

DFAT MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE AUSTRALIA PACIFIC TRAINING COALITION (APTC 3) STRATEGIC REVIEW

The Office of the Pacific initiated a strategic review of the Australia Pacific Training Coalition (APTC) to ensure that it is positioned to support the Pacific's economic recovery from COVID-19, through skills development.

Pacific Island countries were consulted as part of the review process and the review findings have been considered by the APTC Board.

The review found Australia is deepening its contribution and value in the Pacific through the APTC but there is scope to better corral resources to advance skills for inclusive recovery and employment in the Pacific.

The Office of the Pacific welcomes the review findings and has agreed or partially agreed with all recommendations. Several recommendations are already in train, including more effectively allocating staff and resources to support the key priorities of the program and offering new courses in COVID-19 safe practices. Other agreed recommendations will now be advanced. More detailed management responses to each recommendation are included in the table below.

No.	RECOMMENDATIONS	RESPONSE (AGREE/PARTIALLY AGREE/DISAGREE)	ACTION PLAN AND TIMEFRAME
1	All efforts by APTC both in their supporting TVET strengthening and TVET systems reform role, and in their training role, must be corralled to an unequivocal and shared purpose: skills for inclusive recovery and employment.	Agreed	The Office of the Pacific (OTP) will work closely with TAFE Queensland (QLD) (current implementing partner for APTC) on the APTC response to COVID-19. Commenced and ongoing.
2	Re-interpret the contractual target on the basis that it captures a composite of all delivery options and stipulate the number of graduates based on equivalence. Promote the value of Australian qualifications for identified labour mobility opportunities and emerging growth sectors.	Agreed OTP agrees that the APTC's contractual targets should include micro-credentials and non-Australian accredited courses as well as Australian- accredited, Certificate-level qualifications. This will give the APTC greater flexibility to support the Pacific's economic	The current contract stipulates that the APTC must deliver training in Australian qualifications to more than 1,200 graduates per year. OTP will work with TAFE Queensland to develop new training and graduate targets that include a range of delivery options. This may require a contract amendment. The APTC will continue to deliver Australian-accredited training in response to industry demand

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	Challenge the narrative that Australian qualifications are inherently valuable. Australia's TVET quality systems expertise is the core offering.	recovery from COVID and respond to labour market needs in both Australia and in the Pacific.	and where there is identified regional labour market demand, including to Australia. Through the APTC Australia will continue to share knowledge of our quality TVET systems with our Pacific family. Commenced and ongoing.
3	Accelerate the reforms (mandate, systems, processes) within APTC and partners that reinforce the industry demand orientation of TVET provision. Monitor and publish APTC employment data by qualification and by pre-course employment status. Develop a three-year roadmap to adopting further innovations in remote learning and technology supported training delivery (avoid reverting to the traditional classroom model). Consider technology supported access for people living with disabilities.	Partially Agreed OTP supports an expansion of online training, acknowledging that putting in place sustainable, remote technologically enabled learning will be a major reform. TAFE QLD will explore options for the APTC to adopt further innovations in remote learning within the current contract period (to June 2022). In the new phase of APTC (post June 2022), APTC will develop a road map and ensure that appropriate resources are allocated to put in place sustainable remote technologically enabled training. This will include exploring options for technology supported access for people with disabilities.	OTP is working with TAFE QLD to ensure that APTC training is aligned to labour market needs. The APTC has completed a Pacific Labour Market Analysis to support this, which will be finalised and shared with stakeholders in 2021. OTP will work with the APTC to monitor and analyse employment data and will ensure data is published in Annual Reports. The APTC will develop a strategy to adopt further innovations in remote learning and technology. Commenced and ongoing.
4	Integrate and mainstream the strategic shifts in budget and structure – and cohere the strategies and frameworks cognisant of their interconnectivity.	Agreed	The APTC has conducted an organisational review to ensure there are appropriate resources to support the key strategic shifts under APTC 3.

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	<p>Develop discernment criteria that apply across all operations that rigorously drive a focus of effort, contain budget and support an aggregate narrative.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a subset of criteria to determine which fee-for-service activities best serve socio-economic recovery. <p>Increasingly integrate TVET strengthening as a modality less as a separate stream of work and view and deploy the TVET Sector Strengthening Platform (TSSP) as the motor of change.</p>		<p>OTP is working with the APTC to develop and publish criteria for assessing fee for service proposals.</p> <p>OTP is also working with the APTC to promote the TVET Systems Strengthening Platform (TSSP) fund to raise awareness of the fund and increase TVET strengthening throughout the Pacific</p> <p>Commenced and ongoing.</p>
5	<p>Build better mechanisms for defining, tracking and communicating results, including clearly linking APTC country plans to Pacific and Australian policy objectives especially the PacREF, national TVET priorities, Partnerships for Recovery, and Pacific Step-up.</p> <p>APTC and DFAT build more engaged and effective partnerships at Post to support the recovery agenda.</p>	Agreed	<p>OTP will work with the APTC to revise the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework (MELF) to more effectively measure TVET systems strengthening outcomes and ensure this data is analysed and reported.</p> <p>OTP will work with the APTC to ensure that planning is clearly linked to Australia's broader objectives and that APTC activities are supportive of the recovery agenda.</p> <p>Commenced and ongoing</p>
6	<p>Revise the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and refine supporting systems to inform reporting and key</p>	Agreed	<p>As above, OTP will work with the APTC to revise the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework and ensure data is used to inform decision making.</p>

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	communication products that can support strategic and judicious decision making.		
7	<p>Redirect core budget and resources to support the strategic priority of labour mobility.</p> <p>Frame labour mobility targets that accommodate a range of contributions to ‘Pacific labour mobility outcomes’, including APTC’s range of preparedness training for labour mobility participants.</p> <p>Deepen partnership with the Pacific Labour Facility.</p> <p>Anticipate/shape PLF Roadmap initiatives for semi-skilled opportunities and adjust training profile.</p>	Agreed	<p>TAFE QLD is developing a new APTC Labour Mobility Strategy, to articulate areas of cooperation between the APTC and the Pacific Labour Facility, including set labour mobility targets. This will be published on the APTC website when it is completed and approved by OTP.</p> <p>Commenced and ongoing.</p>
8	<p>Supply and demand are inextricably linked and APTC can contribute to shaping the Australian demand for semi-skilled workers through its TAFE Queensland and Board networks (in concert with PLF process).</p> <p>Take advantage of closed borders and trace and track graduates eligible for Temporary Skills Shortage Visas and support links with employers – and/or consider transferring Pacific TSS interests to the PLF who have the sector/employer mechanisms.</p> <p>Work with and through interested TVET partners to support development and delivery of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • employability skills packages; work readiness standards and work readiness training at scale to support the Pacific Labour Scheme; • Certificate I and II opportunities to facilitate youth labour mobility in agriculture; and 	Agreed	<p>As per response to recommendation 7, TAFE QLD is developing a new Labour Mobility Strategy for the APTC. This will include exploring options for APTC graduates to access the TSS visa. This will also articulate areas of cooperation with the Pacific Labour Facility and set labour mobility targets</p> <p>TAFE QLD will also explore options for the APTC to deliver and/ or support national training providers to deliver work readiness training for labour mobility, with a particular focus on youth.</p> <p>OTP will also ensure the APTC is aligned with other Australian Government funded investments, including PHAMA Plus and PACER Plus.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> youth re-integration and employment opportunities along the agriculture supply chain including by leveraging links with Australia's PHAMA Plus and PACER Plus investments. 		Commenced and ongoing.
9	Value for Money (VfM) would be improved by facilitating stronger labour mobility outcomes, accelerating reforms to reduce both the footprint and cost of training, reducing the dependence on bursaries, and increasing access to training for women and people living with a disability, especially by innovating in supported remote learning and technology options.	Agreed	<p>As above, the APTC is developing a labour mobility strategy to improve outcomes in this area. TAFE QLD has conducted an organisational review of the APTC to ensure that appropriate resources are allocated to key strategic shifts, including increasing co-investment and labour mobility.</p> <p>TAFE QLD is also developing and implementing Gender, Disability and Social Inclusion Action Plans for the APTC including exploring options to deploy technologies to support access for people living with disabilities.</p> <p>Commenced and on-going.</p>
10	<p>Develop and finalise the VfM framework, including co-creating performance criteria and agreeing the weightings with DFAT and key stakeholders.</p> <p>Complete the benefits model as a priority so a true cost-benefit analysis can be undertaken.</p> <p>Review and revise the performance criteria for the 4 E's, both in terms of overall content and quantum (there are</p>	Agreed	<p>The APTC is refining its VfM analysis framework.</p> <p>Commenced and due for completion Q4 2021.</p>

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	<p>potentially too many criteria) and weighting particularly for 'Effectiveness'.</p> <p>Add labour mobility as a core and discrete criterion in the VfM framework under 'Effectiveness'.</p>		