Mid-year update

12 July 2023

Dear colleagues,

Welcome to the second semester/term 3 in this cold and wet season. There has been much happening in the first half of the year and we know you will already be into planning and offering programs servicing our learners for the second semester.

As you are aware during term 2, we have conducted pulse sessions, received advice from regional councils, the sector advisory committee and consulted with other stakeholders within the sector. On behalf of the Board, I would like to extend our thanks to the large number of people who have given up their valuable time in providing us with information on a wide variety of matters impacting delivery of programs and services to our learners.

Whilst feedback has been very positive, there have been requests for the Board to provide further information and updates on some of its key strategic priorities and initiatives. In response to these requests this Mid-Year update contains information on a number of priorities mentioned in the consultations which had reports provided to the Board meeting held on 29 June 2023.

Learn Locals and Industry

The first is the rollout of the *Just in Time (JiT) Learn Local Industry Partnerships* initiative. This initiative aims to support Learn Local providers that have a relationship with a local business to develop and deliver a co-designed pre-accredited Language, Literacy, Numeracy, Employability or Digital (LLNED) training solution to address an immediate business need. The project objective is to provide the right tailored education and training supports to educationally disadvantaged Victorians to either improve their job prospects or to existing workers who are vulnerable to unemployment.

All the Learn Local providers involved in the 25 JiT projects funded since 2021 reported that they intended to continue their partnership with their JiT employer and create new partnerships with other employers. They also endorsed the usefulness of the JiT initiative in supporting engagement with industry. Many of the JiT Projects had delivered their bespoke pre-accredited program at least once and up to three times to varying numbers of learners to assess program validity/finalise resources.

Of the over 210 learners who have participated in a Learn Local course developed by the JiT project, more than half reported gaining employment after participating, with many going on to further study. There were also many learners who were existing workers supported to undertake contextualised LLNED workplace training 'onsite,' with employers reporting improvements in these workers' skills and

productivity.

JiT application assessments have also been changed in response to sector feedback, from previously occurring every 2 months, to an assessment upon receipt of each application. Please consider submitting an application as there are still Board funds available to support new JiT projects in 2023. Contact your regional office for further information and assistance or use this link to read the [2023 Just in Time Guidelines.](#)

Another initiative aimed at better promotion of good practice between Learn Locals and industry will occur with the '*Engaging Employers'* guide due for release before the start of term 3, and a number of new tools, resources and activities being made available for Learn Locals to support industry engagement, such as the establishment of *Learn Local Industry Practice Networks*.

Stronger by Design

Stronger by Design is one of the most important strategic projects to enhance the quality and impact of pre-accredited provision while retaining its flexibility and responsiveness to learner needs. *Stronger By Design,* also known as *PQF Plus*, builds on the current Pre-accredited Quality Framework model launched in 2013 and services the same needs of adult learners in order to support their journey to further education and employment. Many of the features of the new model are already happening in the sector.

Together with a greater focus on identifying the learner's core skills needs, the updated model will help to clarify what pre-accredited training is, and to identify which learners are most likely to benefit from a pre-accredited program, resulting in better targeting of the Board's investment to Victorians with low levels of LLNED who are most in need of our support.

There is also alignment between the learner-focused Stronger by Design model and the reform agenda currently being pursued by the Commonwealth government in the context of the new National Skills Agreement (a new commitment to improving levels of Foundation Skills nationally) and recognition of the significant role played by community-based providers delivering non-accredited core skills programs. As mentioned in my previous communique, there will be a number of ways that providers will be engaged by the department to progress the implementation of Stronger by Design over coming weeks and months, with more information to follow via Divisional memos.

Learn Local Secure Portal (LLSP)

The Board was pleased to note upcoming changes to the *Learn Local Secure Portal* (LLSP), which was launched in late 2021. The LLSP is an 'Instructure' product developed as an instance of the 'Canvas' Learning Management System (LMS) and was set up under existing infrastructure developed for TAFE institutes to share course content called the 'VET Shared Learning Resources' (VSLR) initiative.

To address limited license numbers and high staff turnover, Learn Locals were initially encouraged to use generic email addresses, allowing multiple trainers to access the system. However, this approach was not feasible for all providers and required ongoing password management by users sharing a single account. Learn Local access has been problematic, and users have reportedly experienced multiple issues including invitation expiry/timeout during the process, password copying errors, and challenges due to part-time staff and high turnover.

To address these issues, the department will be moving away from using EduPass accounts for LLSP access to streamline the account creation process. Instead of the current maximum of two licenses per provider, there will shortly be no restriction on licenses to ensure that all interested Learn Local staff

members will be able to access course materials and professional development hosted on the LLSP. A Divisional memo will be released shortly seeking provider feedback on past and current use via a survey, and releasing a new user guide to ensure access issues are addressed.

Towards a sustainable pre-accredited regional provision model project

The project has two purposes:

> a. To pilot and evaluate a range of alternative models to determine if they result in improved pre-accredited training provision according to need in three communities where there are thin markets, and the embedding of the optimal model to service each of those communities.

> b. To leverage the pilots to inform system-wide sustainable pre-accredited provision models.

To achieve this, pilot projects testing new models have been established in Northern Loddon Mallee (Swan Hill and surrounds), South-West Victoria (Portland, Hamilton and Warrnambool) and East Gippsland, with the following working definition of 'model' being agreed across pilot locations:

"A pre-accredited provision model which specifies provider structure and location, the type and mode of training, and to whom the training is being delivered, noting that the model may be different in different localities due to their unique characteristics."

Pilot project officers operate on the ground in the respective communities and have shared early insights to ensure each model influences and responds to the other pilots. All three pilots have been supported by a local Advisory Group and a coordination and evaluation expert.

Progress across all three pilot locations has been monitored with strategic advice on sustainable models in regional settings to informing Board and major policy considerations. Models being explored include resource exchange or 'clustering,' industry specialisation and industry 'feeder' models.

Evaluation results are likely to influence future overarching policy settings for registration, provision and procurement.

Digital access in local libraries

The project as a partnership between libraries and selected Learn Local providers in the Eastern Metropolitan region and focussed on enabling access to digital resources and technology through the library network plus leveraging government investment in local areas more effectively via resource sharing particularly for Learn Local tutors and learners.

The purpose of the project was to introduce, test and optimise a partnership model between libraries and Learn Local providers in the Eastern Metropolitan region, involving usage of library digital and learning resources and where feasible, enabling the conduct of classes by Learn Locals in the library environment.

At the June 2023 meeting, the Board approved The Digital Access in Local Libraries Final report and in reviewing all the information presented, noted the co-design approach to the development of these resources has been well received. The Board also approved the Digital Access in Local Libraries (DALL) Collaboration Guide and the recommended roll out activities of the Guide state-wide.

Our thanks go to the Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council, and the Learn Local Working Group comprising CIRE Services, Japara Living and Learning Centre, Mountain District Learning Centre, Central Ringwood Community Centre Inc., Pines Learning and the Eastern Regional Libraries. Great

work.

Registration Extension

The Board approved extending the registration for a period of two years for those providers with a current registration expiry date of 31 December 2023 where they have held a pre-accredited delivery contract during the current registration period and continue to meet registration requirements. A Divisional memo on this will be released shortly.

The above is a snapshot of some of the initiatives and does not do justice to the many other areas of work reported on by the department to the Board. It does reflect there is a lot happening in support of our sector led by the department and most often done by the sector for the sector.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to remind you all that the Learn Local Marketplace event on Tuesday 25 July 2023 will be a great opportunity to find out more about the Board's priority projects and initiatives, and tools and resources available to support pre-accredited provision across the state.

Best wishes on behalf of the ACFE Board.

John Maddock

A/Chairperson

Adult, Community and Further Education Board