



**ISS Institute**  
**DET HESG International Vocational Training**  
**Practitioner Fellowships**

**06 September 2017**

# ISS Institute Fellowship Program

This year, Higher Education and Skills Group (HESG) and International Specialised Skills Institute (ISS Institute) offered ten international Fellowships to vocational training practitioners who are employed within the Victorian Government contracted Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) and Adult, Community and Further Education (ACFE) Board registered Learn Local Organisations (LLOs), including TAFEs and private RTOs. The Fellowships aim to develop opportunities within the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector to align with and support the priorities and objectives of Skills First.

These Fellowships are intended to examine innovative approaches that demonstrate potential benefits for, and application in, Victoria. A key outcome of each Fellowship is developing effective approaches for student engagement and participation, quality teaching and learning, employment and industry productivity. Applications were invited for Fellowships that will support the continued development of VET delivery with priority given to 'Developing Quality Education and Training Systems', 'Supporting Disadvantaged Persons through Education and Training' and 'Improving current practice in the VET sector through the implementation of entrepreneurial and innovative approaches'.

After a rigorous application and interview process, ten VET professionals were selected from TAFE, RTO and Learn Local providers. The Fellows were selected based on individual applications, merit, concept, alignment to the identified priority areas and ability to demonstrate a desire to share their learning and experiences across the vocational educational and training sector in Victoria.

The 2017 Fellowships cover the following:

- Priority 1 - 'Developing Quality Education and Training Systems' = 3 Fellowships
- Priority 2 - 'Supporting Disadvantaged Persons through Education and Training' = 4 Fellowships
- Priority 3 - 'Improving current practice in the VET sector through the implementation of entrepreneurial and innovative approaches' = 3 Fellowships

Out of the ten Fellowships awarded:

- Four are from TAFE Institutions
- Three are from Learn Locals
- Three are from RTOs.

We have three males and eight females undertaking the Fellowships (two females are undertaking a joint Fellowship) and the ages spread from late 20s through to early 60s.

The individuals, who are now ambassadors of the Department of Education and Training, ISS Institute and their respective organisations, will pursue a range of skill, knowledge and experience development opportunities internationally over the next twelve months. On their return they will report on their learning and disseminate to peers, colleagues and the broader VET sector and government a range of considerations and recommendations to enhance innovation, productivity, quality training delivery and an ultimately strong Education State.

# Introducing the 2017 DET HESG International Vocational Training Fellows

## **Simon Bruce (Holmesglen Institute – TAFE, metro)**

There is an increasing expectation on the Vocational Training sector to produce learners with the necessary skills, knowledge and attributes so they are 'work ready'. Potential employers are seeking employees not only with the required technical skills but also with the desired non-technical (or soft) skills. Equally, learners are seeking to develop a skills portfolio that will make them attractive as an employee and give them career options.

Simon's Fellowship will explore how the correct combination of social and collaborative tools and technologies aligned to the appropriate learning approach can be established as a framework around the concept of consequential learning. This consequential learning approach fully enhances opportunities to contextualise the learning content and provides ample opportunities for reinforcement of the learning outcomes and the mastery of skills and knowledge. By providing learning experiences that incorporate consequential learning, it is envisaged that VET practitioners will play a significant role in ensuring that quality and continuous improvement are at the heart of VET.

## **Karen Dymke and Cate Thompson (The Bridge – Learn Local, metro)**

Karen and Cate's Fellowship will identify best practice in Europe that can inform current Australian research and in particular further inform two of the four Adult and Community Further Education (ACFE) strategies under 'Effective Approaches to Re-engagement': 'Outreach and Engagement' and 'Teaching and Learning'.

These strategies have been identified by ACFE as being an effective intervention to improve opportunities for disadvantaged, disengaged learners to move from unemployment and associated disadvantages into employment and positive life options. This Fellowship will research effective methods that will translate into practical application and ultimately an increase in the numbers of disadvantaged, unemployed adults engaging in initial training, moving into VET or equivalent programs that pathway into sustainable employment.

## **Tracey Fenton (Pahran Community Learning Centre – Learn Local, metro)**

Tracey's Fellowship will examine successful, sustainable engagement programs that lead to employment outcomes. She will meet with services that work with disengaged young people and study their methods in getting clients into education that in turn becomes employment and look at the methodologies and pedagogies that they utilise. Tracey's Fellowship will also examine support of staff and how services sustain successful programs, especially programs that operate in different settings including metropolitan, regional and rural to map against similar locations in Victoria. One of the programs Tracey will visit is in Scotland looking at their Government's 'Education Working for All!', a blueprint to substantially and permanently improve the transition of all young people from education into sustainable, productive employment. She will also liaise with 'UK Youth' to examine their programs and meet with 'Movement to Work' representatives to learn about employer driven programs.

## **Alain Grossbard (RMIT – TAFE, metro)**

By offering vocational education students short-term work placements overseas, a new generation of future graduates will have enhanced future employability opportunities. It will demonstrate to teachers the need for hard and soft competencies to be developed within programs that are aligned and connected with industry and changing global needs.

Alain's Fellowship will seek to develop strong links with the vocational education sector, professional organisations and business communities in different countries, actively seeking their views and suggestions,

and attract them to collaboratively engage with Victoria on such work placements. Such programs will assist educators to focus on ways to teach and develop effective cross cultural communication skills, give them the ability to successfully work with people from different countries, enhance critical thinking and problem-solving skills to real life workplace issues, as well as instilling a level of passion and commitment to global industry needs.

### **Anagha Karandikar (Swinburne University of Technology – TAFE, metro)**

Anagha's Fellowship focus is to learn from countries that have mandated Building Information Modelling (BIM), how they prepared for this new process through skills development of the existing workforce and how they have translated into VET curriculum. The findings will help move Australia forward with its own implementation that is now behind other developed countries. Anagha will undertake this by identifying how the UK, Singapore and Denmark have managed the transition to a BIM regulatory environment (demand driven) and determine how those countries have enhanced the skills of their workforce (BIM supply side). She will also investigate current building and construction qualifications, that have upgraded to include BIM, in those countries. Anagha's overarching aim will be to recommend to the VET sector, industry and the Australian Government on how to improve BIM investment.

### **Paula Kudi (Institute of Health and Nursing Australia – RTO, metro)**

Victorian vocational education training in healthcare requires more workplace participation as it needs people to have skills that are usable in the workplace and only employers can provide this kind of knowledge. There is often a barrier presented by employers to either 'train on job' or employ VET graduates as they often believe they do not have the relevant skills or experience for the workplace. The employers, students and community as a whole have to be confident that the VET system is of high quality and contextualised to meet future workplace needs.

Paula's Fellowship will explore the challenge of workplace and industry practical placements as well as apprenticeships and develop workable solutions of improving the VET system so that some of these challenges can be mitigated and employers more engaged and will to offer meaningful work placements.

### **Daniel O'Hara (SkillsPlus – RTO/Learn Local, metro)**

International policy decisions that are mirrored locally are seeing an increase of accountability and transparency in education that has given rise to high stake testing and high stress educational environments. The unintended consequences of these decisions are having a detrimental effect right through to vocational training settings where learners are disengaging at an increasing rate. The question of increasing learner engagement is critical to supporting our industry requirements but more importantly the wellbeing of our communities.

Through his Fellowship, Daniel will investigate best practice engagement online and traditional models, including outreach, that have successfully engaged disadvantaged learners who have left vocational education, and re-connect them with education. Although online tools and approaches are plentiful there is no clear and coherent model that has found its way to VET providers, especially for use with young people. Daniel is committed to this purpose and will relish the challenge of developing as a manager and educator to make a real, meaningful and lasting impact in the VET sector.

### **Linno Rhodes (Olympic Adult Education – Learn Local, metro)**

Adult literacy learners who have experienced trauma often enter the VET classroom with what is commonly referred to as 'baggage'. This baggage may never be addressed or even understood. Many teachers do not understand trauma or the common experiences adult literacy learners bring to the classroom. Learners often get stuck in the same adult literacy classes for significant periods of time.

Linno's Fellowship will investigate the idea that creating a secure attachment relationship between the adult learner and teacher will lead to a transformational change which will greatly improve learning successes and develop stronger pathways into further education and employment. By meeting with experts in Britain,

Canada and America who work in adult literacy and trauma, she will investigate current psychological theories around attachment, trauma, brain neuroplasticity, and combine the work of Carl Rogers and Malcolm Knowles and other adult learning theorists.

### **Katrina Watt (SuniTAFE – TAFE, regional)**

Katrina's Fellowship aims to explore ways of increasing the number of international students participating in education in regional Victoria. In her international research, Katrina will explore some of the strategies and techniques used effectively to support students, from their first introduction to education and training, through to higher education, employment and lifelong learning. Part of this will require a greater understanding of the skills and knowledge that students have on arrival, ensuring that VET programs are engaging, are of a high quality, reflect current and future skill requirements, use innovative technology and include a work based component. Katrina believes that this will also have benefits for our domestic students, local communities and will lead to less reliance on government funding.

### **Feren Yen (Melbourne City Institute of Education – RTO, metro)**

Identifying and acting upon the welfare needs of disadvantaged persons is paramount to any successful educational program. Recognising that the sector is appropriately supporting persons who have a variety of structural or situational obstacles that affect their ability to learn is essential. An effective educational program must make available the necessary and appropriate learner support and wrap around services for the learners.

Student well-being and support systems varies across the sector and Feren's Fellowship will be undertaken at internationally identified centers of excellence where she will observe, interview and research in relation to trauma related mental health support systems and engagement of learners (between 16 – 40 years) in the VET and higher education sector. Upon her return, Feren aims to implement leading practice and share the findings and experience with the VET sector and industries.