TAFE NSW: Doing Business in the 21st Century

Consultation Outcomes and Development of Proposals

February 2008
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Foreword

Nearly 2,500 people participated in the consultations on ‘TAFE NSW: Doing Business in the 21st Century’ by sending in comments and submissions or by attending meetings and voicing their views.

This has provided a wealth of material about how to make a great organisation even better. You have spoken with passion about what should change in TAFE.

Some of the original proposals have now changed. Others have been further developed and explained.

Because of your feedback, work on the TAFE 21st Century commitments has started. $1 million will be invested in Semester 1, 2008 to implement the TAFE NSW Workforce Development Guarantee. The student management (SAM) and open learning (OLS) systems will be available for use across TAFE this year to support personalised student learning.

Your ideas about how equity support is integrated into TAFE’s work have been taken on board and a different approach based on broader strategies around social inclusion is proposed.

Proposals to simplify TAFE’s internal processes, especially around compliance, were well received. Work will start immediately in Institutes to phase out the overly complex teacher programming (EC) system for fulltime teachers. This will significantly free up Head Teachers. We will also look at alternatives for part time teachers.

We will continue to listen and communicate with you about how the detail of the 21st Century TAFE commitments develop and unfold. You can still provide comments through the email address at 21C@det.nsw.edu.au.

I look forward to working with all TAFE NSW colleagues, and the people, businesses and communities you serve to carry the ideas expressed here forward.

Michael Coutts-Trotter
Managing Director of TAFE NSW
Director-General of Education and Training
1. Background: Positioning TAFE NSW in the 21st Century

TAFE NSW is implementing a reform agenda to establish contemporary governance and business models. TAFE needs to ensure its Institutes have the capability to meet the new and emerging demands of changing patterns of work and job roles, as well as widely diverging clients’ needs. An important part of this reform is to examine internal systems, processes and controls and question how well they support Institutes, or if in fact they act as barriers.

On 27 November 2007 TAFE NSW released ‘TAFE NSW: Doing Business in the 21st Century - Proposals for consultation’. The document presented a new vision for TAFE NSW and emphasised five reform commitments to offer greater service diversity and flexibility for learners, employers and customers and to ensure TAFE services better meet the needs of industry and the community. These were:

> strengthening locally customised services
> building a new relationship with industry and enterprises
> implementing personalised services
> investing in TAFE NSW staff
> investing in TAFE technologies

The proposals envisaged faster and more flexible service responses by Institutes, more streamlined and simplified systems and processes to free up Institutes to work more effectively in their local regions and communities. Achieving these changes would help position Institutes as drivers of the Government’s State Plan priorities for increased participation in education and training throughout life.

The concept model that accompanied the proposals outlined a reformed approach to corporate support to Institutes to better match a customer focussed agenda for TAFE NSW in the 21st Century.
2. Overview of consultation

At the conclusion of consultations in December approximately 2500 people had participated either by sending individual responses or by giving feedback in consultation sessions held across TAFE NSW.

The Deputy Director-General, TAFE and Community Education, Institute Directors, Institute Managers and General Managers met approximately 85 separate groups of staff during the consultation phase to provide clarification and encourage responses to the proposals.

Overall, responses to the proposals in 'TAFE NSW: Doing Business in the 21st Century' were positive. Generally there was good will expressed towards the future directions of the reform agenda outlined, and many were keen to see more details.

People expressed additional perspectives on TAFE’s community capacity building role. Some submissions put forward alternative views and approaches on several proposals.

Meetings were held between the Deputy Director-General, TAFE and Community Education and external stakeholders including industry representatives, peak community groups and trade unions.

Industry and trade union responses were strongly supportive of closer working partnerships and greater engagement between Institutes and enterprises to address skills challenges in the NSW workforce. The vision was welcomed, as long as the consistent quality and integrity of state-wide qualifications are preserved.

Staff were strongly supportive of improvements to TAFE systems, simplification or streamlining of processes and greater flexibility to respond to customers.

Meeting stakeholder expectations

Consultations emphasised that shifting internal TAFE processes around course development towards greater Institute control of service design was a significant step in reinforcing local decision making. People saw this as an important part of Institutes’ maturing business autonomy along with their existing budget and course profile autonomy.

The ideas and critique produced throughout the consultation process have been considered and taken into account in shaping and refining the reform proposals described in this document.

The reform commitments for TAFE NSW aim to transform Institutes’ business and governance framework so they can meet the needs of customers, communities and enterprises, by:

- delivering wide ranging and responsive products and services rapidly and effectively to diverse markets and students
- expanding the skills of teachers, leaders and other staff to diversify and personalise services and contribute to TAFE’s competitive advantage
- working closely with enterprises, translating information and feedback to respond quickly and to deliver leading edge services
- investing in new products and services
- integrating flexible teaching and learning technology, business management systems, infrastructure and administrative practices
- simplifying and streamlining internal compliance and quality assurance processes and systems to support a risk managed, service-focussed culture
- responding quickly to the competitive environment, anticipating change and planning for success.
This document summarises the responses received throughout the consultation on the seven discussion themes outlined in the November document ‘TAFE NSW: Doing Business in the 21st Century- Proposals for consultation’.

Each section covers:

- ‘What you said’: giving a broad overview of the content of responses, including support for, concerns or disagreement with the directions of the November proposals

- ‘Changes to the proposals’: highlighting significant changes to proposals or answers to common questions about the original concepts

- ‘Where are we going now?’: outlining redevelopment of the proposals following respondents’ input or giving more detail on how the proposals are being developed.

Section 4 (p23) presents a new model of the proposed functions to support TAFE NSW Institutes in the implementation of the reform commitments.
3.1 Vision for TAFE NSW doing business in 21st century

November proposal: The vision for TAFE NSW in the 21st Century sees customers driving the service and business responses delivered across TAFE NSW …. Institutes will take on a renewed role in leading service solutions for individual learners and enterprises.

What you said

Generally responses considered the proposed vision for TAFE NSW as refreshing, timely and essential for TAFE’s future development. People were positive about the need for a reinvigorated TAFE focus on the needs of individuals and businesses as well as the adoption of new ways of operating in the knowledge era.

What you said

Generally responses considered the proposed vision for TAFE NSW as refreshing, timely and essential for TAFE’s future development. People were positive about the need for a reinvigorated TAFE focus on the needs of individuals and businesses as well as the adoption of new ways of operating in the knowledge era.

There was much interest in and support for increased business flexibility for Institutes. Responses also emphasised that Institutes should be proactively interpreting, analysing and responding to local needs, but should continue to collaborate and share the expertise of staff in other Institutes and central support units. People said that state-wide co-operation across TAFE is important.

Importantly, people also want to ensure that the vision strikes the right balance between addressing the needs of individuals and the needs of employers and industry.

Other recommendations suggested for the renewal of the TAFE vision included:

- acknowledging the creative and entrepreneurial ways that many staff currently work at the local level with customers and the need to diffuse these approaches as common practice across the whole organisation
- capturing the importance of community engagement and TAFE’s contribution to multi-agency strategies for education, skill and workforce development, working across local government areas or economic clusters to address regional sustainability and economic regeneration
- ensuring that the interests of many TAFE customers in regional and remote locations and those who own or work in small businesses are supported and that a ‘metro-centric’ and big business focus does not dominate the vision
- recognising and maintaining TAFE’s long history of social equity commitment especially for those who are not easily able to access education and training.
Changes to the proposal

The vision for TAFE NSW will now more strongly reflect its important role in community capacity building as well as economic and workforce development.

A renewed vision incorporates greater emphasis on:

> extending innovative and responsive ways of operating as the standard way of doing business across TAFE

> building economically and socially more resilient communities

> contributing to community well being and social inclusion

> tailoring personalised services for individuals to engage in employment, adapt to organisational and workplace change or pursue personal career aspirations.

Where we are going now

The proposed vision for TAFE NSW in the 21st Century:

envisages TAFE NSW Institutes working actively with people in the local communities and markets they serve with maximum flexibility, committed to delivering innovative services to individuals, enterprises and industry and contributing to the social and economic development of their region.
3.2 Strengthening locally customised responses

November proposals: TAFE NSW will re-direct effort and resources and simplify systems to maximise Institutes’ capability to deliver services more quickly, engage directly with industry and offer customised products and services to meet diverse individual needs.

What you said

There was strong interest expressed for proposals supporting Institutes delivering faster and more flexible training responses and more direct delivery of national Training Packages. Responses agreed with Institutes developing products in a timely manner to meet the needs of their customers. The more direct use of Training Packages was seen to allow greater flexibility, extend options and increase the relevance of programs to workplace requirements.

Respondents pointed out that most teachers across TAFE NSW are already working directly with Training Packages to customise training programs together with learners and employers. It was recommended that mechanisms be put in place to share resources and ideas across Institutes, colleges and sections.

The consultation with industry and trade unions emphasised that some industry sectors, where NSW legislative and licensing arrangements apply, require a more uniform, whole of state approach to the delivery of qualifications.

Increased local responsiveness was seen to strengthen and extend the professionalism of TAFE staff. It was also seen as positive in enhancing TAFE’s critical role in supporting regional economic and community development. Some were worried about this increasing teachers’ work and questioned how they would be supported in this role.

There were also strong views that the benefits of local customisation need to be balanced against the risk of duplication of effort. Issues were raised about the need to maintain consistency of outcomes and quality of delivery. At the same time people recognised customers often want skill sets rather than full qualifications.

The proposal to refocus central curriculum support through a more integrated service directly linked to Industry Skills Councils (ISCs) was broadly supported by TAFE and industry respondents, although many did not support the proposed title of TAFE Training Services. The need for a strong customer service culture and the development of service delivery standards and customer satisfaction measures for this area was supported. Industry consultations emphasised effective communication strategies to disseminate good practice across the TAFE system.

Access and General Education was perceived by some to have been omitted in the proposed model. People stressed a large proportion of students undertake courses in this area which does not align to an ISC.

The streamlining of quality assurance systems and the simplification of systems and processes was strongly supported. The ‘compliance burden’ was a theme often raised by respondents. TAFE internal systems and processes were often identified as a barrier to Institute flexibility. Responses acknowledged that the Course Information System (CIS) would need substantial overhaul and its functions and fields simplified to support new approaches to service delivery.
Changes to the proposal

> A wide range of resources and ongoing central support will back up teachers in their work of customising qualifications at the local level

> A new Teachers’ Portal web service will be introduced in 2008 to make TAFE resources readily available to all teachers

> New IT and professional support arrangements and simpler internal processes will decrease teacher workloads and duplication of effort across TAFE

> Model training programs will guarantee consistency in delivering outcomes to meet industry regulatory and legislative requirements

> The new integrated curriculum support function will be called ‘TAFE Training and Education Support’ to reflect the significant education mission and service nature of its business

> There will be identifiable support to Institutes for Access, General Education and Quality Assurance.

Where we are going now

Delivering faster and more flexible training responses:

The new approach will mean a fundamental shift in the way national Training Package qualifications are delivered by Institutes. TAFE NSW will no longer centrally approve ‘courses’ on the Course Information System (CIS) before introducing a Training Package qualification. The new approach will be supported by TAFE Training Package Guides which will provide resources and guidance to teachers on how Training Package qualifications can be delivered, without limiting the flexibility allowed for within the Package.

The Training Package Guides and associated resources will be made available through a web based Teachers’ Portal. The Guides will not prescribe how qualifications are to be delivered. They will include samples and exemplars of a wide range of learning resources to support the delivery of quality outcomes. They will provide model training programs and training and assessment strategies to satisfy legislative and/or licensing arrangements, where industry requires a more consistent approach.

Designing training solutions together with learners and employers:

The approach recognises Institutes as Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) with responsibilities under the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) to deliver quality outcomes consistent with Training Package requirements while still needing to customise training programs to meet learner and employer needs.

Under Standard 1 of the AQTF 2007, an RTO must provide quality training and assessment across all of its operations. This standard includes a requirement to develop strategies for training and assessment to meet the requirements of the relevant training package or accredited course, in consultation with relevant industry and community stakeholders.

Because there will now be no centrally approved courses, Institutes will have the same level of flexibility and capacity as other RTOs to customise qualifications from Training Packages.
Customising to suit local needs:
Teaching will be directly supported by resources and services which facilitate quality learning outcomes. The development of TAFE Training Package Guides is consistent with approaches used in other States and Territories and will enable access to a greater range of learning resources and support material than is currently available. Duplication will be minimised through an enhanced capacity to share best practice through the Teachers’ Portal and access both TAFE NSW developed and nationally available training and education resources.

Making systems and processes work for Institutes:
The Course Information System (CIS) will be reduced to include only the core business functions of enrolment, completion, reporting and issuing testamurs. Essential data to support these requirements would be entered on CIS for all qualifications from a Training Package within weeks of it becoming available for delivery thus facilitating more timely training responses by Institutes. Learning resources will move to the Teachers’ Portal.

The Teachers’ Portal will facilitate easy access to Training Package Guides and resources. There is potential for the storage and management of training and assessment strategies to assist sharing across Institutes and support management of scope of registration. The interface with the National Training Information Service (NTIS) III is also proposed when it becomes available. This will significantly reduce effort required to manage Training Package information.

There will be a one on one alignment of TAFE NSW enrolment codes for all qualifications and skill sets contained in a national Training Package. This will also allow phasing out of TAFE NSW courses approved to deliver a Statement of Attainment from a Training Package and establish a generic enrolment code which will allow a customised Statement of Attainment to be developed by Institutes.

Using expertise differently:
Support to Institutes will be provided through an integrated service aligned to Industry Skills Councils (ISCs) to replace the current Curriculum Centre approach. Access and General Education and Quality Assurance expertise will be included with services aligned to the ISCs. The alternative title of ‘TAFE Training and Education Support’ (TES) is proposed to better reflect the full range of services to be provided.

A central mission of TES will be to enhance capacity within Institutes to deliver flexible and responsive training products and services that meet learner and employer needs. Services to Institutes would include learning resource development, quality assurance services, and professional development and advisory services.

Service and performance standards for TES will be defined by its key customers—Institutes, government and industry. Both regional and metropolitan locations for TES are envisaged, with virtual project work becoming a strong feature of future business arrangements in keeping with TAFE 21st century service models.
3.3 Building a new relationship with industry and enterprises

**What you said**

Responses strongly supported more direct relationships between Institutes and local enterprises and a greater focus on up-skilling existing workers. Industry consultations acknowledged their workforce development as a major priority in addressing the skills challenges impeding industry growth and the vision of a more collaborative business approach between TAFE and enterprise partners.

Respondents emphasised the need for system and other process improvements to free up teacher time to respond faster and more effectively to changing employer needs. Many teaching staff indicated they needed skills and strategies to broaden services that go beyond formal training with enterprises and to integrate the day to day operations of industry.

There was strong agreement that TAFE NSW should continue its delegation to accredit courses in areas not covered by national Training Packages. This, together with Institutes’ delegation to vary their own scope of registration, was identified as an area of strategic advantage for TAFE in a competitive training market.

Many respondents argued for an outcomes and/or risk based audit approach to be developed to encourage innovation and new ways of doing business. However there was a tension in responses urging consistency across TAFE and the need to support compliance. Other responses encouraged greater emphasis on Institute responsibility to ensure AQTF standards are met.

Submissions agreed the strength of the TAFE NSW brand is widely recognised and well understood by industry and the community. Yet responses acknowledged that TAFE Institutes now compete for both public and private training resources with other RTOs and education institutions within a diverse training market. There was support for TAFE Institutes being able to position themselves more individually in this market and highlight their capabilities to their customers.
Changes to the proposal

> ‘TAFE Training and Education Support’ will provide peak industry, community, professional and other bodies with a contact point on whole of state, industry, regulatory or other developments

> The proposed ‘Customer Support’ area will back Institutes in delivering more learner and customer-centred services

> There will be an ongoing support role for quality assurance, accreditation of TAFE courses together with local Institute management of variation of scope and continuing AQTF obligations

> The National Business Office and DET International will merge to provide large organisations a single point of entry into TAFE NSW both nationally and internationally

> There will be an ongoing corporate TAFE function to support the management and promotion of the TAFE NSW brand in line with Institute branding and positioning strategies

Where we are going now

Engaging with industry:
Many teachers across TAFE NSW are already regularly engaging directly with enterprises and delivering customised training responses. In order to expand the proportion of teachers undertaking this role, professional development programs and systems improvements will be put in place to improve support mechanisms for teachers.

The proposed approach includes an increased focus for teachers in interpreting Training Packages and contextualising training and assessment strategies to meet enterprise and learner needs.

Leading and innovating:
Streamlined support and processes will free up Institutes to better engage with industry and business innovations. The proposed ‘Training and Education Support’ (TES) function will provide a range of resources and professional support services for teachers to extend their capability in this role.

TES will provide peak industry, community, professional and other bodies with continued access to a central point of contact for TAFE NSW.

While industry bodies will still engage directly with Institutes on local training delivery, TES will provide a liaison point on state-wide industry education and training issues and project teams aligned to ISCs will provide advice to Institutes. This will also be a contact point for regulatory and other bodies such as VETAB, the National Quality Council and the National Audit and Registration Agency.

A ‘Customer Support’ function is proposed to provide stronger corporate capability for Institutes to drive the information, communication, marketing, knowledge management and systems needs of more personalised and customer driven service delivery by TAFE Institutes.

Supplying a single entry point for business:
The merging of the National Business Office and DET International will provide an effective way of capturing and managing the business from large clients with a national and international presence. Large organisations advise they want consistency in product, pricing and delivery and simple contact points for client management. The single TAFE entry point for large corporations provided by the proposed Business function will work collaboratively with Institutes to ensure effective roles and relationships in managing the business.

Improved commercial intelligence and market research support to Institutes
will be provided by the merged body to assist Institutes to develop commercial strategies and target key markets both nationally and internationally.

**Focussing on outcomes:**
The introduction of AQTF 2007 provides an opportunity for more streamlined quality assurance processes across TAFE NSW. The revised standards have been simplified and focus on the quality of services and outcomes being achieved for clients rather than the inputs used to get there. This means that RTOs have more flexibility in demonstrating how their individual approaches provide quality training outcomes for their clients.

The revised standards have a greater focus on Institutes as RTOs demonstrating quality outcomes and engagement with learners and employers to meet local needs. New business approaches within TES will underpin more streamlined quality processes across all areas of regulation.

Institutes as RTOs are wholly responsible for meeting AQTF and Training Package requirements and demonstrating compliance with the AQTF standards. TES will provide resources and services which support Institutes but will not manage or mandate approaches to compliance.

The VETAB delegation to accredit courses will continue to be managed centrally through TES and the TAFE Accreditation Council. The delegation to vary scope of registration will be managed locally by Institutes with capacity to demonstrate evidence of compliance through a shared web portal. This approach will help to simplify and fast track adding qualifications to scope and help Institutes respond more quickly to customer needs.

**Marketing a ‘new look’ for TAFE NSW Institutes:**
The continual development of the local identity of Institutes as responsive providers of training services unique to the areas they serve is fundamental to their business sustainability.

Many Institutes are establishing a new brand image, within the parent TAFE NSW brand, to maximise their success and sustainability. Maintaining Institutes’ brands will help to ensure our customers understand the full range of their local Institutes’ capabilities to customise and deliver training in the workplace and through flexible approaches.

There will be an ongoing TAFE corporate role to support the TAFE NSW brand. The alignment of information and marketing functions in the proposed ‘Customer Support’ area will reinforce the presence of both TAFE NSW and Institute brands and ensure a more targeted approach to the use of resources.

**Establishing a reputation as an agent of workforce development**

Delivering more training and services in the workplace will help to forge a closer relationship between TAFE Institutes and enterprises, and enhance the potential for TAFE to contribute to enterprise workforce development. Institutes can support this role by working closely with enterprises to help identify their training needs, undertake workplace skills analysis, utilise recognition of prior learning (RPL) and customise training to specific enterprise needs.

There are already many highly regarded examples of TAFE Institutes working jointly with the enterprises in this way to address the challenges of corporate change. The next step is to embed this approach across TAFE so it becomes common practice.
3.4 Implementing personalised learning services

November proposals: All TAFE NSW Institutes need the capacity and capability to deliver a full range of learning solutions for learners and customers in regional, national and global markets.

What you said

Respondents generally supported the need for change to ensure TAFE NSW’s continued competitiveness and growth in the VET marketplace. The concept of Institutes offering a full range of flexible and personalised learning solutions for customers was also supported in many submissions.

Respondents were keen to increase current levels of flexible delivery, online delivery and blended options for students and to utilise available expertise, resources and infrastructure across TAFE to accelerate personalised learning.

There were divided views about proposals on how to support this direction.

Leveraging of OTEN systems was a strong recurrent theme supported in many submissions. Institutes wish to gain access to OTEN’s Student Administration and Management (SAM) and Online Learning Support (OLS) systems to support expansion of their blended learning capability.

But there was mixed opinion about delivery of traditional distance learning by Institutes. Some see distance education as a valuable option to provide a more complete solution to their customers. Other perspectives are that traditional distance education as offered by OTEN is one end of the flexible delivery continuum. There was a view in submissions that TAFE needs to expand a wide range of flexible options suited to varying individual need. Some thought it better to adopt distance education selectively across TAFE Institutes according to specialisations and market need.

OTEN staff responses emphasised the specialist nature of distance education and that the proposals risked an erosion of TAFE NSW commitment to, and expertise in distance education. Responses also outlined the commercial exposure of any changed business models for distance delivery, particularly where there is a close relationship with industry associations, community organisations or government agencies.

Other submissions noted the important market share that TAFE NSW retains in this delivery mode, typically in thin markets.

Submissions commented on the strong market recognition of the OTEN brand but queried whether this is an appropriate ‘flagship’ to drive and expand a much broader and diverse suite of personalised service delivery across TAFE NSW. Submissions reflected the need to develop a corporate identity for TAFE as a leader of flexible learning that is compatible with and assists the emergence of Institutes’ own personalised service brands.

The ongoing rationale of separate RTO identity for OTEN emerged as an issue in the consultations. Discussions raised the need to continue capitalising on the strength of OTEN’s reputation as a provider of open training but to reassess the branding and marketing of blended and personalised learning in light of all Institutes’ roles in flexible delivery.

There was positive recognition in submissions of the potential synergy and compatibility...
learning technologies system support to Institutes for increased personalised service delivery across TAFE NSW

> OTEN’s flexible enrolment and learner management systems will be immediately shared across TAFE Institutes

> A collaborative TAFE NSW ‘Open Learning’ website will be an access, self-service and marketing point for a range of flexible learning options across all Institutes.

Where we are going now

Mainstreaming OTEN capability:

OTEN’s flexible enrolment capacity (SAM), learner management systems (OLS), resources and services will be made available across TAFE from 2008/09 to provide all Institutes with the systems they need as they increase their blended delivery offerings. This system capability will become part of the proposed ‘Customer Support’ learning technologies function.

Extending personalised and e-learning services:

Trialling of partnership arrangements between OTEN and Institutes will investigate the extension of support for non campus based flexible learning options across NSW. Partnerships will be based on State strategic priorities, Institute specialisations or niche market needs. These trials will bring together the best of OTEN and Institutes’ skills and resources to expand personalised learning using OTEN flexible options across the TAFE Institutes, especially in rural and regional areas.

The specialist distance education delivery role for OTEN will continue with Western Sydney Institute’s support. The separate RTO status of OTEN will be reviewed and merged into Western Sydney Institute. All Institutes will be able to increase the development of their own personalised and flexible delivery specialisations and brands and be better supported though OTEN’s system capability.

Growing commercial e-business:

The TAFE NSW ‘Open Learning’ website will serve as a promotional approach for all Institutes’ capability as personalised and flexible learning options.

Changes to the proposal

> Shifts to Institutes of OTEN’s course offerings will be trialled through partnerships between OTEN and Institutes in a range of both niche and strategic flexible learning markets. These will be aligned to local specialisations to broaden the suite of flexible delivery options across TAFE

> OTEN’s separate RTO status will be phased out as all Institutes’ profiles and markets in personalised and flexible delivery expand

> The specialisation of distance education and the OTEN distance brand will be retained. Western Sydney Institute will continue to provide corporate backup to OTEN

> The proposed ‘Customer Support’ area will include...
delivery leaders. It will also operate to market Institutes’ diverse and expanding flexible course offerings and to grow their e-businesses nationally and internationally.

**Leading personalised learning and knowledge services:**

The proposed ‘Customer Support’ function will provide a range of business and learning technology systems, knowledge management and other operational support services to Institutes. This service will underpin TAFE Institutes as leaders of personalised, customer-centred information and flexible learning using contemporary information practices, choice, user engagement and market design to adapt services around the customer.

**Upskilling staff:**

High priority will go to developing staff skills to contextualise and to manage personalised learning programs tailored to meet local customer needs. Developing skills to effectively utilise OTEN systems, resources and learning technologies will be prioritised through trials across Institutes.
3.5 Strengthening the approach to equity support services

November proposal: Expertise and support for equity services will be incorporated and strengthened in all central teams to complement the core function of Institutes.

What you said

Many submissions noted a strengthened and reinvigorated approach to equity support services across TAFE NSW was important and understood the intention of the concepts. They felt the proposals were consistent with the need to integrate equity expertise into all aspects of TAFE business.

At the same time, the majority of responses argued the proposal was risky because a coordinated approach across business teams might be difficult to achieve. TAFE’s leadership on equity matters and support to Institutes could suffer.

Many external stakeholders noted TAFE’s significant achievements in relation to successfully supporting people at the margins of the labour market, particularly those of diverse backgrounds, and did not wish to see this diminish. Stakeholders were worried the proposal might impact on the quality of Institute services to students, erode TAFE’s commitments on equity issues and lead to reduction in specialist expertise.

In some instances, stakeholder submissions reflected a lack of understanding of the advisory roles played by central equity support units compared with the integral part equity service delivery plays in an Institute’s business, as strongly reflected in Institute performance agreements.

Staff and external submissions frequently proposed an ongoing core of expertise for advice on Outreach, Multicultural, Disabilities and Gender initiatives. At the same time, submissions recognised the limitations of the current service model and specialisations because of the current complex interdependencies involved in social disadvantage in Australia today.

A number of submissions noted the significance of unemployment, low income, social distress and poor health as compounding barriers affecting participation and outcomes in education and training. Submissions argued the re-positioning of TAFE NSW needs to be founded on a renewed focus on strategic community partnerships to provide more effective vocational education and training pathways to employment.

Submissions also pointed out that an omission in the proposals was a mechanism to forge stronger connections between the TAFE 21st Century engagement with industry, enterprises and communities and broader Aboriginal education and training policy.

Some submissions advocated a shift to a ‘social inclusion model’ of delivering equity support services in TAFE that includes the issues of poverty, marginalisation, the shift from welfare to work and increased labour force participation. Such a move, it was argued, would complement current directions in social policy and recognition in government programs of the multiple dimensions of disadvantage.
Changes to the proposal

> A central TAFE co-ordination and liaison point will be retained comprising specialist equity expertise. It will lead equity policy development, strategic partnerships and programs to address disadvantage and increase workforce participation.

> A ‘Social Inclusion Unit’ will be established. It will also advocate a social inclusion model of delivering equity support services.

Where we are going now

**Focusing on ‘social inclusion’:**
A Social Inclusion unit will be established as a key centre of expertise to redirect and reinvigorate TAFE’s equity policy, strategy, partnerships and programs to support new directions in social policy, training and workforce participation, and community capacity building.

**Strengthening equity support:**
The new unit will adopt a project based approach to work to enable the flexibility and capability to address new and emerging priorities and to ensure Institutes are prepared and well supported. A business plan and service agreement on annual priorities for the unit will be developed by a reconfigured sub committee.

Taking a whole of business approach to equity:
Institutes will work with the new unit to develop a service framework for equity support that utilises social inclusion policy and strategy as a core business approach. The Social Inclusion unit will work with designated officers in planning, performance review, product development, TAFE workforce development and strategic directions on equity issues.
3.6 Investing in TAFE NSW staff

November proposals: Our teachers and support staff are the foundation of flexible and personalised services for TAFE NSW customers – both individuals and enterprises.

What you said

There was widespread support among respondents for proposals promoting an increased emphasis and prioritisation of TAFE Workforce Development in general and expanded training opportunities for staff to develop their skills and potential.

Comments accepted the underlying theme of the TAFE 21st century vision is one of rejuvenation of TAFE – a renewal of energy, and emphasised the importance of TAFE workforce development as essential for enabling new ideas and new ways of doing business.

Submissions agreed it is vital to build staff skills and confidence in the use of new learning technologies, management of flexible learning, engagement with industry and employers and to ensure vocational and industry currency remains a priority. Some commented that it is important to equip TAFE staff to act as flexible learning facilitators to respond to the more demanding and discerning customers in the 21st Century VET market place.

Respondents commented that as the TAFE workforce ages and the profile of TAFE services changes, effective workforce planning is a key strategy to support the design of relevant and contemporary jobs at the TAFE NSW state level and Institute levels. It also includes development of employment options and practices that attract younger workers and cater for older workers.

The development of TAFE’s future leaders was positively received, with the caveat that such a program is ongoing, (ie is not only for a finite number) and applies a fair and inclusive process to target and support individuals. Others suggested that such a program needs to be accompanied by a broader process of cultural change that cultivates fresh thinking and allows such leaders to innovate, take risks and trial new approaches. People offered practical suggestions for mentoring, coaching, exchanges between Institutes and industry and ideas for practical succession planning and encouragement of younger staff members.

An emphasis in submissions was that flexibility is not only about staff skills and motivation to work differently, but is also dependent on practical solutions to enable this to take place. Concerns were evident in submissions that administrative complications related to access to technology, transport and travel may often constrain engagement with enterprises or community stakeholders.

Simplification of red tape and reducing ‘the grind’ of administration was seen as having equal weighting to professional development to equip staff for change and collaborative work with enterprises and communities.

A significant commitment to resourcing investment in the TAFE NSW workforce sustainability and capability was urged in many responses.
Changes to the proposal

> The commitment to “Invest in TAFE staff” will be strengthened and fast tracked with the allocation of $1.0m million generated from commercial international projects to start implementation of the TAFE NSW Workforce Development Guarantee from Semester 1, 2008. Additional funds will continue to be earmarked to back this high priority over the next three years.

> The TAFE NSW Workforce Development Guarantee (see attachment) will have a suite of programs for Institutes to choose from.

> Institutes will lead and manage funding for implementation of the TAFE NSW Workforce Guarantee drawing on local expertise, knowledge and networks to drive reforms and strategies addressing local workforce needs.

> The ‘Top 100’ leadership program will be introduced. It will be an ongoing commitment and broad based approach to the development of current and future TAFE leaders.

> Capability development featured in the TAFE NSW Workforce Development Guarantee will be for both teaching and non teaching staff.

Where we are going

Investing in our workforce:
Work has commenced to define the capabilities necessary for educational service delivery teams in the 21st Century and to design model programs which Institutes can adapt for their staff. Individual Learning Plans, a hallmark of all high performing organisations, will be offered to all staff.

Investing in the next generation of TAFE NSW leaders:
The ‘Top 100’ program will build on and complement Institute leadership development initiatives to ensure senior leadership capabilities continue to be developed across TAFE. The approach will be customised to individual needs, with ingredients including development of personal leadership qualities as well as effective business, political and strategic capabilities. Learning will relate to individuals’ specific work-based priorities with opportunities such as coaching, mentoring, exchanges, fellowships.

Cross sectoral collaboration between TAFE, industry and higher education will take place so that our TAFE leaders are informed by ‘of the moment’/real world management issues both inside and outside our organisation. A network of upcoming leaders will be nurtured. The program is not limited to 100 people. It will be an ongoing feature of TAFE’s leadership development.

Matching TAFE workforce skills to our business needs:
Strategic analysis at the state level will tackle the issues affecting our ability to plan for, attract and retain high performing staff who meet Institutes’ specific business needs. This work will be a key transitional project to help us create a contemporary employment brand and to address the issues of our ageing workforce.

Backing our teachers with good resources:
Making resources and learning and assessment strategies more readily available through the TAFE portal (see 3.2).

Using technology better:
Reforming systems and reducing complexity so administration is easier (see 3.7).

Supporting TAFE workforce development:
It is proposed that the TAFE workforce development function, positioned with ‘Training and Education Support’, provide strategic analysis, expert advice and project management to ensure the capability development and other planning and retention aspects of the TAFE Workforce Development Guarantee are delivered. Initiatives will include
industry specific and contemporary recruitment marketing, the customisation of the Department’s Capability Framework for key staff groups, building and sustaining TAFE leaders’ networks and significant external connections.

A key role would be to develop capabilities for TAFE leaders. The TAFE workforce development function would also facilitate knowledge sharing across Institutes by supporting Institute Workforce / Organisational Development staff and Departmental Human Resources staff to address whole of business needs.
3.7 Investing in TAFE technologies

November proposals: Our technology systems have to support, not get in the way of our business.

What you said

Responses were overwhelmingly supportive of simplified and accessible TAFE processes and systems, better alignment of separate software applications and investments in technology to assist students and staff.

Respondents commented that there appear to be many, often complicated, systems which ‘hard-wire’ TAFE’s way of doing things. They strongly agreed to a reform, upgrade and simplification of those systems and their associated business processes. Concerns were often expressed that TAFE systems ‘don’t talk to each other’ and this can mean staff effort is duplicated or people have to undertake inefficient ‘workarounds’.

Perceived ‘bureaucratic’ barriers (such as filtering of Web 2.0 access) were commonly raised as blockages to TAFE flexibility and seen as disabling access to useful learning tools or sites.

The Establishment Control (EC) and Classroom Management System (CLAMs) were singled out as requiring ‘a radical overhaul’. The EC system in particular was seen as less relevant to the contemporary role of the VET practitioner.

The most significant change supported in the consultations is the investment in systems to promote the development of e-business strategies to meet the needs of the current generation of learners. Respondents perceived the benefits not only as streamlining customer contacts and interactions but facilitating more flexible delivery models which could support students and employers who want to study or access services away from the campus or outside standard semester arrangements.

Submissions supported the need for TAFE to embrace changes in educational technologies as long as appropriate support and training for these systems is in place, particularly for the ICT staff responsible for installing, configuring and supporting any newly customised technology or applications.

Some submissions noted the varying business approaches across Institutes and emphasised the importance of designing any future system solutions to meet the individual Institute requirements for greater flexibility and business autonomy. This was seen as important in meeting TAFE’s 21st Century vision.

External stakeholders remarked that investment in technologies needs to be balanced with more effective knowledge management and sharing of expertise and best practice across the organisation.

Numerous staff submissions argued for greater, or in some cases, simpler access to shared resources such as laptops and data projectors which are seen as ‘21st century ICT basics’.

An overall commitment to resourcing the investment in improved TAFE technologies, applications as well as hardware and software currency was urged by many respondents.
Changes to the proposal

> The commitment to simplify and develop accessible TAFE processes and systems has commenced with the allocation of $4.5M in 2007/08. An intensive and comprehensive redesign program is underway. Significant additional funds to be invested over the 08/09-09/10 period are earmarked to back this high priority.

> Immediate systems fixes in 2008 for improved online customer services

> An interim (2008/09) systems solution for managing personalised learning will be available across all Institutes through the ‘scaling –up’ of OTEN’s SAM/OLS

> A longer term solution (2009) will be the introduction of a new Virtual Learning Environment

> The EC system will be phased out. An alternative management approach to the EC process for full time teachers will be trialled across all Institutes in 2008 with a view to its overhaul and eventual discontinuation.

Where we are going now

Making it easier for customers:
Web-based ‘self service’ is fundamental to 21st Century customer relations. For TAFE, this means applying, enrolling and paying, submitting assessments, getting results or checking credit for past learning over the internet. This enables universal access to systems and services and also supports a more mobile TAFE workforce, facilitating more enterprise based assessment and delivery.

The services and system fixes available in 2008/09 include:
• access to eServices for employers of apprentices and trainees
• automated credit for past TAFE studies
• enrolment online for students in commercial courses and application for FEE-Help
• enrolment and payment online for new apprentices and trainees in early 2009, with all other student cohorts following shortly after
• an e-recognition service from early 2009
• real time student payment and receipting with Web Cash Register.

The TAFE Virtual Learning Environment will provide learners with easier access to learning resources.

Supporting student learning:
Teachers will have access to more effective tools for individually monitoring and advising learners of progress. Initially, the student tracking and progress management components of the OTEN student learning and management system (SAM) and Online Learner Support (OLS) portal will be made available to Institutes.

In the longer term, the TAFE Virtual Learning Environment will provide a contemporary framework supporting learning. It will include communication and collaboration tools like Web 2.0 and easy learner access to rich media learning resources (videos, digital stories, podcasts) that can be provided on demand rather than having to be downloaded and played on a user’s computer. The TAFE Virtual Learning Environment will also provide a capability for more online assessment and submission of digital evidence.

Enabling easy access and sharing of learning resources:
A new portal to support teachers in developing and accessing training and assessment strategies and resources will be available in 2008. This will complement a simplified Course Information...
System and access to other repositories such as TaLe.

The TAFE Virtual Learning Environment will enable teachers to easily create learning resources. This will also enable teachers to find and incorporate resources into learner support sites quickly and simply. It will reduce barriers that currently exist for teachers making learning resources available to students.

Web filtering management for TAFE will be devolved to Institutes during 2008. This will enable teachers and learners to access appropriate resources such as Facebook according to Institute needs.

**Freeing up teachers and head teachers:**

Streamlining of processes and simplification of systems will enhance delivery and reduce administration. The aim is to overhaul and eventually discontinue the use of any unnecessary forms and processes. For example, the Establishment Control (EC) system and the administrative burden of paper based recognition processing will be addressed. The e-recognition service combined with automated credit transfer will reduce this workload.

Trialling of new management approaches to discontinue ECs for full time teachers will commence immediately in all Institutes.

Enhancements to CLAMS available in March 2008 will provide improvements in student tracking and support the use of mobile phone and personal digital assistant (PDA) technology. The longer term solution of individual student learning management is in train.

Automation of the process for students enrolling across calendar years will be in place before the end of 2008. This will reduce the need for time consuming workarounds and unnecessary data entry by teachers. The implementation of a more flexible student information system is in train.

**Redirecting resources:**

The renewed focus on customer and learner support as well as the high priority and levels of investment in information and learner management systems requires strengthened support arrangements and a different corporate team configuration. A ‘Customer Support’ function will lead state wide development of personalised, customer - centred business, marketing, information and knowledge services and flexible learning support.
4. Further development of concept model

The following conceptual model describes reconfigured functions to better support TAFE NSW Institutes.
5. Next steps

This summary of the consultation outcomes and further development of proposals in ‘TAFE NSW Doing Business in the 21st Century’ is part of a series of communication and consultation opportunities that will continue to be available to staff and other industry and community stakeholders.

You can make comments on this document through the TAFE NSW dedicated email address at 21C@det.nsw.edu.au.

Consultations will continue with the Teachers Federation and Public Service Association, industry, other trade unions and peak community groups.

A further communication document with more detail and team functions to support the renewed vision for TAFE NSW and more flexible approach to delivering services will be released in March.
What is actually ‘guaranteed’ in the TAFE NSW Workforce Development Guarantee?

The TAFE NSW Workforce Development Guarantee gives a commitment to our own staff that we will prioritise the development of their capabilities to meet the challenges of the 21st Century vocational education and training environment. TAFE NSW and Institute resources will collectively provide professional development for 3500 staff each year for three years. Key capabilities for initial investment will be:

- interpreting and customising Training Packages
- delivering workforce development services to enterprises
- using technologies to do business
- meeting the needs of diverse learners

The TAFE NSW Workforce Development Guarantee gives a commitment to industry and our communities that we will adapt our workforce to meet their service needs. Institutes will design and implement workforce plans that respond to the changing needs of learners and employers in their local markets.

The TAFE NSW Workforce Development Guarantee gives a commitment to our head teachers and managers that we will assist them to meet the labour shortages that they – like industry – currently face. This will include using innovative recruitment approaches and employment options to attract high performers from different generations and different industries. TAFE NSW is committed to developing a contemporary and attractive TAFE employment brand so that we can compete with other industries and VET providers for great staff.

The TAFE NSW Workforce Development Guarantee gives a commitment to our stakeholders that we will actively develop the future leaders of TAFE NSW through a ‘Top 100 Program’ that can be accessed by potential leaders from anywhere in TAFE NSW.

Our determination to ‘do something about’ our systems to free up our people also underpins this guarantee. We are committed to having a workforce that is able to focus on innovation and service.
The workforce needs new, or newly emphasised, skills and capabilities to support an innovative economy. Innovation is not a skill or capability of its own – it is the application in a specific context of a combination of skills/capabilities and knowledge.” [Innovation and Business Skills Australia, 2007].

The TAFE NSW workforce is no exception, and the TAFE NSW Workforce Development Guarantee will support practitioners in all Institutes to apply new or current skills in constantly changing contexts.

As part of the Guarantee, new capabilities and ways to develop them locally to meet customer needs, will be articulated and supported. Behind this capability development will be opportunities for staff to develop critical underpinning skills and knowledge, giving them confidence to work differently. To this end, a TAFE-wide professional development initiative is in design.

It is backed by an additional investment of $1.0m million. The first phase, planned to start in Term 1, 2008 will focus on critical capabilities which are being developed and underpinning competencies.

The initiative will draw on Training Package (TP) units so our staff can work towards a nationally recognised qualification. Where a gap analysis indicates that a TP won't meet our needs, an enterprise qualification may be the way forward.

The initiative will be open to both individuals and teams. It will support collaborative teams in Institutes to model the processes and practices they themselves will use when assisting businesses to develop their workforce skills. Recognition of prior learning will be a feature, and a ‘menu of learning options’ will be proposed to maximise accessibility and local relevance.

These units are some of the competency options for the first phase:

- **interpreting and customising Training Packages**
  > TAAENV410B Work effectively in VET
  > TAADES401B Use Training Packages to meet client needs
  > TAASS403B Develop assessment tools
  > TAASS404B Participate in assessment validation

- **delivering workforce development services to enterprises**
  > BSBREL402A Build client relationships & networks
  > BSBCUS402AS Address customer needs
  > TAADES501B Design & develop learning strategies
  > TAADEL502B Facilitate action learning projects
  > TAATASS01B Undertake organisational training needs analysis
  > TAATASS04B Facilitate group processes
  > BSBMKG401b Profile the market
  > BSBMKG413A Promote products and services
Work has also begun on the second phase, drawing on units such as:

- **using technologies to do business**
  - BSBITU203A Communicate electronically
  - BSBEBU401a Review & maintain a website
  - BSBITU203A Create electronic presentations
  - BSBEBUS508A Build a virtual community
  - TAADEL405A Facilitate e-learning
  - TAADES503A Research & design e-learning resources

- **meeting the needs of diverse learners**
  - TAADEL405A Co-ordinate & facilitate distance-based learning
  - TAAENV404A Develop innovative ideas at work
  - TAAENV401B Foster and promote an inclusive learning culture
  - BSBDIV301A Work effectively with diversity

Many Institutes and OTEN have developed resources able to be customised to deliver these units in a flexible and work-based way. These resources will be shared across TAFE NSW.