



**RIVERINA
COMMUNITY
COLLEGE**

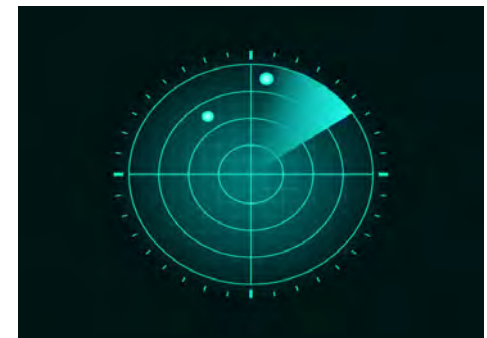
‘SUPPORTING PATHWAYS IN LEARNING AND LIFE’

ACE-NSW NON-ACCREDITED TRAINING

**(TEACHING AND LEADERSHIP RESEARCH PROJECT,
2021 / 2022)**

WHY THE NEED TO RESEARCH?

- How can you improve if you don't know what you're doing wrong?
- The organisation /institution / network that doesn't analyse itself is going to miss important things.
- Little historical focus on this important tool among ACE-NSW colleges (lack of time, money, momentum).



WHAT WAS THE RESEARCH LOOKING INTO?

1. ***Necessity or luxury?*** Non-acc training often seen as the ‘poor cousin’. If that is true, why have it at all?
2. ***Investigate trends /diversity of this type of training*** across the college network
3. ***Assess levels of PD and collaboration*** in the development of non-acc resources
4. ***How are ‘soft skills’ (that are not always taught comprehensively in mainstream VET) taught in non-accredited training*** at a time when they are increasingly important to finding work?



HOW WAS THE RESEARCH CONDUCTED?

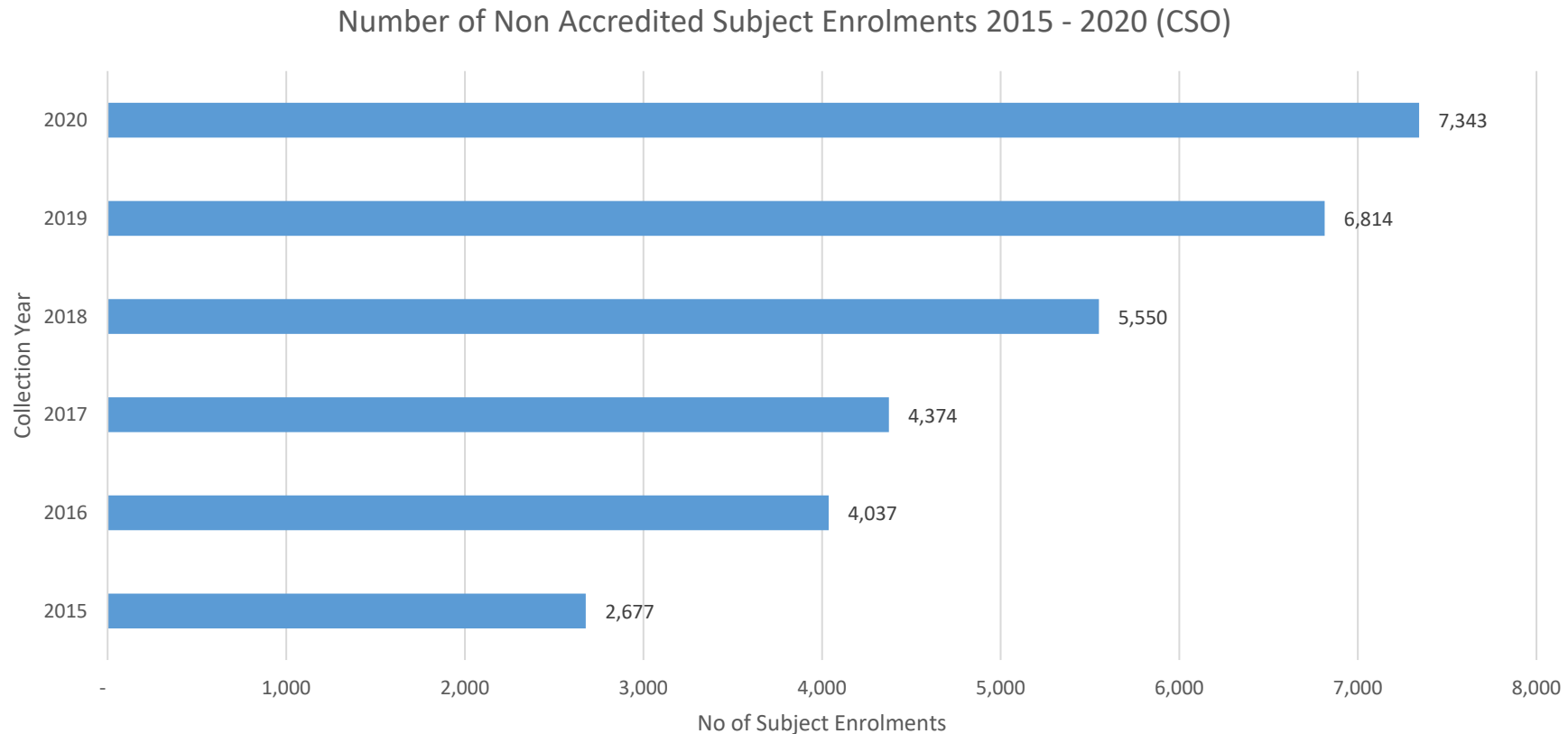
By using four perspectives, then collating these viewpoints:

1. By reviewing relevant literature (*see references*)
2. Interaction with senior ACE staff and relevant industry representatives (interviews); interaction with ACE students (through surveys)
3. Through data analysis of both ACE and NCVER data
4. By using social impact analysis to assess the 'hidden' impact of CSO



WHAT IS NON-ACCREDITED TRAINING ?

‘Semi-formal education designed to aid in the creation of vocational outcomes, but without the formal testing of skills that would normally be part of such a program’



COLLEGE LEADERS SPEAK: THE NEED FOR NON-ACC TRAINING

1. **Re-engaging with learning:** aiding students feel comfortable in a classroom again after long periods away from learning and / or after having had a negative experience with learning.
2. **Building learners' confidence** through a 'gentle' approach to learning



“Without non-accredited training, we wouldn't get very far! Especially the ladies who had come to us who had the anxiety disorders. They would come to class happily, they would learn happily [but] as soon as we said, 'we have to get the assessments from you', they'd disappear for days on end because they would panic ... It's not that they couldn't do the work, they'd been doing the work in class, and they'd even been doing it using the formal books. But, while they were having fun and doing it, there was no pressure on them; as soon as you put the pressure on them [through assessments], they just couldn't cope”.

COLLEGE LEADERS SPEAK: THE NEED FOR NON-ACC TRAINING

3. **Engaging with community:** students connect with others with similar issues and challenges, integrate with the broader community through the program and move forward.
4. **Provide training that cannot be delivered in accredited framework** (e.g. driving test; art therapy)
5. **Entrepreneurialism:** mature students setting up in business who don't want to / don't have the time to complete a qualification.



TRENDS AND PATTERNS: THE DIVERSITY of NON-ACCREDITED TRAINING

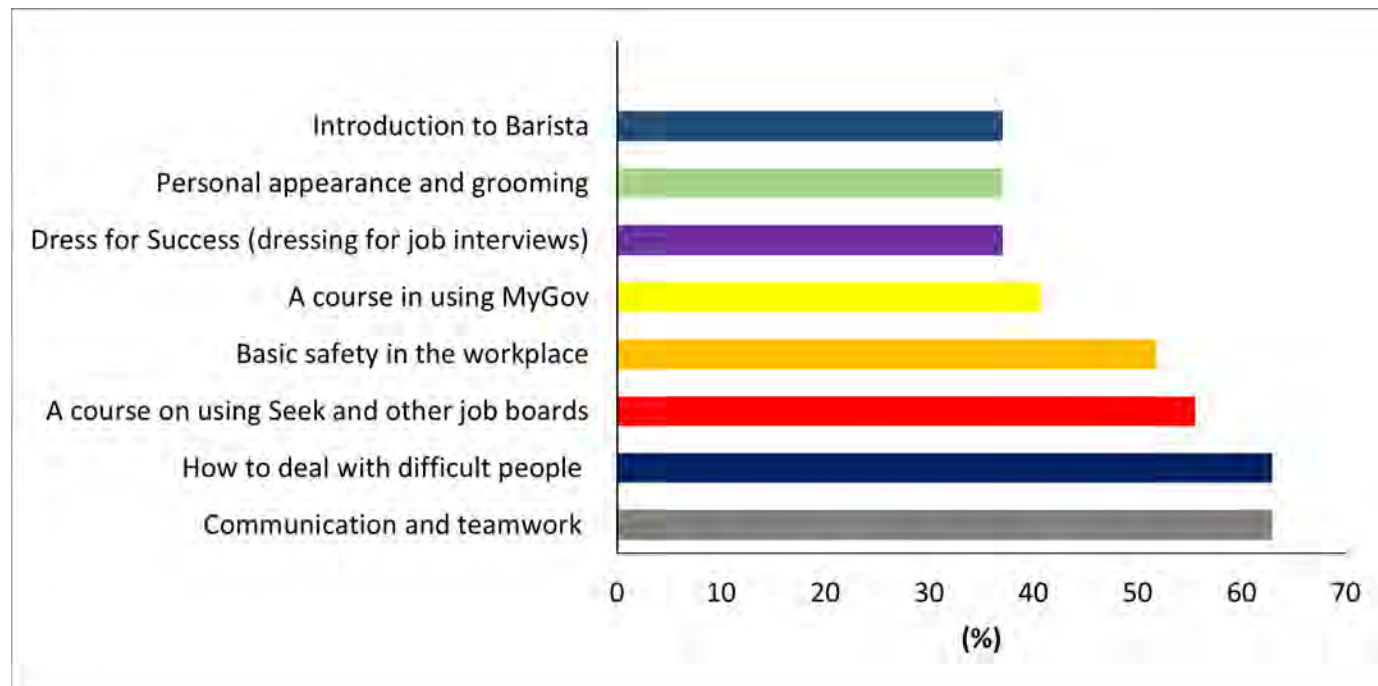
Four main *types* of non-accredited training could be identified:

- **Building self-confidence** : e.g. 'cooking therapy'
- **Literacy and numeracy**: 'English intermediate for CALD'
- **Developing employability**: 'personal grooming'; 'career pathways'
- **Preparation for specific industries or jobs**: 'intro to hotel sector'; mini hospo project' etc.



THE VOICE OF THE LEARNERS

- **Very little difference in the students' minds** between accredited and non-accredited training. Both were regarded as useful; non-accredited training even slightly ahead on some parameters (e.g., lower dissatisfaction rating for non-accredited).
- **Believed the non-accredited training material being used could be improved.**
- **Wanted more courses on aspects of finding work and dealing with others in the workplace**



SOCIAL VALUE: THE 'RIPPLE EFFECT' of ACE PROGRAMS

PUTTING A DOLLAR VALUE ON THE RIPPLE-EFFECT:

A community college wide, mixed training program for 1,000 students from varied age groups undertaking six units of studies in basic computing and English language development. Four units are non-accredited and two are accredited. Assuming all students complete the program, the program takes place in both regional and metropolitan locations (60% of students in a regional location and 40% in a metropolitan location) and assuming total cost of the program is \$3,265,920.

The net benefits of the program amount to **\$9,534,570** or *almost four times* the investment in the program.



EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

“The people [that we assist to gain employment] don’t actually see any positivity in their life, nor do they see that they’re good at anything. They don’t know enough about appearance, health, what a good meal looks like.

Wouldn’t they learn that from TV?

No, they don’t watch TV. They have not been in the socio-economic sphere where that information is available, or, if they have watched it, they don’t think it applies to them. They can’t afford to eat properly. They can’t afford to present themselves correctly, so they don’t understand what work clothes look like. I don’t believe that’s been taught in school these days either, and I think it’s a massive missing component”.(IND:1)

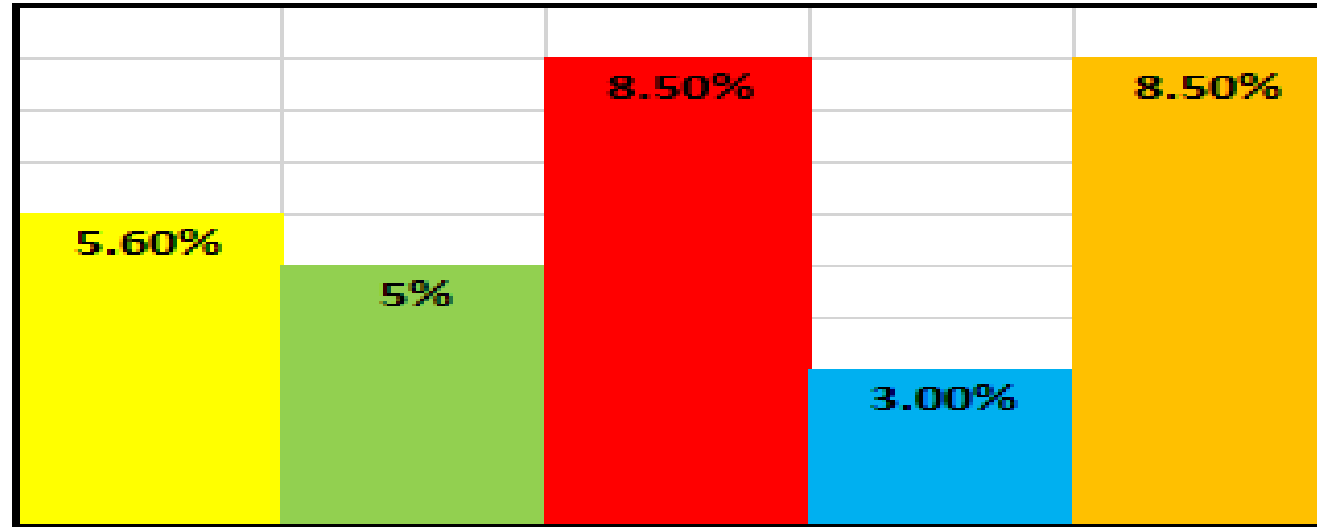
Given this back-drop, there was a huge emphasis by employers / JobActives / GTO’s on soft skills, that they believe our students must have in order to:

- A) Overcome the internal (personal) barriers that prevent them from engaging with the labour market and
- B) Help them overcome the external barriers that stand in their way



EXTERNAL BARRIERS (I): UNEMPLOYMENT IS MUCH HIGHER THAN WE ARE BEING TOLD

To compete for the jobs that are out there, *our students will need an edge.*



5.6% = People registered with Centrelink and on 'Newstart Payments

5%: = People who are unemployed but not registered with Centrelink

8.5% = People who are unemployed but on the disability pension

3% = People who are unemployed but on other benefits (single mum allowance etc.)

8.5% (orange) = Underemployment (earning just a little more than when on benefits)

So, unemployment is probably around 16 -18% of the workforce ... or about 25% if we include underemployment.....

EXTERNAL BARRIERS (II): THE NATURE OF WORK IS CHANGING

Second, they will need an edge *to access a dwindling supply of full-time work.*

1979: 75% of jobs are full time (3 in 4 chance of finding FT work)

2019: Just 45% of jobs are full time (less than 1 in 2 chance of finding FT work)

Particularly if you are mature: Mature age unemployment is lower than youth unemployment *but lasts far longer*, depleting savings and retirement nest-eggs....





LEADERSHIP

TEAMWORK

STRESS RESISTANCE

COMMUNICATION

MOTIVATION

TIME MANAGEMENT

ACTIVE LISTENING

SELF CONFIDENCE

EMPATHY

PERSISTENCE

SO ... HOW ARE WE DOING AND WHERE COULD WE IMPROVE?

- ***Likely to be caught out*** if we fail to recognise the importance of pre-screening students re. their suitability for training.
- ***Likely to be caught out***, no matter how good we are at VET training, if we are still not wholly recognising the value of non-acc training as a precursor to success in VET training and employment.
- ***Mature-age students, as a cohort with specific needs, have often been overlooked*** even though they represent a large proportion of the student body



- ***Not focusing, as a sector, on the hidden (\$\$) value within our programs;*** if we do not recognise this and value it, nobody else will
- ***Need for ‘soft skills’ training on the rise,*** yet, no network-wide attempt to develop resources collaboratively
- ***Not engaging with industry*** to trumpet the value of our non-accredited training
- ***Not paying enough attention to PD around non-accredited training.***
‘Any old trainer will do’ etc.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- That the community colleges *collectively integrate the latest tools for pre-assessing potential students' level of genuine commitment* to studying
- *That we create a recognisable soft skills e-credential that students can 'badge' onto their resumes and social media stream*
- That the colleges find ways to *collaboratively develop a suite of non-accredited resources* for use across the ACE network for **mature students** in the middle of their working life.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Professional development in non-accredited training**, particularly in how to deliver programs in soft skills, should be a key area of focus.
- The colleges should institute **more robust evaluations on the social impact of ACE programs**: a greater emphasis on a broad, return-on-investment (ROI) analysis approach.
- **That the NSW Department of Education:**
 - **Consider greater flexibility in the allocation of non-accredited training** (e.g., a case-by-base application system for higher levels of non-accredited training)
 - **Invest in the opportunities inherent in non-accredited training.**



WHERE TO NOW?

Two non-accredited 'soft skill' training units linked to this program have been developed and are being trialled.

- **Building personal resilience:** 'Going the extra mile: dealing with job loss and successfully finding new employment'
- **Accessing the labour market:** 'Ten secondS to impress: creating resumes that open opportunities'

Once the trial period finishes (6 -8 weeks) these will be distributed to the colleges with trainer guides and class Powerpoints. There will be a ZOOM session on these units and how to use them. Late Sept / Early Oct.



**GO THE EXTRA
MILE. IT'S NEVER
CROWDED.**

QUESTIONS?

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