

# Vocational Education & Training Factsheet

- The VET sector is comprised of public and private training institutions, referred to collectively as Registered Training Organisations (RTOs). Government-funded or **public training institutions** are known as colleges or institutes of Technical and Further Education (TAFE). All TAFE institutes offer a range of training courses from Certificate level through to Advanced Diploma, and an increasing number also offer undergraduate degree (Bachelor) courses. While all TAFEs offer a fairly standard range of core training subjects such as Business and Information Technology, many also provide training in more specialised fields, often relative to the particular skills requirements of the workforce in their surrounding area.
- Like TAFE, most **private-training institutions** offer standard core subjects but many also offer specializations in areas such as audio engineering for the music industry. Independent education providers also offer courses from Certificate through to Advanced Diploma levels, and an increasing number also offer undergraduate degree (Bachelor) programs. A very small number are even accredited to offer Masters Programs. Qualifications from Australian VET institutions are recognized worldwide.
- Australia's education system provides for flexible **access to higher education**. Students completing a Diploma at a TAFE or private training organisation may obtain academic credit for entry into the second year of university. The amount of academic credit a university will grant may depend on factors such as the nature and content of the vocational training course, the entry level or number of places available for the degree course. The benefit of this arrangement for students is that they are able to enter the Australian tertiary education system at an academically less demanding level than might otherwise be required.
- **Apprenticeships and traineeships** are structured programs that combine on-the-job training with formal training leading to a nationally recognised qualification provided by a RTO. There are more than 500 apprenticeships or traineeships available in all industries open to employees from 15 years of age. Apprenticeships are in the traditional trades and usually take 3-4 years. Traineeships are in non-trade related areas and take on average between 1 and 3 years. They are open to new or existing employees. Both apprenticeships and traineeships can be part-time, full-time or even school-based. Apprenticeships and traineeships include paid employment under an appropriate industrial arrangement. They also require a training agreement between the employer and apprentice or trainee which is registered with the NSW Department of Education and Communities.
- Apprenticeships and traineeships are **competency-based**, meaning that the apprentice or trainee is judged on outcomes not on time served. Also, those who have been working in an industry and demonstrate the skills and knowledge required may be granted recognition of prior learning which allows them to complete their apprenticeship or traineeship sooner. Apprenticeships and traineeships are also offered by Group Training Organisations (GTO) which employ apprentices and trainees and place them to another employer. The Australian Government provides incentives and subsidies to eligible employers as well as apprentices and trainees. There is additional assistance for rural, indigenous and disabled apprentices and trainees.