

# How RTOs Measure and Deliver Quality: An overview with a community education twist

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WITH

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# THE PROJECT

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- ▶ What we aimed to do was explore how providers:
  - Define and measure quality in VET delivery
  - Describe features of high-quality delivery
  - Use quality measures
  - Perceive barriers to quality
  - Suggest what could be done to help them do a good/better job
- We talked to all types of providers and RTOs and their peak bodies, a number of VET 'experts' and bodies concerned with the quality of what providers deliver

# WHAT DOES GOOD QUALITY DELIVERY LOOK LIKE?

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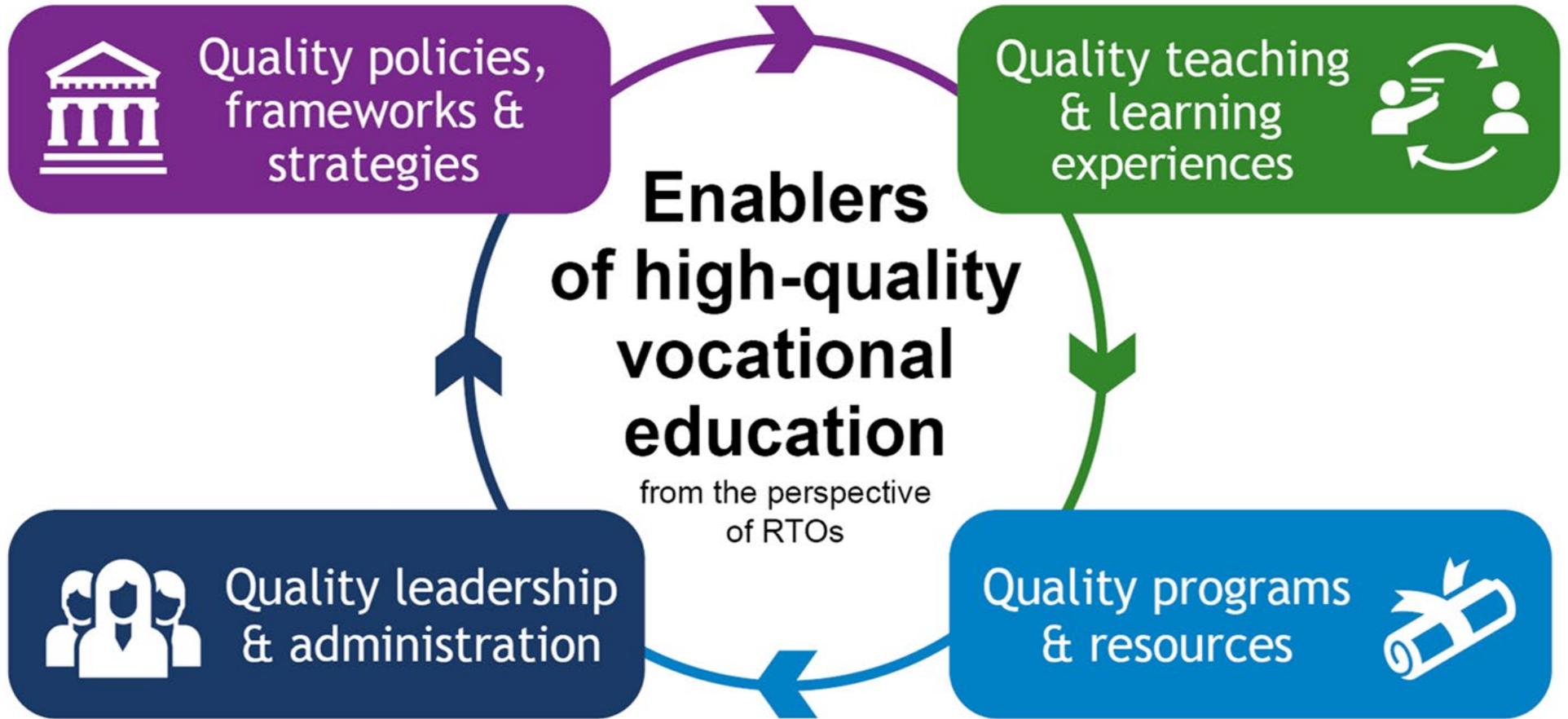
The providers we spoke to tell us that quality delivery:

1. Prepares their students for work and life
2. Develops students' occupational identities
3. Meets the needs & expectations of employers,
4. **Results in employment or other outcomes (and these 'other outcomes' are especially important for community ed. providers!)**
5. **Supports students' personal growth and well-being**
6. Continually adapts to changing circumstances

# THE BIG MESSAGES

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- Finding a definition of delivery quality that suits all provider types and other stakeholders is almost impossible
- How the various types of providers think about delivery quality depends on their purpose & goals, student types, courses and qualifications and context
- **Provider type matters because it determines what is important to them**
- Provider size, breath of profile and 'cultures', and the number of campuses also matter
- A person's role in a provider has a strong bearing on their perceptions of quality
- Providers find it hard to sustain high quality delivery in the current climate



# Quality teaching and learning experiences

- They **MUST** be learner centred, and
  - Based on an 'excellence' mindset
  - Well planned and organised
  - Inspiring and engaging
  - Inclusive and empathetic
  - Contemporary in its use of technologies, pedagogies and (where appropriate) industry knowledge and practices
- They **MUST** also be focused on preparing students for **life** and work **AND**
  - Holistic in their learning approaches, **and especially including the best possible student support!**
  - Flexible
  - Continually improving
- Finally, they need to be collaborative in building and sharing knowledge, resources and good practices within and across community ed and other providers

## Quality programs and resources

- Fit for purpose for students and potential employers
- Effective, current and inclusive
- Well designed
- Based on 21C skills and capabilities of the future – **including foundational skills and learning to learn**
- Possibly available as a pool of master teaching, training and assessment resources
- Continually improved through ongoing evaluation and review

## Quality leadership and administration

- A focus on students, including learning and personal support
- Strong involvement by key groups, including employers when appropriate
- A good understanding of the enablers and constraints of quality delivery
- Support for teachers and trainers, including though high quality CPD
- Support for innovation in delivery approaches
- A productive performance management system linked to comprehensive CPD for provider staff
- Appropriate facilities and infrastructure – and that can mean something special for community ed
- Effective admin systems, including the LMS
- Effective collaboration within and across providers



## Quality policies, frameworks and strategies (at both the national and state/territory levels)

- Supportive policies and strategies to enable high quality delivery
- Stable funding models with adequate funding
- Consistency in govt. funding contracts across jurisdictions (for some)
- Genuine concern for quality assurance and improvement **not just compliance**
- Strategic approaches to CPD for the provider workforce
- Informed by VET's and community education's bodies of research

# AND WHAT ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS?

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- Critically, Language, Literacy, Numeracy and Digital skills (LLND), and employability skills, are the key skills that assist people to get a job and remain employed, look after their mental and physical health, and help them to participate in their community.

AND

- Community education providers are key players in their development

SO

- Foundation skills learners often embark on complex journeys through the VET system, with these involving multiple enrolments in LLND or employment skills programs and, in many cases, other VET programs.
- There are a broad range of reasons why learners enrol in foundation skills programs so that understanding their underlying intention or motivation for enrolling must also be considered when gauging a program's success or otherwise

**NCVER did a report on this recently and you can access that [here](#)**



# ABOUT COMMUNITY ED

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- **It's about taking steps and providing the environment and support** to positively transform the lives of individuals, families and communities.
- **They:**
  - **serve a local need** and reach vulnerable and disadvantaged students
  - **can provide pathways** into TAFE and other studies, and into work
  - **are learner-centred**, small class sizes, personal and student support
  - **are collaborative** with other ACE providers, leveraging collective strengths
  - **are flexible**, agile and quick, and can employ wide range of tools
- **They potentially have the freedom to take risks**

# KEY MESSAGES FROM COMMUNITY ED. PROVIDERS

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- High-quality delivery in ACE is defined as helping students to move to their preferred destination or to a pathway to further learning.
- Quality starts with careful pre-delivery assessment to ensure ‘we know our students, what their needs are and that this is this the right course for them’
- Key foci are providing wrap around services and strong learner support. The quality of facilities is not necessarily a mark of quality delivery and making learning environments ‘homely’ and welcoming is more important to the quality of learning for learners who often feel uncomfortable in formal education settings.
- To judge their quality ACE providers rely heavily on anecdotal information (as well as more formal measures) to monitor the quality of delivery and, importantly, the progress and welfare of students. They ‘feel the vibe’!
- They use benchmarking and collaboration with other ACE providers. Partnerships with local employers and other key stakeholders and community groups are important too

# OTHER KEY POINTS IN JUDGING/MEASURING QUALITY

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- While completion of studies and employment outcomes are often seen as key measures of success for VET programs, this is not necessarily the case for community ed. ones. Getting a job may not be their learners' goal, AND SO
  - policy makers and others need to be wary of making simplistic judgements about the value of community ed programs by measuring 'success' in too simple or limited a way.
  - understanding learners' underlying intentions or motivations for enrolling must be considered when gauging such program's success or otherwise
  - we need to ensure we are conceiving or measuring course outcomes and measures of success comprehensively, fairly and validly

# BARRIERS TO QUALITY

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- Funding - formulae, levels, contract duration and inconsistencies between jurisdictions
- Compliance-driven regulation
- The quality of training packages and the effort and cost of updates
- Difficulty recruiting, retaining and developing teachers
- Limitations of current quality metrics

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# RTO SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO IMPROVE THINGS

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- A national body to promote & support quality delivery
- Funding models that support & incentivise good efficient delivery
- Trust in proven providers to do a good job, while supporting others to improve
- More trust and investment in the professional judgment of teachers
- Better use of the significant body of VET and community education research
- Getting rid of the term 'compliance'



# ACCESSING OUR PROJECT'S PRODUCTS

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We produced two products:

- An occasional paper: [Unpacking the quality of VET delivery](#)

And

- The final report: [Delivering high-quality VET: what matters to RTOs?](#)

And there was also a webinar Melinda and I did that provides an extended overview of the report lasting about 1 hour. Access the presentation and the associated slides are available [here](#) and [here](#) respectively