *Shaping our future*.

## National implementation

*Rebuilding lives* will inform national priority setting and resource allocation arrangements, national research priorities and planning in both the VET and corrections sectors.

It can be used as the basis for undertaking activity under strategy four of *Shaping our future*, which calls for ‘positive steps’ to be taken ‘to achieve equality of participation and achievement’ for people ‘who face barriers due to ... imprisonment’ (ANTA 2003, page 15).

Implementation will require a whole-of-government approach involving a range of state and federal agencies and organisations. In supporting the implementation of the Strategy, cooperation is vital among agencies and bodies such as the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, the Department of Education, Science and Training, the National Centre for Vocational Education Research, the Australasian Corrections Education Association, the National Secretariat for Correctional Administrators, the Australian Institute of Criminology, the Flexible Learning Advisory Group, Centrelink, Industry Skills Councils, employer groups and others.

These agencies and organisations will be called on to provide advice on initiatives arising from this implementation framework and to act as partners in research. During the life of the framework, these partnerships will be further explored and documented.

Currently there is a range of initiatives:

- Centrelink offices in each state have links with the justice system. Staff are involved in pre-release programs, in partnership with prison education staff, which help prisoners access information about various community services and education and training programs.
- DEWR provides employment services, including labour market information about employment opportunities, so that prisoners on release can be better targeted to overcome vocational barriers to employment. DEWR is keen to increase the flow of job seekers from correctional services programs and support services into the Job Network system, when program providers assess they are job ready. Due to the high rate of incarceration of Indigenous Australians, DEWR is building links with correctional services and VET agencies to provide a whole-of-government approach to support Indigenous offenders both pre- and post-release.
- Industry Skills Councils have developed learning resources relevant to particular industries for people with low levels of literacy, which can be used by trainers in the corrections environment.

## State and territory implementation

State and territory policy makers are encouraged to consider *Rebuilding lives* as a framework for implementation which may be linked to their annual justice and VET plans. Priorities for projects and research should also respond to strategies within this framework.

It is critical that state and territory justice and vocational education and training agencies collaborate in assigning these priorities to ensure maximum impact of this framework. VET in corrections must be an integral part of both the VET system and the corrections system to ensure consistency, quality and portability of outcomes and qualifications.

## Objectives

The four objectives of the Strategy are as follows:

**Access:** To improve access to vocational education and training for adult prisoners and offenders.

**Participation and attainment:** To support successful participation and attainment across a range of fields of study and levels of vocational education and training’.

**Employment and lifelong learning:** To contribute to the employment and learning pathways which can support the successful re-integration of offenders into the community.

**Promoting quality and accountability:** To create an accountable system that provides quality vocational education and training outcomes for offenders.

The consultations for *Rebuilding lives* produced a set of strategies that address these objectives. These strategies are set out below, under the four Strategy objectives. The relevant links between these strategies and the key national strategy document discussed earlier, are also set out beside each section. Examples of good practice stories collected during the consultations are included as ‘Snapshots’ and follow each strategy.

## 1 Access

Prisoners and offenders must be given adequate information, opportunities and encouragement to:

- know they can participate in VET
- understand their VET options
- be able to set realistic goals through VET pathways.

VET's value as a significant factor in rehabilitation must be acknowledged and embraced by the agencies that deal with prisoners before and after their release. The individual aspirations and needs of each offender should be addressed through informed choice, quality VET provision, and staff collaboration.

### Strategies at the national level

- Ensure that prisoners and offenders have access to vocational education and training
- Undertake research on the accessibility of VET in correctional settings for women, people with a disability and Indigenous Australians.

### Strategies at the state and territory level

- Market educational programs innovatively to engage the interest of prisoners and their key influencers
- Increase opportunities for Indigenous Australians to undertake programs that maintain and develop their culture
- Increase opportunities for Indigenous Australians to undertake higher level VET qualifications
- Promote existing subsidies, incentives and services available to support offender access to VET
- Include VET in offenders' management plans, with input from education and training personnel, and regularly review these plans
- Identify or develop preparatory programs that improve offenders' access to and achievement in VET
- Assess the skills and knowledge already held by prisoners and offenders as part of the initial assessment of educational needs
- Develop and promote VET pathways across correctional facilities and jurisdictions
- Align the recording and reporting processes between internal and external training providers to ensure the accurate, consistent and timely transferral of information about offenders' participation in VET
- Enhance linkages and cooperation between authorities within jurisdictions and between agencies across state and territory boundaries.

### *Shaping our future*

- ✓ Strategy 1: Increase participation and achievement, particularly by existing workers
- ✓ Strategy 2: Help clients navigate and interact with vocational education and training
- ✓ Strategy 3: Improve the value, brand, language and image of VET and public recognition of its employment outcomes
- ✓ Strategy 4: Take positive steps to achieve equality of participation and achievement

### *Bridging pathways*

- ✓ Encourage the participation of people with a disability in VET at all qualification levels
- ✓ Increase employment and training pathways for people with a disability through greater access to recognition of prior learning (or current competencies)
- ✓ Market the value of VET to potential students with a disability, their key support networks and formal and informal sources of advice and career information
- ✓ Strengthen the access and equity performance of Registered Training Organisations in relation to opportunities provided for people with a disability

### *Partners in a learning culture*

- ✓ Develop mechanisms for inclusion of Indigenous advice in all VET projects, programs and products
- ✓ Increase access to and attainment in higher level VET and more industry relevant courses for Indigenous students
- ✓ Establish/expand partnerships between Indigenous people, communities, training providers and industry

### *Women: shaping our future*

- ✓ Promote the success of VET for women using role models and mentoring
- ✓ Improve links between informal and formal pathways for VET
- ✓ Improve recognition of prior learning processes for women's informal learning and generic skills
- ✓ Create incentives based on outcomes for Registered Training Organisations that train Indigenous women
- ✓ Provide Indigenous women with access to language, literacy and numeracy support

## Snapshots

- To gain support for VET amongst custodial staff, correctional facilities in some states and territories provide opportunities for these staff members to access accredited training. Others provide them with information sessions about VET pathways and the Australian Qualifications Framework.
- In Albany, where prisoners are engaged in conservation and land management, the TAFE college works with the prison in mapping the skills the prisoners develop on-the-job with the Conservation and Land Management Training Package, using progressive assessment.
- In the Northern Territory, courses that integrate literacy and vocational programs for Aboriginal prisoners (for example, in art, furniture making and horticulture) provide a high level of responsiveness to individual needs.
- In Western Australia, an education and training instrument has been developed that includes a section – Potential Barriers to Learning – which helps education officers pinpoint learning difficulties.
- At the Sir David Longland Correctional Centre in Queensland, some prisoners act as mentors for others, ensuring they come to class, keeping them focused and motivated and helping them with personal development.
- In NSW, the Department of Corrective Services (DCS) and the Department of Education and Training have collaborated to develop an implementation plan for TAFE NSW provision for Aboriginal prisoners. The plan establishes objectives, strategies and measurable outcomes to ensure quality TAFE courses in NSW correctional centres for Aboriginal prisoners. Regional TAFE/DCS committees have been set up throughout the state to help with the effective implementation of the plan.

## 2 Participation and attainment

Training and assessment services need to be targeted so that prisoners and offenders can make the most of employment and learning opportunities on leaving prison. Employers should be aware of the role that VET can play in preparing prisoners and offenders to contribute effectively in the workplace.

### Strategies at the national level

- Use new and existing research on improving participation and attainment for VET clients to inform practice in correctional settings
- Showcase successful prison-to-work transition programs and New Apprenticeship programs in correctional settings to inform practice nationally
- Undertake research to identify opportunities for adopting flexible and alternative learning approaches to increase participation for prisoners and offenders
- Explore options for funding so that appropriately skilled specialist teaching and support services are available and adequately resourced to support VET for offenders
- Provide adequate resources, both human and material, to meet the training needs of prisoners and offenders.

### Strategies at the state and territory level

- Develop the physical infrastructure and resources necessary to support a broad range of VET in correctional settings
- Employ appropriately qualified Indigenous Australians to undertake delivery and assessment
- Ensure that non-Indigenous training delivery and assessment staff are skilled in cross-cultural communication
- Integrate VET with work carried out in prison industries where there is scope for competency development related to Australian Qualifications Framework qualifications and post-release employment opportunities
- Customise VET resources and support materials to suit the learning styles and learning needs of Indigenous Australians, where appropriate
- Develop peer support programs as an adjunct to formal provision of VET
- Integrate literacies into programs involving vocational skills
- Encourage and provide opportunities for prisoners and offenders to participate in New Apprenticeships
- Recognise prisoners' VET achievements through awards, ceremonies, reports and documentation, including, where possible, family and communities.

### *Shaping our future*

- ✓ Strategy 5: Make a sustained investment in TAFE and other RTOs
- ✓ Strategy 6: Enable training providers and brokers to partner with industry to drive innovation
- ✓ Strategy 7: Implement flexible funding models and planning and accountability approaches
- ✓ Strategy 8: Develop a sustainable mix of funding

### *Bridging pathways*

- ✓ Encourage the participation of people with a disability in VET at all qualification levels
- ✓ Improve pathways for people with a disability into New Apprenticeships through collaboration between Group Training Companies, employers and Disability Employment Assistance Services
- ✓ Recognise significant achievements in education and training outcomes for people with a disability
- ✓ Foster clear pathways for people with a disability from VET into employment services and directly into employment
- ✓ Equip training delivery staff with skills that assist the inclusion of people with a disability

### *Partners in a learning culture*

- ✓ Secure Indigenous employment in key areas in the VET sector
- ✓ Provide professional development for staff delivering VET
- ✓ Promote Indigenous training and employment through Group Training Companies

### *Women: shaping our future*

- ✓ Ensure professional development to VET management, professionals and advisors engages them with issues for women
- ✓ Improve the capacity of RTOs to cater for different learning styles and needs
- ✓ Research the impact of VET funding models on women's participation in VET
- ✓ Resource support services for women, including childcare, customised counselling and career advice, language, literacy and numeracy tuition
- ✓ Fund flexible and remote delivery that is not only online
- ✓ Increase student support services for Indigenous women doing higher level VET courses, apprenticeships and traineeships

## Snapshots

- In Queensland, a Post Release Employment Assistance Program operates in all correctional centre locations. Currently two Registered Training Organisations and one Job Network agency have been funded under the Post Release Employment Assistance Program, and have achieved excellent results by helping ex-prisoners gain employment by targeting those about to be released and case managing them into employment. Prior to October 2004, the service was provided in Townsville and south-east Queensland only. The service providers work closely with the prisons in identifying prisoners who may be suitable to fill targeted positions.
- Western Australia has found that New Apprenticeship programs in prisons are strengthened when the following is in place:
  - a central coordinating body that works with a variety of RTOs on user choice principles, seeking the best fit between prisoners and programs
  - a limit to the placements so that quality rather than quantity becomes the emphasis
  - assessment of each application to ensure suitability and 'fit'
  - an individualised training plan that is monitored and reviewed
  - promotion to the prison, ensuring that officers and prisoners understand the requirements of the scheme
  - not moving prisoners for the life of the traineeship
  - learning based on real work and not just classroom-based
  - a variety of models offered that allow for transfer, work release and other options at the end of a sentence. It is especially useful to have a partnership with Group Training Organisations
  - prisoners are allocated a trainee wage
  - protocols that clearly set out the above.
- In NSW, the Disabilities Services Unit of the Department of Corrective Services and the TAFE Disability Programs Unit, Department of Education and Training are collaborating to provide a pilot vocational education and training program for prisoners with an intellectual disability. The pilot, funded by the Australians Working Together Program, provides pre and post release skills in the Certificate I in Horticulture at Long Bay Correctional Complex and Goulburn Correctional Centre.

### 3. Employment and lifelong learning

Prisoners and offenders require a good understanding of how to access further education, training and employment. They need to have skills that are attractive to the marketplace and they need to have an understanding of how they can build on their VET outcomes achieved in prison. VET programs in correctional settings must be compliant with the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) to enable consistently high quality outcomes and to facilitate a seamless transition to post-sentence further education and training. Participants in these programs must be supported to continue VET programs on release.

#### Strategies at the national level

- Explore means to address working in correctional settings in national teaching and training qualifications
- Undertake research on the transitional and post-release outcomes for prisoners and offenders who have participated in VET, particularly comparing employment and recidivism rates
- Create incentives for employers who employ prisoners and ex-prisoners.

#### Strategies at the state and territory level

- Implement nationally accredited employability skills programs for offenders
- Develop, support and expand specialised employment and training programs to support the transition from prison to work
- Support throughcare by establishing networks and formalising links between correctional facilities, internal and external training providers, community corrections, and other service and support providers to promote effective education and training delivery and referrals
- Provide offenders engaged in VET with vocational counselling services that support the pursuit of work and further study options on release
- Provide programs for short-term prisoners that offer achievable and rewarding outcomes
- Provide professional development for corrections and training personnel that supports the promotion of VET pathways to offenders
- Ensure that resource allocation processes consistently reflect prisoners' identified skills and learning needs that will lead to future employment outcomes
- Develop and maintain networks to support the sharing of good practice in the implementation of the AQTF
- Provide professional development to trainers, teachers and assessors working in correctional settings to help them to improve VET services, consistent with the AQTF
- Reflect state and territory training priorities and labour market conditions in VET offerings to prisoners.

#### *Shaping our future*

- ✓ Strategy 9: Strengthen industry's role in anticipating skill requirements and developing products and services to meet them
- ✓ Strategy 10: Make learning pathways seamless
- ✓ Strategy 11: Improve quality and consistency

#### *Bridging pathways*

- ✓ Establish equitable purchasing arrangements that improve the effectiveness of public investment in VET for people with a disability, by supporting inclusion and removing disincentives to providers
- ✓ Encourage the participation of people with a disability in VET at all qualification levels
- ✓ Establish a coordination mechanism at state/territory or regional level to provide improved access to supports and better links between services

#### *Partners in a learning culture*

- ✓ Create partnerships between schools, post-secondary institutions, industry and communities
- ✓ Promote Indigenous training and employment through ITABs (Industry Skills Councils)

#### *Women: shaping our future*

- ✓ Target women who are not yet in the workforce
- ✓ Improve outcomes for Indigenous women in VET and related employment
- ✓ Improve pathways to earning and employment for young Indigenous women
- ✓ Improve links between VET and labour market policy and trends related to labour market outcomes
- ✓ Establish effective partnership arrangements across and between government departments, agencies and industry to improve employment outcomes for women

## Snapshots

- In NSW, a non-custodial transitional centre for women has been established where women gain access to the community through work and study.
- ACEA conferences, held every two years since 1989, have been successful in providing professional development and networking for corrections education staff across Australia.
- In Western Australia's remote regional prisons, Indigenous prisoners are offered education and training that has strong links to Indigenous economic development projects in remote communities. The aim is to give individuals the skills to become productive members on returning to their communities. The communities identify the skills training areas.
- Dillwynia Correctional Centre is a new women's gaol located at South Windsor on the outskirts of metropolitan Sydney. It has been designed to have as 'normal' an environment as possible. Offenders and staff interact in the 'town square' area of the centre which includes the visitors' centre, health centre, training room, administration rooms, kitchen and bistro. At Dillwynia, women apply and are interviewed for vacant positions in industries located at the centre, thus encouraging the development of a range of employability skills. A Gloria Jeans outlet is located within the gaol, providing training and employment opportunities for the women offenders.
- In Western Australia, minimum security prisons also aim to provide a 'normalised' environment, with the emphasis on re-integration into the community. Prisoners have the opportunity to attend mainstream education and training at TAFE and university or experience on-the-job training outside prison during the day. Evidence has shown that the likelihood of continuing with these activities post-release is higher when such links have been established.
- In Victoria, the Correctional Services Employment Pilot Project uses external agencies to work closely with corrections education providers and prison industries to determine employment opportunities and to help in preparing prisoners for employment.
- In order to strengthen assessment processes and to meet the validation requirements of the AQTF, teachers in some Victorian prisons have participated in validation workshops at local TAFE Institutes. This has been a valuable professional development exercise for all parties involved.
- In NSW, the Department of Education and Training and the Community Offender Services, Probation and Parole Service, Department of Corrective Services are working together to provide a TAFE NSW course for probationers, parolees and people on community service orders to give them employment, education and training pathways. The course has been specifically designed to meet the needs of offenders re-entering the workforce and/or study.

## 4. Promoting quality and accountability

Quality systems establish indicators for review and evaluation and measure progress against these indicators. Information requirements are met through efficient and effective data collection.

In order to research and evaluate outcomes for offenders, and to make informed decisions about the allocation of resources, reliable and consistent data about the impact of participation in VET needs to be available.

The following measures of success are recommendations only and could be used by states and territories to re-focus current data collection approaches or to plan future data collection as a basis for measuring progress against the objectives in the *National Strategy for Vocational Education and Training for Adult Prisoners in Australia*. Each state/territory can choose performance measures to best suit their situations and requirements.

The indicators are adapted from the key performance measures in *Shaping our future*, and reinforce the links between this policy and the *National Strategy for Vocational Education and Training for Adult Prisoners in Australia*. Mechanisms for collecting data are suggested after each indicator. It is possible to measure progress nationally with data collected at the national level through the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard.

The implementation of the *National Strategy for Vocational Education and Training for Adult Prisoners in Australia* and *Rebuilding lives* will be monitored by future equity arrangements endorsed by the National Senior Officials Committee.

### Strategy at the national level

- Collect data to measure progress against the indicators of success included in this implementation framework.

### VET for adult prisoners and offenders – measures for success

#### Participation

- The number and proportion of adult prisoners and offenders who participate in VET each year and the number of qualifications, competencies and modules they attain (including through recognition processes).

*Data collection mechanism: national VET data collection (depending on National Training Statistics Committee [NTSC] approval of changes to present system)*

#### Results

- Government recurrent expenditure per publicly funded corrections-based VET output.

#### *Shaping our future*

- ✓ Strategy 7: Implement flexible funding models and planning and accountability approaches
- ✓ Strategy 11: Improve quality and consistency

#### *Bridging pathways*

- ✓ Improve data collection protocols with regard to the participation, outcomes and satisfaction of people with a disability in VET
- ✓ Ensure annual reporting includes qualitative and quantitative outcomes measures for people with a disability

#### *Partners in a learning culture*

- ✓ Participation of Indigenous students in higher level VET
- ✓ Participation of Indigenous students in VET by AQF level
- ✓ Module/unit of competence pass rates for Indigenous VET in Schools participants
- ✓ Module/units of competency pass rates for Indigenous VET students
- ✓ Proportion of Indigenous people awarded a module through recognition of prior learning and recognition of current competencies

#### *Women: shaping our future*

- ✓ Review data collection and measurement to map outcomes
- ✓ Identify ‘broadening occupational choices for women’ as a performance indicator for VET planning and reporting
- ✓ Identify trends impacting on women through additional analysis of data held by the NCVER and the Australian Bureau of Statistics

*Data collection mechanism: Special research projects*

## **Outcomes**

- The proportion of adult prisoners and offenders who improve their employment status or continue on to further study, both while in prison and on release, after completing VET  
*Data collection mechanism: Special research projects*
- The proportion of prison industry employers who have adopted VET to meet the skill needs of their workforce.  
*Data collection mechanism: Surveys of prison industry employers*

## **Measures for special groups**

- The number of:
  - prisoners and offenders from an Indigenous background
  - female prisoners and offenders
  - prisoners and offenders with a disabilitywho participate in VET each year and the number of qualifications, competencies and modules they attain  
*Data collection mechanism: national VET data collection (depending on NTSC approval of changes to present system)*
- The proportion of:
  - Indigenous prisoners and offenders
  - female prisoners and offenders
  - prisoners and offenders with a disabilitywho improve their employment circumstances or continue on to further study, both while in prison and on release, after completing training.  
*Data collection mechanism: special research projects*

## **Views from client groups**

- The proportion of adult prisoners and offenders who perceive they have gained benefits from accessing VET while in prison.  
*Data collection mechanism: Client satisfaction surveys*

## Steering committee members

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*Note: Different representatives from some jurisdictions and organisations attended different meetings.*

## References

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