A study of stakeholder power relations, governmentality and capital in vocational education and training policy in Australia

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A STUDY OF STAKEHOLDER POWER RELATIONS, GOVERNMENTALITY AND CAPITAL IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING POLICY IN AUSTRALIA

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B.Ed

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Declaration

To the best of the candidate’s knowledge, this thesis contains no material previously published by another person, except where due acknowledgement has been made.

This thesis is the candidate’s own work and contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any institution.

The research presented and reported in this thesis was conducted in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007, updated 2018). The proposed research study received human research ethics approval from the University Of Notre Dame Australia Human Research Ethics Committee (EC00418), Approval Number #014012S

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Date: 7 January 2020
Abstract

The purpose of this study was to observe the perspectives of stakeholders on Vocational Education and Training (VET) policy in Australia. The intention was to explore the interplay of policy implementation, stakeholder perspectives on policy and VET activities, and theoretical notions of power relations, governmentality and capital, utilising frameworks by Foucault and Bourdieu. The problem, as it was established in literature review, is the potential influence of policy relations, governmentality and capital on VET activities and VET policy formation and implementation. The outcome was to better understand stakeholder perspectives of VET and to add a facet of knowledge to the theoretical frameworks.

Michel Foucault provides a platform from which power relations and governmentality can be observed, given a particular situation, a ‘present’ in which to conduct such an observation. Further, there is a potential nexus between power relations, governmentality and the forms of capital, established by Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu. By establishing the historical conditions of Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Australia, it is possible to know how we arrived at a point in time, a ‘present’. A genealogical literature review focused on discontinuity, as opposed to a timeline of events, afforded development of such knowledge. From this point, it was feasible to conduct research into the present conditions. Hence, this study attempted to construct an understanding of VET stakeholder perspectives in and around 2015. It did so by exploring empirical issues within VET policy and activities, generating two sets of findings: first, a response to the empirical issues and second, an illustration of theoretical concepts.
Operationally, the multiple case study is defined by stakeholder groups, characterised by an explanatory sequential design of two phases. A complex study, data collection and analysis focused on 5 domains, including core VET objectives, work placement, apprenticeship, teacher qualifications and employability (generic) skills, for which there are a number of findings. The first quantitative phase illustrates case perspectives utilising a cross-case survey, analysed using statistical methods with measures of significance. Sample size for Phase 1 was $n = 281$. These were used to define questions for qualitative interviews in Phase 2, where $n = 13$. They were also summarised for their contribution to findings and theoretical discussion. Analysis in Phase 2, namely thematic synthesis, explored and developed themes of empirical inquiry and findings, adding detail to the quantitative findings. Moreover, it provided a response to the theoretical frameworks.

Macro findings of empirical issues showed an inflated view of VET from the perspective of some stakeholders. Industry particularly had a deflated view, which shone through in both phases. In the context of power relations, there were well defined systems of differentiation, objectives, means of power relations being brought into play, forms of institutionalisation and rationalisations illustrated. The complexities of governmentality were described in relation to policy and stakeholder perspectives, which arose from the data. Further, capital formation was explored in light of empirical findings and relations to power drawn.

The implications of the study for policy are how related decisions have influenced capital outcomes for students and stakeholders, such as contestable markets and pathways from VET to tertiary study, investment of industry into VET, differences between stakeholders for needs and expectations of work placement, and
the effect of policy implementation on quality training. Teacher qualifications were also implicated as a complex area of need, especially for upgrades and maintenance. In the context of power relations, there is a greater understanding of how stakeholder perspectives influence implementation of policy and their interactions between and within the sectors of education and industry. This may provide insight into how policy can be formed to better engage stakeholders. Further, it describes the ways capital formation is impacted by power relations. Finally, there is knowledge of how stakeholders respond to issues related to governmentality, and the decisions made to refuse infliction of governance.
Acknowledgements

This has been the most superb undertaking of my life thus far. It is, without doubt, the greatest learning experience; constantly challenging, ever changing and all consuming. I am grateful God has given me the will and persistence to complete this work. But, without a support network I would have been lost. I have an incredible depth of gratitude for so many people.

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# Glossary of terms and abbreviations

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANTA</td>
<td>Australian National Training Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>AQF</td>
<td>Australian Qualifications Framework</td>
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<tr>
<td>AQTF</td>
<td>Australian Quality Training Framework</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASQA</td>
<td>Australian Skills Quality Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBT</td>
<td>Competency-based Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEEWR</td>
<td>Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCVER</td>
<td>National Centre for Vocational Education Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>New South Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTIS</td>
<td>National Training Information Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>Queensland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RPL</td>
<td>Recognition of Prior Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>RTO</td>
<td>Registered Training Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBAT</td>
<td>School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STA</td>
<td>State and Territory Training Authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAFE</td>
<td>Technical and Further Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UAC</td>
<td>Universities Admissions Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>VET</td>
<td>Vocational Education and Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>VETiS</td>
<td>VET in Schools</td>
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1 Introduction

1.1 Foundation

The state of Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Australia is constantly shifting, driven by political, industry, social, cultural, educational and economic agendas. As these drive vocational education initiatives, it is subject to constant change and influenced by the perspectives of stakeholders. The stakeholders of VET include leaders, teachers and trainers within institutions, industry representatives, particularly business people and owners who benefit from the education provided by institutions, government representative bodies, and students. The intentions of policy within VET are, generally, to educate participants with the knowledge and skills to participate in the world of work, defined by the Australian Qualifications Framework (Australian Qualifications Framework Council, 2013) and encapsulated by training packages and resultant qualifications. Policy and embedded activities provide the structural approach for the production of knowledge and skills, which are transferred through institutions; capabilities provided by teachers and ‘consumed’ by students. In tandem are industry stakeholders, owners of businesses and organisations which provide work-based training opportunities, eventually to employ qualified, skilled and educated people who have journeyed through the VET system. Industry stakeholders define the need for VET training, expecting that the person they employ is educated according to the relevant training package and qualification to participate in work. This, in a theoretical context, is known as capital, whether cultural, economic, social or human; the ability for the worker to engage in the business as a skilled person because of the knowledge and skills they have and bring from their education, and their ability to contribute this for the greater
improvement of society and economic success of the country. Underpinning policy are the complex networks of power-knowledge, biopower and governmentality, defined by Foucault’s work, which influence the context of policy formation.

This study embarks on a challenging journey through multiple theories using stakeholder knowledge to inform an understanding of policy in a current and historical context, using the current to reflect on the historical. This understanding drives an illustration of power-knowledge insofar as it relates to biopower, governmentality and the subject. The interplay of capital, power and policy development is explored to shed light on intentions unsaid, a hidden agenda expressed through discourse. With the current context of policy and an illustration of power relations drawn, the study proposes implications for future policy formation. It is possibly obvious, then, this study employs interwoven concepts of Foucault and Bourdieu. In a practical context, it is a multiple embedded case study of stakeholder groups in two phases, where data are used to fuel theoretical interrogation and examination. What results is a deeply considered multi-threaded approach to thinking about the way we think, operate and interact in a complex system, driven by power-knowledge and biopower, governmentality and capital.

1.2 Background

I, too, was once a student of Vocational Education and Training. I had always had a passion to be a chef, and from a young age I spent many hours either working in kitchens, free or as paid work, learning what I could to give myself the best start possible. At the end of ‘formal’ schooling, or Year 12 in New South Wales, Australia, I started an apprenticeship with one of the top restaurants in Sydney.
Coupled with a four-day workweek, I attended a Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institute in Ryde. The experience was fairly mixed, although I had a great teacher who constantly challenged me to improve. On reflection, however, the theoretical work in class was more superficial than it should have been. Mostly booklets of worksheets built on rudimentary content and activities. This is not necessarily a reflection on the teacher but a reflection on practice. The practical training received both at TAFE and at the restaurant was superb, though, and it helped me become a diverse and capable cook.

At the time, the gap was more specifically in the work-ready skills; the ability to work day-to-day in the restaurant with peers and mentors. I rarely experienced positive mentoring from chefs, which I know is broadly reflective of the industry. I was taught to be selfish and overly confident, yet always reminded of my ‘position’ within the hierarchy. There was a constant offer of criticism and numerous attempts at cooking tasks were discarded because they were not up to standard. Though not seemingly harsh, hours of work were rejected and had to be redone and the process of correction and improvement was never undertaken positively even when the outcome was significant learning. One only needs to read Anthony Bourdain’s book *Kitchen Confidential* (2007) to have a glimpse into this world. I am not complaining and, to a degree, I know these experiences made me a better cook in so many ways. They were the foundation of valuable employability skills that I would later pass on to others. Yet, I cannot help wondering, if the process had been more ‘humane’ and in keeping with what I have since learnt are more engaging, motivational and pedagogically sound practices, whether I would have become that chef I envisaged as a young boy.
Travelling with my qualification was an amazing experience, as I was accepted anywhere and always found work. The skills I developed were well honed and enabled me to create great relationships around the world. Returning to Australia, I married and started a family. It was at this time of added responsibility that I knew I needed to change my career.

Teaching has been a great source of pleasure and pride as a chef. I enthusiastically took on new apprentices and taught them what I knew, and whilst I know it was not always the most positive experience, I hope it was better than what had been provided for me. Eventually, an opportunity arose to complete a degree in teaching, which would incorporate the trade certificate I had already achieved. Throughout the degree, I couldn’t help but see the inconsistencies between what I was being taught compared with the expectations of industry. Many discussions with colleagues contextualised the complexities of what we were teaching students, and whether they were actually experiencing and benefiting from an honest, realistic representation of reality and whether they would be in a position to access and apply the higher-order skills, in addition to practical skills, expected by industry.

Throughout my career, I have seen many students start and finish school and I have been there for the transition from school to work. Some students have expressed anguish over the years at school and the re-training they experienced on the job: a complex and ongoing process of un-learning and learning coupled with the costs of more training and qualifications. It was the same experience I had as an apprentice and as a teacher. Schooling is valuable, but for many students there appears to be a gap between school learning and learning in the workforce, which is difficult to explain.
In a practical context, the driving force behind this study is that gap: the void between learning and doing, and the gap between intentions and reality. The conundrum we face as teachers is how to ensure the product is what we set out to achieve, and how to ensure students are prepared for work. As a teacher, it seems so much of what we do has little benefit to the real world. This is not to say there is limited value in education, and I do not start this journey with this perception; I start with the perception that between school and work, there is a part of our education that is lost in translation, a part that does not transition with us, an intention that is misplaced or impractical. At some point, training does not meet the needs of those who employ our students. This raises the question whether student knowledge and skills have limited applicability because of system design, or some other manifestation of intent that will never benefit them. It is part introspection, part interrogation, and I start with the knowledge that we are all responsible.

1.3 Research Question

Studies usually work diligently to identify gaps in literature and then to fill them with new knowledge as a result of quantitative or qualitative data, or in some cases, both (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). Doing so answers unknowns and produces depth to the research either side of the study. By employing a primarily Foucauldian framework, though Foucault would deny such a possibility (Ball, 1990a), this study takes an approach which is to test ideas, methodological paradigms and concepts which arise from theory; an application of sorts. Inspiration was sought, in part, from work by Ball (1990a), as it follows a similar pathway with a vastly different outcome. The tests in this study are devised and conducted in a relativist and naturalistic sense, in which data are tangible and real, but relative to the perspective of
the participants (Bryman, 2012; Cohen et al., 2011; Kusch, 1991; Rosenbaum, 2013). Ball (1990a) conducts Foucauldian research, offering “an exploration and...application of Foucault’s work within the field of education” (Ball, 1990a, p. 5), which is what this current study attempts to achieve.

Literature review for this study took a genealogical pathway, which examined the discontinuities of historical policy development and explored the factors of influence throughout the birth and growth of Vocational Education in Australia. Recurrent themes of constant shift and discontinuity (Marshall, 1990) were core aspects of the VET system, curriculum and intentions of the framework itself, namely quality training, teacher and trainer qualifications, productivity, employability (soft) skills, work placement arrangements and apprenticeships and traineeships. The vast array of agenda, interests and influences between stakeholders were apparent throughout all aspects of literature, particularly those of a political nature. Deep interests of institutional, governmental and industry stakeholders was also indicated. Therefore, this study is positioned at the intersection between policy and stakeholders, where the transmission, exercise and interactions of power are at their greatest, given the often-competing interests and varying degrees of power-knowledge that are at play.

However, it would seem that there has been no systematic and rigorous investigation and analysis from the perspective of industry, TAFE, Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) and institutions on these issues, particularly on stakeholder perspectives on policy implementation, capital formation and accumulation and the implications of power relations. Consequently, the specific research question is
Under what circumstances are power relations exercised insomuch as they construct stakeholder perspectives within the systems of differentiation in VET and influence the implementation of policy in Australian VET?

This primary research question sets the scene for a broad, specific and complex study, but it speaks of an investigation that is led by a strong theoretical underpinning. To clarify the question and ensure methodical responses, the primary question is broken into the following sub-questions, including:

- *How is the implementation of policy affected by stakeholder objectives, and how do the actions of others that act on these objectives enhance the effect?*
- *What implication do power relationships have for capital formation within VET policies or programs?*
- *How do stakeholders rationalise power relations in their context?*
- *How does governmentality shape discourse or implementation of policy?*

These sub-questions are unordered and unweighted. As the work progresses, it is conceded that much could be exposed and aspects of these questions remain unanswered. It is through the lens of theoretical application to empirical data that this study finds its purpose, presenting some rational discourse as a result.

1.4 Overview of Theoretical framework

This brief introduction of the theoretical framework forms the foundation of this study. The intention is to deliver two major concepts that are woven into the fabric of the study, though there are three pillars on which this study is formed. The first is Foucault’s notion of power, specifically, power-knowledge, encompassing
power, biopower and governmentality. In parallel is Foucault’s later notion of

critique, which is considered under the lens of governmentality. The third, capital, sits

alongside both as a driving factor of policy development. This is conceptualised by

Bourdieu with contributions by Foucault. An illustration of the framework is provided

in Chapter 2, though the following overview provides the basics of the three

theoretical pillars.

Foucault’s genealogical work (Scheurich, 2005) emphasises relationships

between truth, the forces of power relations and discursive practices, specifically,

“‘Truth’ is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and

sustain it, and to effects of power which induces it, and which extends it. A 'regime' of

truth” (Davidson, 1986 in Ball, 1990, p. 13). From within this ‘truth’ we can conduct

inquiry, and it is this inquiry that enables us to “free thought from what it silently

thinks, and so enable it to think differently” (Kusch, 1991, p. 211), and with the

possibility to re-evaluate history with truth (Martin, Gutman, & Hutton, 1988).

Furthermore, this truth is subjective and as researchers we ascribe meaning from

within and outside the framework. Therefore, genealogical literature review

establishes an historic account of VET policy and the discontinuations that shaped it

(Marshall, 1990), the truths created by the effects of power-knowledge, and the

effects of governmentality on policy construction.

On the notion of power, Foucault (Ball, 1990; DiGiorgio, 2010) considers

education a formed institution, with power at the centre. For the sake of definition, a

formed institution is a field within which a framework of rules, practices and

standards exist (Kusch, 1991; Marshall, 1990). Power, which operates relative to

knowledge and capital, provides a structural context within which institutions operate,
and people interact (Leask, 2012). The study adopts this construct to investigate the interplay of power-knowledge in the construction and implementation of policy.

Power-knowledge relationships are subject to fluidity, and discourse can be subject to opposing discourse that gives rise to new voice, often disguised within the frameworks that defined the originating discourse (Ball, 1990a). Essentially, within the discourse of inquiry, opportunities to oppose current thought may eventuate as new thought with similar language. Investigation of stakeholder perspectives in Phase 1 of the study establishes current thought (Ball, 1990a; Marshall, 1990; Martin et al., 1988). Through Phase 2 of the study further clarification is sought utilising a grid of power relations (Marshall, 1990) in analysis; in parallel to notions of capital. The combined data are used for an analysis of governmentality and power-relations using the notions of critical attitude (Foucault, 2007), which is the use of the current thought to potentially refute what is commonly known and accepted.

Biopower is power in capillary form, the power of literal bodies, of individuals, a manifestation that involves discipline but less in its state of control and punishment and more in a state of emancipation (Cisney & Morar, 2015; Foucault, 1980b). The disciplinary form shifts to accept other modes of power, not just disciplinary power; particularly power moved beyond (discipline of) the individual to the “species-body” (Cisney & Morar, 2015, p. 5). This coincided with the emergence of biopolitics, a manifestation of power that is exerted by the State for the purpose of control and organisation. This is not simply through discipline, it leads to regulation. Governmentality is the exercise of this biopower by the State for the purpose of discipline and control, but of the population rather than the individual (Ball, 2012); it
is a modality of disciplinary power exercised by the State in a form that considers the consequences.

Critique, or critical attitude, responds to the present and the truths of governmentality in that we question the truths of biopolitics and governmentality in the context of the present, and hence question the way in which we accept governmentality (D. Taylor, 2014b). It is this order of power that is used throughout analysis to consider data in the light of policy, and vice versa, for what stakeholders divulge of their perspective of governmentality, truth and the opportunity to examine these truths.

For capital, it is accepted that agents (stakeholders) within the field possess power, developed in the accumulation of capital, whether social, cultural or economic (Bourdieu, 1986). Power is considered relative, in that the greater level of capital one possesses, the greater the level of power they tend to have (DiGiorgio, 2010). Human capital, though, for Bourdieu (1986), has a greater relationship to economic, social and cultural capital in the breadth of its contribution. For Foucault, human capital is less defined and more resonant of Marx’s perspective, in that human capital is there to be consumed “machine like”, for the purpose of generating an “earnings stream” (Foucault, 2008, p. 225). Education provides capital, in its various states, to those who engage in it, but the limitations asserted through power to control education and the level to which people are educated, potentially limit the capital endowed within the student (DiGiorgio, 2010). This is symbolic power; a mechanism used by dominant members of society to exert control. Public policy is often written in such a way that it infers, or is indeed explicit, in the construction of hierarchies and composure of order (Springer, 2012). Those who control the system, in this context, education, are
essentially asserting power over those who are subservient to it, a manifestation of class (DiGiorgio, 2010). This complex and interwoven context of capital manifested through education and controlled by the constructs of biopower and governmentality is an aspect of analysis in this study; the manifestation of capability through the taught curriculum and the control of capital and implications for class.

In the context of this inquiry, it is also recognised that there are patterns and connections between practice and discourse. Springer (2012) describes discourse as being shaped by practice without privileging any form of practice, such as class struggle. Practice in turn can shape discourse without privilege to any form of discourse. In the context of this study, this perspective provides an opportunity to examine discourse between stakeholders with the knowledge that practice has an influence on discourse, and discourse on practice.

In summary, the proposed theoretical framework provides a foundation for a relativist field of inquiry, taking a Foucauldian perspective in the context of power and henceforth, truth, power-knowledge, biopower and governmentality. It also leverages combined concepts of capital by Bourdieu and Foucault (Ball, 1990a; Bourdieu, 1986; Foucault, 2008). Each case contributes to multiple realities that combine to provide a multi-faceted, real-world focus that builds stakeholder perspectives of observed realities.

The theoretical aspects that underpin this study provide a rich and complex field of interrogation, much of which is unchartered territory in this context. It is an opportunity to examine power in its various forms, the notions of capital as they relate to power, and the context of truth as it relates to the established norms through critical
attitude; the voice of the stakeholder. The theoretical framework is more clearly defined in Chapter 2 by way of illustration of conceptual and operational aspects.

1.5 Overview of methodology

A naturalist and relativist paradigm underpin this study. Naturalistic inquiry allows for experiential, human-centred design to explore what is known and real. A relativist approach utilises a framework to determine the interaction of stakeholder views (Kusch, 1991; Rosenbaum, 2013). It may also be that views are multiples, precipitating multiple realities, which are observer dependant (Harrison, Birks, Franklin, & Mills, 2017; Yin, 2014, p. 17). Foucault’s perspective on relativism establishes that

a production of truth and knowledge is possible only against the background of, and within, a framework of rules, practices and standards, to wit, that the production of knowledge is possible only against the background of, and within, systems of social power (Kusch, 1991, p. 210).

Further, the concept of historical evidence is susceptible to refute, and in the words of Foucault:

My role - and that is too emphatic a word - is to show people that they are much freer than they feel, that people accept as truth, as evidence, some themes which have been built up at a certain moment during history, and that this so-called evidence can be criticized and destroyed. To change something in the minds of people - that's the role of an intellectual (Foucault cited in Martin et al., 1988, p. 10).
Essentially, the methodology is well placed to expose the truth and communicate it through analysis and discourse; that the relative nature of this truth can reform what we have accepted as truth.

Such a research paradigm demands the most effective and efficient way to answer the research question (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). The use of mixed methods is a recommended approach (Sammons, 2010; Yin, 2014), providing both numerical data and a thick description of the lines of inquiry. Consequently, a dialectic approach (Greene & Hall, 2010; Koopman, 2011) supports the use of mixed methods in data collection and informs data analysis. Dialectics encourages the use of more than one worldview as a lens over the data (Betzner, 2008; Shannon-Baker, 2015). Koopman (2011) argues an appropriate combination is genealogy and pragmatism, taking into account a critical view of history while preparing the present for the future. In adopting this approach, there is a propensity for flexibility, rigour and careful discourse between methods (Greene & Hall, 2010; Shannon-Baker, 2015; Sommer Harrits, 2011).

The methodology that provides structure and rigour is multiple embedded case study (Yin, 2014). The research design is divided into two phases that provide maximum flexibility to define the research and investigate the present, real world perspective of participants. The explanatory sequential design provides a complex, deep scope of analysis, where the first informs the second (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Phase 1 utilises quantitative methods of data collection and analysis while in Phase 2, qualitative methods feature. The overall impact of the research design provides a deep understanding of the cases and provides space for theoretical knowledge to emerge from the data.
1.6 Significance of the Study

The primary aim of this study is to conduct a deep introspection on the policy, biopolitics and governmentality that drives the construction of policy in Vocational Education in Australia. Second to this, it is to examine the interplay of power between stakeholders and the manifestations of power-knowledge, critical attitude and responses to governmentality. This brief outline of purpose carries great significance from understanding the construction of policy historically and the way it defines truth, to the way we can move forward in its construction of policy and governmentality of VET.

The literature review examines the construction and intention of policy historically, using a genealogical approach that looks at the detail and reasons for decisions (Marshall, 1990; Scheurich, 2005). Case study delivers perspective of stakeholders in two phases, used in conjunction with current and historical literature to examine the accepted truths, and consider how historical decisions have become accepted norms in society. This works to emancipate policy makers from the limitations of historical decisions in moving toward a new construct of vocational education in Australia.

Institutional stakeholders can use the exploration of benefits of VET in the context of capital development and accumulation to consider the implementation of policy. Participants include teachers, trainers and industry to show how the practical, every-day aspects of VET impact institutions. Furthermore, it can provide a detailed exploration of the journey from school-based VET to higher education, outlining the opportunities and potential within and beyond VET. This carries significance in the way attitudes are formed as students are provided options for education.
As capital is examined in the context of economic, social and cultural capital, there is a deep significance for industry as they consider the broader benefits of VET. Much of the policy defining VET provides only economic and productivity foundations for the significance of VET, yet as Bourdieu (1986) argues, the benefits are much greater. This study has the potential to shift the perception that capital is limited to human capital with singularly economic benefits. Altering the perceived value of capital developed through VET courses and how this may translate into future careers is potentially critical for the future of VET in Australia. For students, this study provides an opportunity to develop an understanding of perceptions of programs and policies foreign to them due to varying levels of use and participation. This is intended to provide voice to students who see potential value in these programs for them in development of capital.

Theoretically, there is a potential to understand power relations within vocational education in a new context. The examination of the nexus between policy, stakeholder perspective, power and governmentality are a unique viewpoint. Providing another application and ‘test’ of Foucault’s toolbox (Marshall, 1990) contributes to the understanding of how to use these tools in education research.

In the context of governmentality, this study responds to the evolving and complex nature of VET, its ongoing requirements for teachers, institutions and the public, and how these restrict or liberate stakeholders to achieve quality outcomes. This is achieved in the light of a critical attitude and examination of stakeholder perspectives, established historical truths and their acceptance in the current context. The implication for theory is an ongoing evaluation of the more complex ideas of Foucault in a practical, real and tangible way.
The significance of this study is broad, because it attempts to accomplish much. By combining the theories, considering a range of perspectives and applying a breadth of tools to each stage of the study, there is a greater potential to achieve a significant impact beyond the simplicity of data, results and findings. Through this, it is possible to establish the effects of the implementation of policy and outcomes for stakeholders.

1.7 Limitations

The study is characterised by a dialectic stance utilising pragmatism and genealogy. Methodologically, it is a multiple-embedded case study and is therefore limited by generalisability, replicability in the same context and sample size.

Case study by design is often considered limited in its own right, in terms of replication and reliability (Bryman, 2012; Cohen et al., 2011; Mills, Durepos, & Wiebe, 2010). This inability to replicate the study can be time dependent, limited by present political, economic and social influences or perspectives due to a constantly shifting landscape of these domains. This study has worked to overcome some of these by approaching with rigour the design of the case study.

Sample type and size is an often-discussed topic, and many recommendations exist as to ideal type and numbers for various types of study (Cohen et al., 2011). Importantly, sampling error, the extent to which the sample is representative, and generalisation, the ability to apply the research in generalised terms to other contexts or make generalisations about the findings, is not necessarily overcome by sample size (Bryman, 2012; Cohen et al., 2011).
Utilising multiple methods in research is often limited to the degree that meta-inferences can be made (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010, p. 361), particularly where the design is sequential from qualitative to quantitative. The critical limitation in this study is dependent sequential design and sample size in the quantitative phase. This reduces statistical power of correlations in the quantitative phase (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010, pp. 361–362) and limits the use of correlational bivariate statistics formula, such as the chi-square (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 654). As a result, it is necessary to use alternatives that produce similar results on a limited data set. To this end, and to accommodate the multiple case study design, one-way ANOVA and Scheffe post-hoc tests were employed to analyse statistical significance between the cases.

The sample of participants for the quantitative phase was from a selected group of schools, institutions and industry workplaces in only the eastern States of Australia. This also has implications for generalisability. However, as a broad spectrum of institutions and industry were offered the opportunity to participate, this mitigates the potential limitation. For qualitative analysis, participants volunteered to participate and given two further opportunities to revoke their permission, indicating their commitment to providing feedback in the context of the results and questions.

A limitation of discussion is its focus on outcomes of VET to the Certificate IV level, as it has the greatest level of implication for the pillars of investigation (namely VET, Employability Skills, School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships, Teacher Qualifications and Work Placement), and allows discussion to stay within the confines of Schools, TAFE and private RTOs. Going beyond this qualification level encompasses higher level study and university VET offerings, which are beyond the scope of this study.
When selecting stakeholder groups, the conscious decision was made to omit universities from the cases. This was a practical decision around data saturation and management of the various cases, but it was also determined that universities had little investment in VET at the time. Their main investment focused on pathways from VET to university. Since analysis, it has become apparent there is a greater breadth of influence that universities have on the VET system, especially since their involvement has become greater over the course of completion. It could be an avenue of further study, though it is beyond the scope of the current study to branch into this aspect post-analysis.

1.8 Outline of the thesis

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to this study. It described the background of the study and the researcher’s interests. The research question was presented and justified. The theoretical framework was introduced due to its pivotal role in the study. This was linked to the proposed outcomes and research questions. A methodology and dialectic approach for data collection and analysis was presented and the two-phase approach defined. Significance was provided and limitations defined.

Chapter 2 provides a conceptualisation of the theoretical framework. This is provided before literature review, as it sets the scene for a genealogical review of VET policy. Defining the features of literature review provided structure before it was conducted, and follows a similar pattern to Foucauldian research which presents a framework before conducting the study (Ball, 2012; Zoellner, 2017). The framework outlines the interactions of Foucault’s power-knowledge, a toolbox for analysis of power-relations and an analysis of the inputs and outputs of capital (Bourdieu, 1986).
Chapter 3 presents the literature review. What emerges is a series of policies and programs that have defined VET. They have also been the subject of great debate, change and ‘need’. Stakeholder and educational implications are presented. The intention of the literature review is to identify the effects of historical discontinuity on the present in which the study is situated.

Chapter 4 details a methodology for the study. A multiple-embedded case study approach is defined, synthesised within the theoretical framework and characterised by a dialectic, pragmatic and genealogical method. A sequential design is offered with two phases: firstly quantitative to inform the second qualitative phase. It also outlines the methods of collection and analysis.

Chapter 5 presents data analysis and results from Phase 1, the quantitative phase of the study. It outlines findings of the empirical questions around the implementation of policy and programs within VET. This is interrogated to prepare a set of results of the success of each policy or program from the perspective of stakeholders.

Chapter 6 represents Phase 2 of the study, which collects qualitative data in the form of interview. The data are interrogated for the follow up of empirical results from Phase 1, but also enlivens a discussion of power relations, governmentality and capital formation. The empirical themes and findings are presented and concluded.

Chapter 7 details theoretical findings in the context of power relations, capital and governmentality. It offers implications of this knowledge and the ways in which this has impacted stakeholders in the present. While it does not provide specifics of a step-lock way forward, it does provide seminal insights for policy makers that will empower them to discern the implications of the impact of policy change in VET.
2 Theoretical Framework

The French philosopher Michel Foucault has been a significant feature of works in education research (Ball, 1990a, 2018; Marshall, 1990; Roth, 1992). Such research has generally had a focus within the constructs of discipline and control, a manifestation of power (Foucault, 2000) and biopower (Cisney & Morar, 2015), and the exercise of power by teachers or the State, in the form of governmentality (Green, 1998). However, this approach, the reductionism of power to domination and control, detachment of power from knowledge and the use of discourse analysis to inspect interviews and text, is cautioned against (Ball, 2018). In ‘doing’ Foucauldian research and using these concepts as a methodology, researchers should be looking for the unsaid, the nuance and utterances that create meaning beyond the text, specific and obvious (Ball, 2018). This study presents the theoretical layers first, then attempts to apply them to the research in an effort to minimise reductionism of the theoretical layer and consider all aspects of Foucault’s work (for example, see Christie & Sidhu, 2006 in Ball, 2018).

This chapter outlines and defines in detail the theoretical framework employed as the foundation and structure for this study. In building the layers of the framework, it will explore Foucault’s notions of power-knowledge, biopower and governmentality. Building on these will ensue a discussion of the subject and critical attitude. Finally, it will examine the forms of capital in accordance with Bourdieu, with links to Foucault for clarity and an alternate perspective. Throughout, specific definitions will be provided and linked to the research question to ensure each is clearly defined within the context of this study. This both formalises the theoretical and conceptual aspects of the framework.
In operationalising, Marshall’s (1990) work on genealogy and conducting an analysis of power relations is examined. The methodology of genealogy is utilised mainly in the context of literature review, whilst analysis of power relations is conducted in conjunction with empirical aspects of the study. A general framework for the analysis of capital is provided, which operates in conjunction with the analysis of power relations.

2.1 Foucault: Power, Subjectivity and Capital

Foucault provides a complex journey through theoretical notions of power, subjectivity and capital, which frame this study. Throughout this section, a Foucauldian perspective on power that manifests within education is defined, framing the lens under which this study investigates policy, the interplay of power-knowledge, governmentality and the subject, who is the individual participant in this study. It investigates the practices of power, the interconnectivity of power-knowledge (Herlin, Hernes, Hjorth, & Holt, 2014) and how it plays out in vocational education.

2.1.1 Power

For Foucault, power is everywhere, dispersed amongst individuals and entities and is neither liberating nor the cause of entrapment (A. Allen, 2012; Butin, 2006; Foucault, 2002). According to Butin (2006), within the social context, power is accumulated, can be shared, and is “never singular, unidirectional or fully controllable” (p. 378). It can be empowering or oppressive, and subject to the influence of society, politics and economics. An agent who possesses power can transfer it, but power cannot be lost; it is the level influence of the agent as a result of their possession of power that provides an opportunity to rise up for change, given
their capacity within their field of action (DiGiorgio, 2010). Simply put, those who have power have the greatest ability to enact change, or at least rise up in a situation where it may be necessary for them to do so, such as a student protesting for better food in the school canteen, after developing knowledge of healthy food choices. Knowledge has empowered them in this context, and this new-found power may give them the foundation on which to raise voice of opinion and desire. This unearths the notion that power is built upon knowledge, or that there is a relationship between the two.

Power has been defined as a complex notion and structure, usually of either power ‘over’ or ‘to’ (DiGiorgio, 2010). Power ‘over’ is a submissive form, where one individual or entity has the power over another. Foucault (2002) later defined this as a ‘technology of control’, where control refers to normalisation through the exercise of modern power, in a social way that goes beyond the individual. In this context, power is no longer that of the individual, but of the subject. Power ‘to’ is an assertive form, where one has the power to achieve, make choices, or act. This is known as ‘techniques of self’ (Foucault, 2000), which defines the knowledge, perspective and attitudes one possesses, shaped by the historical contexts in which one experiences one’s world of ‘truth’. The self has capacity to reflect and consider historically the truths that have defined the subject and respond, question and examine these truths for their ‘truth’ in the present. In essence, it is the freedom one experiences as a result of power.

For Foucault, power ‘over’ and ‘to’ is the assertion of the effects of power, whether negative or positive. To provide two examples, power ‘over’ can produce a normalisation effect (Scheurich, 2005), exemplified in societal class structures where
dominated classes accept their position within society as normal and unchangeable. These are the technologies of control. In the context of this study, these are a dominant state of power, embodied in the policies of vocational education that affects the subject; also defined as governmentality, which is a state of control and result of biopolitics, both defined later in this chapter.

Power ‘to’ provides the opportunity for one, as a subject, to act on oneself, on one’s own body, in establishing one’s own truth (Foucault, 2000). These are the technologies of the self (Martin et al., 1988), contextualised in the subject, the subject’s adherence to the policies that define VET, and an response to these requirements of policy.

In the context of this study, the facets of power ‘over’ and ‘to’ are important, as I examine perspectives on the assumed role of stakeholders on the influence over policy production and implementation. The technologies of the self and control underpin notions of biopower. Biopower is that which flows through everything, developing the nexus of power between one and another.

2.1.2 Biopower

In his work, Foucault was interested in the way power flows through everything, a capillary form known as biopower (Foucault, 1980b), and how it comes to shape our actions and interactions (Ball, 2012). The formation of power previously discussed is a sovereign notion, a dominant power over another that is formed for its power in the context of punishment. Disciplinary power evolved in the early eighteenth century, and modern notions of power, biopower, in the late eighteenth century. For want of a definition, biopower can be distinguished as an interaction
with, and control of, bodies; a right to life, or control of the subject (A. Allen, 2012; Foucault, 1980b; D. Jones, 1990; Marshall, 1990).

As Foucault writes, to navigate modern power and hence, biopower, we must begin to look beyond the simplicity of sovereign power to notions of power relationships, the concepts of freedom and subjectivity (Foucault, 1982; C. Taylor, 2014; D. Taylor, 2014a). A nexus between power and freedom is also apparent, in that power can only be exercised when the subject is free; free to consider that subject’s response, position and relationship in the context of power. To illustrate, C. Taylor (2014, p. 44) offers three examples of progression through the developments of power. The first, sovereign power, is the punishment of a crime based solely on the facts of the crime. Under disciplinary power, the discipline of a crime takes into account the subject’s character, the conditions under which the crime was committed and the potential for reoffence. Finally, biopower takes an interest in the ‘big data’ of the crime; crime rates, demographics, the control or regulation of crime. The focus becomes the individual within those parameters. Subsequently, biopower works alongside discipline, and discipline sometimes within it. Henceforth, in the context of power we can observe a) disciplinary power sits with the institution, exercised within it and by it, acting upon the individual; b) biopower acts through the State, on the State, and on collective bodies; and c) for the subject to enter into a discourse of truth, they will need to feel as though they are free to do so (Foucault, 1978; C. Taylor, 2014).

Table 2.1, adapted from one defined by D. Taylor (2014) and amended in italics, provides a summary of these formations of power which positions each in the context of this study. The term knowledge/power is used in the original though this is
altered to the term power-knowledge as used through this study, having a more specific relationship to power relations in this setting. It is by these two forms of power that analysis of stakeholder perspective can take place in the context of biopower (leading to biopolitics and addressed next), discipline of the institution and power relations, the definition of which follows.

Table 2.1

A definition of the modes of power and biopower

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>Tactics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regulatory Power</td>
<td>Populations, species, race,</td>
<td>Power-knowledge and</td>
<td>The State or schools, where the</td>
<td>Studies and practices of demographers, sociologists, economists,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(biopolitics)</td>
<td>students as a collective body,</td>
<td>control of the population</td>
<td>State is a stakeholder</td>
<td>interventions in the birthrate, longevity, public health, housing,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>teaching professionals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>migration, education, careers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disciplinary power</td>
<td>Individuals, bodies</td>
<td>Power-knowledge and</td>
<td>Schools, armies, prisons, asylums,</td>
<td>Studies and practices of criminologists, psychologists, psychiatrists,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(anatomopolitics)</td>
<td></td>
<td>subjegation of bodies</td>
<td>hospitals, workshops</td>
<td>educators; apprenticeship, tests, education, training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Adapted from C. Taylor (2014, p. 46), with contextual additions provided in italics
A distinction to be made: the table presents disciplinary power as having a relationship to the study of educators, education, training and apprenticeship, which would seem appropriate in this context. It is, to a degree, and henceforth why it is used in the context of analysing discourse within data. It provides feedback from data on the requirement of policy and resultant impact on aspects of curriculum achievement, such as quality teaching. Of greater importance to this study is the discourse of regulatory power and biopolitics; the policies themselves and relationship between policy and governmentality.

2.1.3 Biopolitics

Whilst Foucault’s earlier work aligned biopower in context of the body, later work (Foucault, 2004) built connections between power of the body (biopower), and biopolitics; control of the body by the State due to economic and political conditions of the time. Usually it is embodied in the control or organisation of the masses, taking into account measures of population and characteristics of the ‘species body’ (Cisney & Morar, 2015, p. 5). In cases where the State has an interest in an institution, such as a school or prison, biopolitics can flow and incorporate disciplinary power.

Consequently, the control of the body from a political standpoint has influence on the development of policy, with schools (among other institutions) the vehicle for implementation due to the restricted frameworks within which they operate, and the concentration of people for which the policy are intended (Foucault, 2004). This extends, of course, through other social contexts such as sexuality; though these are not the concern of this study, it is relevant to be aware of the connection and reach of biopower throughout social structures and frameworks.
To analyse power relations, we need to establish the intersection of power-knowledge and the way in which Foucault can be related to the education setting. We should also establish the ‘standpoint’ from which power relations should be analysed.

2.1.4 Power-knowledge and power relations

The intersection of power-knowledge is a complex relationship (Adams, Cochrane, & Dunne, 2012; Apple, 2013). It is the knowing and management of oneself, and of how knowledge allows people to relate to others and behave in society. It is the school, through the monitoring of behaviour, activities and experience, that shapes and models this knowledge and creates individual power-knowledge relationships; a construction of the human subject (Leask, 2012). The construct of power-knowledge within the subject provides opportunity to focus on the influence a subject exerts, as opposed to how power and knowledge influences the subject, in this case the student within the educational setting (Marshall, 1999). In this way, power-knowledge becomes an instrument of analysis, in which we establish relationships between the subject and truth. What do subjects know, how do they know this, and how does this internal power-knowledge relationship impact their ability to influence or effect change? Establishing this understanding of power-knowledge is instrumental in understanding how stakeholders effect change from their position, and how their knowledge of the education system influences their capacity to exercise power in policy construction.

D. Taylor (2014b) asserts:

As mentioned previously, “effective” navigation of power relations involves critically analysing our present conditions in order to identify
norms and practices that reinforce the status quo to the point where prevailing modes of thought and existence come to be seen as given, as what must be (p. 4).

Foucault (1982) proposed to effectively measure power and the relationship of power to a subject, it may be necessary to re-imagine how power is analysed, by carefully selecting the conditions under which it is observed. As such, his perspective is that power relations are observed in their antithesis, in that we look for power relations by considering the issue from the inverse angle and construct the observation (Foucault, 1982). As illustrated in the quote by D. Taylor, this further involves establishing the current conditions that define current norms and practices. These are, in the context of this study, the domains of investigation that enable navigation of power relations, observed form beyond the institution. Foucault suggests that in order to analyse power relations, it should be done from an external standpoint and not from that of the institution; looking down into the institution from the perspective of the relationships of power and how they operate within the institution (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983).

Foucault’s work was less useful in examination of pedagogy and experience of students. It was not to develop a grand theory, disconnected from practice. Further, it was not to establish that voice, or discourse in a way, is a platform for liberation from entrapment within the system (Butin, 2006; Foucault, 1982). Rather, his work was useful in understanding the relations of power and knowledge within the education setting, insofar as it provides a platform for voice in a context where knowledge instigates power to make change (A. Allen, 2012; Butin, 2006).
In summary, power relations are revealed by observing what they may not be; this study considers perspectives on the enactment of policy in schools and other institutions, to establish perspectives on outcomes from the policies created by those in power to do so. This seeks to establish if the interests and intentions of policy are being met and, consequently, power relations amongst the stakeholders within development and subsequent implementation of policy. In this way, politics enters the scene. It is not to say this study embarks on a political analysis, as that is far beyond the scope of this study. But, in analysing power relations, it is necessary to introduce governmentality, and have it considered amongst the discourse.

2.1.5 Governmentality

When Foucault speaks of government, he speaks firstly not of the formal Government, but of the government of oneself; how to govern oneself, how to be governed, how to govern others, and so on (Foucault, 2002; D. Taylor, 2014c). This is internal governance, which is applied to the self. Governance of others is the organisation and discipline of others, but it is still an internal governance that is expressed as power over an individual. Foucault then clarifies on the forms of government that weave themselves amongst society and the State, drawing on the evolution of government, to govern and the police of the sixteenth to eighteenth century. From this form of State and external governance, which was born from the ability to govern oneself, is born the notion of economy, and later the emergence of ‘economy’, in itself a form of governance (Foucault, 2002). For Foucault (2002),

To govern a State will mean, therefore, to apply economy, to set up an economy at the level of the entire State, which means exercising toward its inhabitants, and the wealth and behaviour of each and all, a form or
surveillance and control as attentive as that of the head of a family over
his household and his goods (p. 207).

This defies governance as an action, rather than an institution of governance.
For governance of the State, there is an attachment to population. For there to be
governance of the State there is required a population, and with a population the State
can exercise control. In support of this argument, Leask (2012) holds that
governmentality is constructed of the discourses that develop in the ‘conducting of
conduct’, the strategies and rationalities of governing a population. For Foucault, this
is biopolitics; the discipline of the population as a whole, the species body, though not
discipline in the negative sense of the word, but of organisation and control for
improvement and productivity (Cisney & Morar, 2015; Foucault, 2002; D. Taylor,
2014b).

Governmentality, then, is the power for the social norms to train us to be who
we will be: a disciplinary power in the context of discipline for productivity, and
biopolitics in the context of biopower, in that it is the power of the State to train the
species-body to respond to the needs of the State. This leads to a process of
normalisation; the creation of the ‘docile body’ (Foucault, 1995). It is through
governmentality that we accept truth; truth of ourselves, and truth of being governed.
Critique, then, is the formation of those governed who concern themselves of “not
being governed quite so much” (Foucault, 2007, p. 45). It is how we examine the
discourse through critique that enables introspection of policy, hence it is necessary to
establish the construct of critical attitude.
2.1.6 Critical attitude

This notion of critique has significance for this study. As governmentality speaks to the discourses of discipline, organisation and control the population is accepting of and governed by, has an impact on this study for our understanding of how each policy is enacted and its purpose: critique speaks of the way in which we question this policy. To be clear, though, not every person is ready to provide a critique and in analysing the data, consideration is given for the way in which people respond, the error in the data and the lack of clarity that may arise. Nonetheless, critique is an important feature for how data are used to provide an understanding of the present for its application into the future.

If governmentality is the modality of being governed, critique is “the art of not be governed quite so much” (Foucault, 2007, p. 45). It is an attitude, a disposition, and the discourse entered into that seeks to understand the why of governmentality in a way that can allow us to question it. There are three ‘anchors’, as Foucault (2007) puts it, though they have historical roots and need to be interpreted as such. The first includes challenging and refusing authority, in a biblical and scriptural sense; the questioning of truth within the Scriptures as they were written and enforced. The second is not accepting laws because they are unjust; a relation to the natural law. Where governmentality requires obedience, our rights in defence of this to the degree they cannot be refuted. The limits of the right to govern, essentially. Third, not accepting truth just because it is provided, by an authority, in that way; rather, accepting truth only because of some intrinsic reason; a confrontation of authority. This is a decision to accept truth because it is presented with some justification and a confrontation in the case where this is not provided. These are the discourses of truth.
As D. Taylor (2014c) explains, this is the basis of subjectivity. Subjectivity includes the technologies of the self; finding oneself, but in an acceptance and questioning of truth in a way that defines who we are because of our ability to question truth, of “thinking and acting differently” (D. Taylor, 2014c, p. 180).

Critique, then, is a process by which we negotiate the course of power relations; a manifestation of power-knowledge and critical attitude to call in to question all we are told and accept as truth as a process of governmentality. The notions of power relations spread wider than governmentality, but the context remains within the scope of this study for clarity. Critical attitude is

…a particular way of responding to the present; specifically, a critical attitude entails thought, speech, acts and modes of relating that reflect “insubordination” against prevailing conditions, which reveal those conditions as contingent, and thus do not simply reproduce the same relationship between truth and power which leaves persons in a self-sacrificing relationship of obedience to the authority of prevailing norms (Foucault, 2007 in D. Taylor, 2014c, p. 181).

2.1.7 Summary

Therefore, this study adopts this definition and ‘process’, a methodology that is not a framework, but a way of thinking. It captures the willingness of participants to question, challenge and respond to the authority of policy through the governmentality of education, the discipline and control, organisation, of policy and governance of curriculum in VET.
The study uses the participants’ critical attitude in analysis of historical significance with a context of the present. It asks questions of what is, and is not said, and the conditions under which they enter into the discourse of truth. Essentially, “[w]e need a historical awareness of our present circumstance” (Foucault, 1982, p. 778). Using present data, historical policy and current thought can be analysed for the authors’ position within VET, their objectives, authority and power-relations, with the emancipatory potential for suggesting a way forward beyond the confines of historical truth, just because it is. This outcome becomes the focus of Chapter 7. It is the culmination of an evaluation of power relations, built on an empirical investigation, journeying through historical, present and future policy.

The following outlines a conception of the institution of VET and schools, the manifestations of power, control and self.

2.1.8 Education

Foucault considers education a discursively constructed institution (B. Allen, 2010; Foucault, 1972), with power at the centre (Ball, 1990a; DiGiorgio, 2010). Discursive construction or formation is defined through statements that arise from discursive practice, and those statements are grouped and in turn, define what we know as knowledge (B. Allen, 2010; Foucault, 1972). It is the process by which an institution is constituted in and through discourse, such as discipline, government and truth. The discursively constructed institution is formed by the statements that construct the rules, practices and standards of the object. A formed institution then is a field within which a framework of rules, practices and standards exist (Kusch, 1991; Marshall, 1990), such as the policies and procedures that constitute it.
Foucault explores the institutional context of power and education, in which it is likened to hospitals and prisons, and often reflects the construction of these environments, physically and operationally. An institution, such as a school, is intended to shape and nurture the beliefs and values of a particular field, imparting these to subjects of the field (DiGiorgio, 2010). Institutional power is therefore another facet of the power framework, in which students are the subjects of power, and the recipients of knowledge that builds power. Power operates relative to knowledge and capital, provides a structural context within which institutions operate, and is a feature of how people interact (Leask, 2012). Leask’s (2012) analysis of Foucault’s perspective on the human subject is that schools, from a behaviour, power and control perspective, “construct the human entity” (p. 59). As behaviour is shaped, managed and controlled, it fabricates the person or subject, and that we do not ‘go to school’, but ‘emerge from it’. This is exemplified in a discussion by Robinson (2006), who talks to the industrialisation and standardisation of modern schooling, where students are subjected to measures of behaviour control, essentially killing creativity and innovative thinking, in the crusade for skills and knowledge; indeed, capital. Foucault’s (1995) description and analysis of panopticism, institutional surveillance for behaviour control in prisons, underpins the implementation in schools. Educational ‘industrialisation’ creates effects of docility and acceptance of one’s ‘status’; a repression of the student’s power to find voice within their situation. According to Allen (2012), Foucault established this as shaping the “subjectivities” of the person, influencing the decisions made within only a “limited number of acceptable options” (p. 3). This is a form of direct oppression and establishes a point of investigation within this study and the sub-question on curriculum requirements and the influence they have on student outcomes.
Ryan (1991) suggests Foucault intended the management of time, activity and behaviour as a tool for the creation of productivity, often under the guise of developing skills and knowledge, as is the intention of vocational education in Australia (Education and Employment References Committee, 2015; Productivity Commission, 2011). This is a superlative illustration of biopower (Foucault, 2004) in action; control of the body through “regulation and discipline” (Ball, 2012, p. 82). Similar patterns of discourse emerge from others in the same contexts (A. Allen, 2012; Leask, 2012). Observation, a critical feature in the theory of power-knowledge (Foucault, 1980a), is also a mechanism of control in the context of time and organisational practice. Observation comes in the form of building design, seating and organisation of time. The infiltration of surveillance technologies within schools has deepened control through observation. Further to the concept of ‘shaping’ the individual, the control of activity and experience fuels a potential for inequality and repression. Strictly, behaviour of the student is not a feature of this study, however it does feature in the consideration of how policy is used to control time, behaviour and experience within the educational environment. Hence, the facet of control also constructs our perspective of Foucauldian power; control over time, behaviour, knowledge and speech.

The educational reality of power and knowledge is that students are subject to the power articulated by those with more knowledge and are often the subject of oppression with limited opportunities to express voice (Green, 1998). They are shaped by control, manifested through management of behaviour, time and activity, and observation, which limits their access to options beyond those made available by the system, driven by those with greater power. Schools are designed to ‘construct’ the student, under a broad intention of creating skills and knowledge in a quest for
productivity. Recall, however, this is a positive manifestation of power; normalisation of behaviour through discipline and control (Scheurich, 2005). It is with these core principles we investigate policy development for vocational education and establish the influence those with greater power have over the implementation of these policies. It also drives analysis and discussion of perspective by stakeholders investigated in the course of this study.

2.1.9 Capital

Foucault’s notions of capital are used to understand the relationship between systemic implementations of VET. These are used in conjunction with Bourdieu’s concepts, defining the various interpretations of how capital develops as a consequence of education, social interaction and cultural evolution. In doing so, the study can explore the impact VET has on capital production in relation to the policy and programs designed to build capital amongst students.

Foucault’s perspective of human capital, which is the main focus of his work on capital beyond the discourse of power and the subject, is nestled into neo-liberal discourse (Foucault, 2008). For Foucault, human capital is a fixed proposition and not directly tied to an income, which has greater implications. It is aligned to an “earnings stream”, and the body a machine in the context of work. A machine because it requires maintenance and has a lifespan, to wit,

An earnings stream is not an income, precisely because the machine is constituted by the worker’s ability is not, as it were, sold from time to time on the labour market against a certain wage. In reality this machine has a lifespan, a length of time in which it can be used, an obsolescence,
and ageing. So that we should think of the machine constituted by, if you like, ability and worker and individuality bound together, as being remunerated over a period of time by a series of wages (Foucault, 2008, p. 225).

Further, the ability and skill of an individual cannot be separated, in the same way it cannot be from a machine. This is a positive constitution of the human as body and machine, particularly in the context of one’s ability to use the machine for an earnings stream. Human capital, in a hereditary sense, is accumulated by way of utilising one’s human capital for the improvement of social status and selection of a spouse, where resulting children can benefit from genetic capital. In a formation sense, it is educational investment, school or professional, that improves human capital and forms it for the individual.

In the same way biopower measures the population, human capital is affected in the same way. It can be measured in the context of investment, such as time spent with parents and their measure of human capital, health care and hygiene and migration (Adamson, 2009; Foucault, 2008). The empirical evidence of this is seen in articles that argue against the use of human capital as a metric, misunderstood in its purpose and calling for greater appropriation of the use data exposed as a result of its use as a measure of capability (M. McHugh, 2007). Further, there is an argument against the neoliberal use of human capital as a factor for the purpose of schooling in general, highlighting student voice in altering the neoliberal stronghold on education (Smyth, Robinson, & McInerney, 2014).

Theoretically, though, the nexus here is between the measurement of capital and the capacity for the body to be of benefit to the greater population through its
contribution of this capital, in the past, present and future. The intention is to consider how vocational education contributes to the multiple domains of capital, how it can be decoupled from these static metrics, engage with critical attitude, and the way power interacts with the outcomes of VET activities.

2.2 Bourdieu: Capital

Bourdieu’s notion of capital includes the fields of social, cultural symbolic and cultural capital, often defined as the knowledge imparted as a process of education, whether formal or as a result of social interaction (Bourdieu, 1977; Grenfell, 2013). The following section examines these forms of capital from Bourdieu’s perspective, building on the aspects of Foucault’s capital already examined.

2.2.1 Economic, social, symbolic and cultural capital

Bourdieu considers four forms of capital, specifically social, cultural, economic and symbolic. There is a nexus between the forms of capital and what Bourdieu calls, the social field (Bourdieu, 1977); each field values a specific type of capital and as one develops sufficient capital, and hence, power, one can enter a specific social field. The forms are linked, even though they may seem distinct, and can be converted between types, though this may incur losses of capital (Bourdieu, 1977).

Cultural capital is the translation of values and cultural nuance that makes a culture what it is; behaviours, knowledge and practices of a people. Cultural capital occurs in three states; objectified, embodied and institutionalised. It is this last form that is most appropriate for this study. It defines the certifications and education,
professional development and training undertaken to create skills and knowledge. Social capital refers to the networks in a person’s social field. It is the resources provided to that person as a result of membership, such as a professional or trade certification connecting with similarly trained people.

Economic capital is that which can be directly transferred into financial or monetary gain. In a tangible sense, this is property or material acquisition, though in the context of education these are the skills that can be used for income. This sits in opposition to the concepts drawn by Foucault, in some ways, though if the notion of capital, economic and potentially human within it, is seen as a capacity to convert knowledge and skills into an ‘earnings stream’ with a lifespan, it is possible to maintain the integrity and consider the lifespan of a qualification. Furthermore, it is feasible to establish discourse of the power relations between economic capital, human capital, qualifications, life-long learning and work (Bourdieu, 1986). This has great potential for further investigation and clarification through exploration of data.

Finally, symbolic capital refers to the verification and recognition of all forms of capital that constitutes usefulness of this capital on the social field (Bourdieu, 1977). This can be viewed as the capabilities of a teacher who has gained the knowledge or the certification and skills to be a teacher. Analysis of this takes place on the value attributed to the collective capital of the individual, given their social, economic and cultural capital.

2.2.2 Summary

Accordingly, this study explores the relationship between capital and implementation of policy, in response to the research questions. This is a consequence
of the focus in VET on training and application of knowledge and skills. In part, this conception of capital provides additional context to the second part of Marshall’s toolbox (Marshall, 1990), explained later in this chapter, in which an analysis takes place of the objectives of those who have power to act upon them.

Capital precedes knowledge, which has a nexus with the exercise of power and ability to engage in the discourse of power and truth. It is at this precipice we consider the interplay of power between stakeholders and policymakers in examining policy implementation through critical attitude. As policy, activity and curriculum are exposed through data, an analysis of the contribution to the forms of capital takes place to establish its relationship to power-knowledge.

2.3 Operationalisation

The following section pieces together the puzzle established in previous sections. It is important to visualise how power, power relations, genealogy, capital and critical attitude are positioned to achieve the outcomes of the study.

Application of Foucault can be seen as problematic, as there is a consensus that no framework exists explicitly for use in research, and in some ways it is un-Foucauldian to use a systemic framework (Ball, 2012), particularly for genealogical approaches (Marshall, 1990). There is some critique in the use of Foucault, specifically in ambiguities or inaccuracies of his work and ensuing attempts to use it as a framework, for which it was not intended (Graham, 2005; Roth, 1992; J. Ryan, 1991) and although not directly studying education, Foucault’s work has been used to examine educational contexts (Ball, 2012, 2018; Green, 1998; Simola, Heikkinen, & Silvonen, 1998). However, as Ryan (1998, p. 118) argues, “Scholars and practitioners
in education would do well to use Foucault in their attempts to understand the nature and effects of formal schooling.” Furthermore, as Ball (2012) argues, Foucault provides an opportunity to “intervene within the discourses of power” (p. 24).

Consequently, this study utilises a well-documented and carefully selected toolbox, *per se*, incorporating an analysis of power-knowledge, genealogy and new notions of time and discontinuity synthesized by Marshall (1990). This builds on the framework of analysis for power relations offered by Foucault (1983a). This operational approach provides a ‘way of doing’ the theory; considering power relations particularly, and in discussion referring to the conceptual and responding to the theoretical. For the purpose of this study, it is coupled with an analysis of capital.

### 2.3.1 Genealogy

A genealogical approach is recommended (Marshall, 1990), as “we have to know the historical conditions that motivate our conceptualisation” (Foucault, 1982, p. 778). This is not with the intention of “studying the past, but assessing the present” (Marshall, 1990, p. 23). The present, then, is the context in which an investigation takes place, and not the current present, as is the norm conception. Marshall applies genealogy to the toolbox as a way of understanding the historical conditions under which power relations manifest. For literature review, it provides a substantial way to construct history, informed by the present.

For Foucault, genealogy is a break from traditional practice of developing historical timelines of events or a chronical. The focus rests on the practices, procedures, processes, and discontinuations of events that build truth and knowledge.
of the present (Fraser, 1993). It is “a historical awareness of our present circumstance” (Foucault, 1982, p. 778).

Hence, the use of genealogy will focus on historical discontinuations that led the development of policy, providing a clearer picture of the issues surrounding educational reform (A. Allen, 2012; Roth, 1992; J. Ryan, 1991). This occurs in literature review, later linked to discussion of the empirical and theoretical results of data collection and analysis. The focus on discontinuity exposes the changes that led to knowledge, an exercise of power and the impact on capital, whether capital formation or reliance for policy formation.

2.3.2 Marshall’s toolbox and power relations

Foucault (1983a) provides an approach, an analytic grid, for analysing power relations within a defined institution. Marshall (1990) clarifies this into a clear and concise framework, a “tool-box” (A. Allen, 2012, p. 4). According to Marshall (1990), this particular toolbox has not yet been used for analysis of education. There are three parts that comprise this toolbox, including “an analytic grid of power-knowledge, the method of genealogy, and new notions of time, especially rupture and discontinuity” (Marshall, 1990, p. 24). The analytic grid is examined below. The method of genealogy pertains to literature review, the structure of data collection in the present, which wraps the notions of time and discontinuity informed by a historical ‘present’. This was explained previously and is applied in Chapter 3.

Marshall’s framework is provided verbatim below and addressed for perspective and alignment to the subsequent approach. Omissions are made in the quote below of examples from the original to diffuse confusion and supplemented
with examples in the context of this study. Some are left in their original form to maintain intent. Therefore, of Marshall’s framework is, to quote:

1. The systems of differentiations established by law, traditions, economic conditions, and so on which give some *prima facie* position for power relationships to be brought into play.
   a. The position to, experience in, and expectations of, teachers and employers that influence curriculum and learning, or the way in which systems or the sectors are differentiated.

2. The types of objectives pursued intentionally by those who act upon the actions of others when power relations are brought into existence.
   a. A teacher may be pursuing curriculum and educational imperatives, whilst an employer may pursue industry expectations, whilst both exercise their power in opposition to the other’s imperative.

3. The means of bringing power relations into play, by force, compliance, consent, surveillance, economic reward, and so on.
   a. Teachers are the subjects, of compliance, as are institutions and organisations who maintain certification. Employers are engaged in training for economic reward. Development of social, cultural or human capital.

4. Forms of institutionalization.
   a. These may be a mixture of legal, traditional, hierarchical structures such as the family, the military, or the school [*sic*].

5. The degree of rationalization that, depending upon the situation, endows, elaborates, and legitimates processes for the exercise of power. Much of the
early talk in the philosophy of education of teachers being in authority and an authority might be conceived in this light.

a. Similarly, legislation and bias exercised by governing bodies for industry engagement may influence such processes.


The framework is applied within thematic synthesis conducted in Phase 2. Power relations are expected to arise from the data, which are interrogated for meaning in Chapter 7. This is a deeply complex pattern of thought and analysis. The outcome will be to establish patterns of thought and action that evolve into the discourses of truth.

2.3.3 An analysis of capital

Capital manifests in policy as a driving factor for its development. As examined in literature review, Chapter 3, capital is integrated into policy throughout VET. In responding to the integration of capital in policy, this study attempts to analyse capital in the discourse of truth on policy and the benefits to capital formation. By aligning with the general principles of Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice (Bourdieu, 1977; Walther, 2014), there is an opportunity to engage with a general framework in operationalising the terms of reference for analysis.

Presenting a synergy between Foucault’s thesis on progressive politics, Bourdieuian notions of capital, and notions of chief contradictions, Jóhannesson (1998) argues for compatibility between social endeavours and strategies, and technologies of the self. This creates a nexus between the concept of power relations generating discursive themes, which can be problematised. The effect of this is an ability to
evaluate capital manifestations in the context of problematisation in VET. Essentially, it considers how has VET used capital to justify the development of policy, and how capital has been problematised to substantiate policy development. This does not replace the research questions on capital, but it does provide a starting point for analysis without becoming embroiled in a cumbersome framework that takes the focus off power relations. On the contrary, it provides another lens under which we can place power relations and policy for analysis.

Bourdieu’s theory of practice (Bourdieu, 1977) is a framework used to investigate the normative behaviours of a society, culture or group. Whilst this is not the focus of this study, what is adapted is the foundational uses of capital in policy development. Hence, the framework provided by Walther (2014) is far too in depth to be used in its entirety here, however the principles of investigation remain constant and provide relevant guidance for the analysis of capital. An empirical use of capital in a similar way was implemented by Greenspan (2014), also used to provide context and guidance in analysis. Table 2.2 provides a number of contextual examples that sit within the boundaries of this study. They are conceptualised and operationalised using the explanatory framework provided by Walther (2014).
Table 2.2
A general framework of examples for the analysis of capital throughout Phase One and Phase Two of the study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Capital</th>
<th>Social Capital</th>
<th>Cultural Capital</th>
<th>Symbolic Capital</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • The financial benefits of policy, activities or curriculum in the context of employers or students  
• Work placement hours, free labour | • Production of networks through training, education or work placement.  
• Value placed on the students by those who can provide those networks and connections | • Institutionalised forms; certification, trade certification  
• The value placed on education in the context of greater society | • The value placed on teachers and their work  
• The recognition of quality teaching in reports and policy documents |

Note. Each are examples of the evidence sought from analysis of spoken or written text in policy, literature or data.

These conceptions are used in data analysis and to guide discussion of the manifestation and understanding of capital in data analysis. The process is focused on considering the written and unwritten discourse in policy of capital, and the relationships between this, biopower and governmentality.

Figure 2.1 below illustrates the theoretical and conceptual layers, presented and justified. It also provides the analytical (operational) layer of the framework.
The interplay of power dynamics, governmentality and biopower, and the formation of capital provide a decent layer on which to build knowledge present and historical and understanding as we navigate the data in discourse.

2.3.4 Summary

A theoretical position, established in this chapter, interlinks the concepts of power-knowledge, critical attitude and capital, to provide a foundation on which institutions such as VET, school, work and policy, can be examined. The conceptual framework provides a series of definitions critical to the purpose of the study, underwriting the research question. These become the focus of interrogation in the context of the analytical grid of power relations and capital throughout the phases of
the study. The operational provides a practical way of ‘doing’ the study, without necessarily formalising a framework or allowing ambiguity to take hold. The approach allows for reflexive analysis of each element, using an empirical dataset to provide understanding in a theoretical discussion; finding the unsaid.

Consequently, to establish a flow, a genealogical approach is taken in literature review, with a focus on the discontinuities of, and circumstances surrounding, historically significant policy development. An empirical study proceeds, utilising literature to develop a series of points for investigation. Data in two phases is analysed; in the first for stakeholder perspective on policy whilst the second seeks to clarify the empirical, illustrating stakeholder power relations, policy contributions to capital and governmentality of policy and VET.

2.4 Conclusion

Foucault provided a significant opportunity for critical analysis of discourse, truth, power relations and the subject. This study has attempted much, and in doing so seeks to use Foucault’s concepts as a position within theory. This is coupled with Bourdieu’s notions of capital, such that they fill a gap in the investigation and provide some basis on which to interrogate the data. This too is not a framework, but a position from which to observe data.

By utilising a genealogical approach to literature review, we can understand the past so as to interrogate the present. Discontinuity becomes a focus, rather than the specific iterations of policy and political shift. A theoretical position that incorporates power-knowledge, critical attitude and capital underpins an empirical investigation; two phases to establish truth.
This attempt through theory was not made blindly, though it is made with a great deal still to learn, know and understand of Foucault’s deep knowledge and methodologies. If it achieves anything, it has achieved something. Whilst there are likely gaps in this work, it may offer a substantial opportunity to examine, produce clarification and contribute a better understanding of theory.
3 Literature Review

Discovering a sense of truth is a complex and relentless exploration of individual and broad perspectives, to carefully reveal every minute detail (Graham, 2005; Marshall, 1990). Genealogy is one approach that affords the rigour due to such a task (Foucault, Rabinow, & Faubion, 1997; Tamboukou, 1999). Truth is discursively constructed, embodied in the perspectives of stakeholders and their vantage point of the institution from which they observe the world. In this way, collective power-knowledge flows to influence policy change and shape historical and future context, creating the world we now know (B. Allen, 2010).

This review starts in the ‘present’, which for the purpose of the literature review is 2015. First, the major features of VET are analysed which includes the macro perspective, specific policy and programs and stakeholders. The review then travels throughout history and interrogates literature for each contribution and discontinuity that led to the evolution of each feature. As this evolves, policy, programs or activities critical to the success of VET are exposed. These are analysed in context and considered for their level of importance in the scheme of VET. The review includes an ongoing analysis of these from the perspective of capital formation. It concludes by identifying the programs necessary for inclusion into this study.

3.1 ‘Doing’ Genealogy

Foucault provides no systematic framework, no direct methodology, of genealogy (Tamboukou, 1999), but rather a “toolbox of concepts” (Ball, 2012, p. 38) for the purpose of further development and understanding. However, a basic criterion
for analysing and conceptualisation is that “[w]e have to know the historical conditions which motivate our conceptualization. We need a historical awareness of our present circumstance” (Foucault, 1983a, p. 209). One way to consider this is through the problematisations and discontinuities that shape history.

Discontinuity, according to Foucault (1980a, pp. 109–115), is misunderstood. A discontinuity is seen as the antonym of smooth transitions, those which historically are observed primarily in transformations of forms of empirical knowledge, such as medicine, political economy and biology, from one understanding. This differs from the gradual incline of knowledge or practice in other disciplines, where the ongoing developments are more readily and easily accepted. These practices contain statements, which are accepted as scientifically true. These statements change not in their content of theoretical form, but in the way they are governed and what governs them; a régime of power (discourse) between the statements governed by scientific measure, test and acceptability. Foucault refers to the significant disruption in medical knowledge, which was beyond even new knowledge, but a “new ‘régime’ in discourse and forms of knowledge” that happened “in the space of a few years” (Foucault, 1980a, p. 112). The underlying intention of identifying the discontinuity is to examine why a deep modification of the rules that makes the science (education) true takes place and how the internal regime of power relates to this change. Focus on discontinuities allows this study to take a unique approach in establishing the development and implementation of policy, whilst the context of governmentality considers stakeholder perspectives, influence and critical attitude – the response to government.
Problematisation, on the other hand, is a political concept. As Foucault (2000) describes, problematisation is about how politics answers to historical problems. This is opposed to analysing a problem from the perspective of politics. The concept is a ‘how and why’ certain experiences, concepts, behaviour or processes become a problem (Healy, 2013). As Foucault (1983b) states, “a given problematization is not an effect or consequence of a historical context or situation, but is an answer given by definite individuals” (p. 75). As the problem develops, there is potential for anonymizing ownership of the answer. This leads to a general assumption of truth as to the answer, without direct consequence to the individual who provided the answer.

In discussing the forms of genealogy, Foucault (1997) defines three domains of genealogy, specifically

a historical ontology of ourselves, in relation to truth through which we constitute ourselves as subjects of knowledge; second, a historical ontology of ourselves in relation to a field of power through which we constitute ourselves as subjects acting on others; third, a historical ontology in relation to ethics through which we constitute ourselves as moral agents (p. 262).

Each is a focus of self, a perspective, and varying measures of truth, power-knowledge and ethics, in the way we construct the world in a historical context. The domains help to frame investigation, in which the ensuing literature review aligns with the second; understanding the stakeholder perspectives in the field of power that created historical policy, the way that policy is enacted through the power of others, and how that informed current contexts. The first domain is more substantially focused on knowledge and truth and the third on ethics and moral values, which are
Ball’s (2012) use of genealogy gives primacy to historical discontinuities that shape policy, creating an “effective history” (p. 58), examining “practices rather than laws…discourses rather then [sic] rhetorics [and] techniques and procedures rather than structures” (p. 59). Ball (2012) addresses the “practical issues, necessities. and the limits of the present” and has no “determinist ascription of causality” (pp. 58–59). Such an investigation focuses on the “advance of humanity from one domination to another” (Ball, 2012, p. 59). This is so as to not fall prey to the pitfalls others have been criticised for, such as misrepresentation and detachment of intertwined concepts, like power-knowledge (Ball, 2012). By following these operationalisations of genealogy, literature review can provide a substantial formation for investigation and the resulting research produces “useful work” (Ball, 2012, p. 39).

Allan (1996) argues for the use of a Foucauldian approach in an attempt to analyse the benefits of mainstream schooling for disabled children. In this analysis of the criticisms of his work, a critical point is made as to the process of genealogy for Foucault. For Allan, we should “[begin] with a diagnosis of the present situation…making it possible to ask ‘How did we get here?’” (p. 229). This approach provides a unique opportunity to start at the present and work backwards.

In completing this literature review, there is an attempt to piece together an approach used by others (Allan, 1996; Ball, 2012; Pillow, 2003; Tamboukou, 1999) and develop an understanding of the how and why particular events and processes, policies and enactments throughout history have become a problem (Foucault, 1983b). It is an attempt to describe and appreciate the problematisations and
discontinuities that inform the present, starting in the present. It will focus on our circumstance in VET; analysis of the laws is unavoidable, but the developments of VET are as deeply connected in policy and stakeholder effect as they are to laws, so this takes primacy without disregard to the laws. The approach will provide a pathway through history using Foucault’s ideas (Davidson, 1986; Foucault et al., 1997; Scheurich, 2005), constructing a detailed account of policy, programs and activities in VET, whilst engaging three fundamental aspects of Foucault’s work – power, truth and the subject. At its conclusion it will provide a way to conduct ‘useful work’.

3.2 Vocational Education and Training

The Australian VET sector is constantly under scrutiny. Wheelahan and Moodie (2011) assert that complaints of the VET sector as not new, and since the 1800s have been the topic of discussion in every country implementing some type of vocational education, particularly from an economic viewpoint. Three reasons were stated. First, VET is constantly on the back foot, training people to be ready for a workforce that is ever changing. As a result, the VET sector is trying to keep abreast of these changes. Second is a social consideration, where society pushes for greater consideration that cannot be reconciled within a single system. And third, “problems in the economy and mismatches between skills and work are attributed to problems with VET even though the relationship between VET and work is mutually constitutive, and problems can also arise from ineffective deployment of skill in workplaces” (Wheelahan & Moodie, 2011, pp. 3-4).

In 2015, the state of vocational education in Australia is complex. Its manifestation is influenced by industry needs and expectations, policy and political necessity, funding arrangements, historical organisation and market shifts. These
characteristics and influences are not new to vocational education, nor is the list exhaustive. Historically, VET has been the subject of great ebb and flow. Systemically VET has been dealing with fundamental change, political fluctuations primarily, for as long as it has been around. Nonetheless, they each have an effect on the operation of VET and its implementation across States.

In many contexts, the VET sector in Australia is highly successful. Toner and Dalitz (2012) assert the lack of recognition and opportunity for Australian VET and the sector in innovation initiatives at the federal level is hurting the status of VET. The implication is where colleges could meet the needs of industry, they are constrained by a lack of technology and fulfilling skill shortages in innovation-intensive industry. Pickersgill (2005) makes the point that historically, Australia has been ahead of innovation in many technical initiatives and certifications, likening awards for ‘lesser’ degrees to those at higher levels in Edinburgh and Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

3.2.1 Selection of domains for review

The following section considers many aspects of VET and their formation. The criteria for selection are defined in Chapter 4. Each were chosen for the impact across States (particularly New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria), historical significance and breadth of impact for stakeholders. They were also included for their ability to persist into current arrangements. The review starts with by examining the shift to competency-based training (CBT) in the early 1990s, considered one of the most substantial change to VET in Australia in recent history (Malley and Keating, 2006). Issues such as funding arrangements and contestability, institutional arrangements including TAFE and RTOs political drivers such as social contexts and
innovation are then explored, as are major policy and frameworks that define VET. This forms an illustration of the present which is followed up by a brief history of VET in Australia.

The final sections of the review establish and clarify concepts of capital that exist throughout VET policy. This informs the study of how capital is expressed throughout these policies and responses by stakeholders historically. Finally, cases used in the study are defined using stakeholder definitions.

### 3.2.2 Competency-based Training: A Paradigmatic shift

The introduction of a competency-based educational framework was a substantial change to the technical education sector, shunting it into a new era of training. Malley and Keating (2006) describe policy shifts throughout history in four periods, where the one most relevant here is the fourth:

from 1992 to the present, [the fourth period of policy shift] is one of structural response to the observations and recommendations from the previous review period. Three forms of vocationalism emerged during this time: a localised one based on youth needs; a State-based one driven by the institutional frameworks of a general education system; and a national one based on the Vocational Education and Training (VET)[2] sector, and a corporatist view of social capital, competitive training markets and competency-based demand driven training (p. 628).

Shifts in national VET are the focus of three reports, including the Finn, Mayer and Carmichael reports (Carmichael, 1992; Finn, 1991; Mayer, 1992) written between 1991 and 1992. These paved the way for sweeping changes across the sector,
which sought to overcome equity for access to education in the sector, improve industry engagement, create clearer connections between general and vocational education, improve apprenticeship and traineeship uptake and employment, define the employability skills (Key Competencies) needed for work-readiness, increase competition across the public and private VET sector, enable national recognition and portability of qualifications and improve quality of training. The most significant change to VET though, was the introduction of competency-based training (CBT).

Three substantial points can be made from the Finn report. First, prior to the Finn report, the Kangan report (Kangan, 1975) indicated the way into the future of education was to broaden educational opportunities through technical and further education, which went beyond historically established education streams (Russell, 2010). Traditionally, schools provided the core learning for a pathway into general work, university retained for the privileged few and technical colleges to provide for trade, craft or vocational skills. Kangan made the point that vocational education could be for more than simple development of “skilled manpower” (Russell, 2010, p. 21). The Finn report responds in part to this call to equity. At the time, there was a push to increase Year 12 completion numbers, of which the Finn report indicated a mandate for up to 95% by 2001. This had enormous implications for socially and economically disadvantaged youth, what the Finn report referred to as those at risk. Tait (1995) argues the notion of ‘risk’ is a governmental term, which statistically can provide a measurable and numeric value on the number of those ‘at risk’. It also infers no opposing status, unlike the term ‘disadvantaged’ would (Tait, 1995). Using the term ‘at risk’, the Finn report was able to include all students to be the target of policy and a foundational reason for change.
The Finn report also focused on the convergence of general schooling and vocational education, and education and work skills. This too was picked up from the Kangan report, though it made a point of placing the burden of broader vocational education offerings on schools and to TAFE, increased general vocational education and competency within this training beyond apprenticeships and craft-based skills and knowledge training (Finn, 1991). This would result in programs such as VET in Schools. The report also called for other organisations to take on ‘recreational’ courses, with schools and TAFEs taking a clearly defined role in the provision of VET.

Third, it indicated the need for developing a national curriculum of key competencies that will help to underpin training with recognisable skills people possess as a result of skill and knowledge development. It was proposed these skills were transferrable and generalised, able to be used across jobs and industry sectors. This point is explored more deeply later in this chapter, as it was the core focus of the Mayer report.

The policies, authorities and processes recommended as part of the Carmichael report came under the umbrella of the National Training Reform Agenda (NTRA). A core feature of the NTRA was introduction of a national credentialing system and competency-based training, known as the National Framework for the Recognition of Training (NFROT). The framework enabled design of training packages specifically for job roles. This would focus more on the competencies a person could demonstrate for use in the workplace rather than on time served in a workplace and training, a (still present) characteristic of apprenticeship and traineeship (Carmichael, 1992; Williams, 2005). Consequently, the framework was
primarily industry-focused as opposed to focusing on the needs of the individual (Goozee, 2001).

The purpose of competency-based training was to prepare school leavers not undertaking an apprenticeship, traineeship or entering university with a basic qualification, called the Australian Vocational Training Certificate. Levels 1 and 2 provided students with the basic work-ready skills to be employable, where a Level 3 certificate was seen as equivalent to TAFE certificate for apprenticeship (Committee for Economic Development of Australia, 1995). Some complaints in relation to this approach were a lack of general education, the focus on industry as a driver of curriculum, and narrow field of competency definitions (Carmichael, 1992). These concerns were initially overcome by the idea that CBT had more to offer than the issues that arose from it, particularly if well-defined and strategized under the NFROT and in alignment with the Australian Standards Framework. It was envisaged the NTRA would be ‘industry-led’, in that it would respond to the workplace skill needs of industry and employers. This was assured by the involvement of industry in the development of competencies that related specifically to the jobs people would conduct in their workplaces. The NTRA, however, was a complex bureaucratic centralised and national system, given the necessity to balance the needs of education, industry and community within complex government arrangements across Commonwealth and State structures (Bowman & McKenna, 2016). Subsequently, various industries and enterprises found the NTRA and related frameworks arduous to access, leading to a lack of industry involvement (Committee for Economic Development of Australia, 1995).
The NFROT policy was fraught with problems. After only 12 months, a review illustrated concerns with quality assurance, interpretation of policy and implementation guidelines, recognition of certifications and the need for a longer-term strategy (Working Party on the Recognition of Training, 1993). One of the most important recommendations of this report was to highlight the absence of a competency-based national system of qualifications, resulting in a fall-back to an existing system that was time-recognised rather than skill orientated, and competency measured. This left certification confusing and ill-aligned to the new competency-based system (p. 11). Furthermore, there were issues with recognition of competency between States, a core principle of the original policy and implementation framework.

The Australian Recognition Framework (ARF) was introduced in 1998, responding to the need for improvements required in the NFROT policy. Citing quality assurance and issues in providing quality training across States, it was recommended that changes be made to the ARF for stricter quality control under a National Training Quality Council (Committee on Employment and Workplace Relations, 2000). Other issues such as funding, State responsibilities and control of RTO quality assurance were cause for overall improvement to the framework which resulted in implementation of the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) in 2001. Designed to strengthen nationally recognised training and qualifications, the AQTF provided strict guidelines for operation of a RTO nationally.

3.2.2.1 VET in Schools

VET in Schools is the operation of VET in secondary schools, which manifests differently across States. The Carmichael (Carmichael, 1992) report had indicated a substantial need to bring VET to school students for the purpose of more
flexible arrangements and earlier training of apprentices and trainees, providing broader school options. It also provided pathways for students completing school as part of the change to the school leaving age (NCVER, 2011).

As an example of the disparity between manifestations, the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) differs to the New South Wales VET in Schools Higher School Certificate program. VCAL is designed to sit alongside the Victorian Certificate of Education, the ‘mainstream’ school leavers certificate that signifies completion of formal schooling to Year 12. Similar programs run in other States, though are reported as part of the same qualification all students achieve when leaving school, in that State. For example, in NSW students who decide to complete a VET pathway through the Higher School Certificate (HSC), the exit examination at the end of Year 12 in Australia, receive the same certification as other students who chose a non-VET pathway, though they are ineligible to receive an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR).

VET-pathway certifications (such as VCAL) provide “flexibility for young people who it deemed to be disengaged from education” (Smyth et al., 2014, p. 493), though the outcome is more significant. Instead of providing for students in a purposeful and positive way, they are often found to be more disengaged due to the complexity of issues students bring with them. Ryan (1998) examines a multitude of global issues on low-status vocational education and emphasised the negative impact these have had in Australia. To some degree, these programs can become dumping grounds for students who are unable to fit ‘traditional’ models of schooling (R. Ryan, 2002). Smyth et al. (2014) write:
These programmes are often situated on the edges and borders, like an appendix that can be removed quickly if it gets too messy or infected. The students are often housed in annexes, demountables and other ramshackled cubby houses. Their teachers are often struggling to do their best with limited resources and are confused, exhausted and lost as to what they can do or provide that will change the situation for these young people who have ended up in these ‘pockets’, and who bring with them a complex smorgasbord of diverse, confused, complicated multifaceted needs and experiences (p. 499).

There are practical examples of purpose-built trade training centres that provide specific facilities for students. The Trade Training Centres in Schools (TTCs) program ran between 2008 and 2017, providing $1.4b in Commonwealth funding to the States for improvement of training facilities. Some of these are multi-million-dollar buildings with exceptional facilities, however most vocational education at the high-school level is provided in fairly limiting situations, with many simple extensions of usual school offerings. A comprehensive report (Scott, 2014) on the outcomes of objectives for TTCs in Australia considers the impact of this investment, with most success found in the quality of teachers, offerings of the schools and collaboration with industry. The investment has paid dividends; future decisions on this policy have the potential to support, or negatively impact, these outcomes.

3.2.2.2 Summary

Changes to the way VET was perceived had implications for the development of policy and implementation of general and vocational education in Australia (Australian Education Council and Curriculum Corporation, 1991), brought about by
a period of review between 1991 and 1992. The greater implications of these related to the provision of schooling for ‘at risk’ youth and development of a new, competency-based national VET system that would become the responsibility of schools, TAFE and the private RTO sector. This resulted in a competitive market-based VET system that would have greater implications for the value of VET, especially across sectors that were now competing against each other for market share. It would also generate pressure on general schooling providers and TAFEs as it developed over the coming years, particularly in a social context. Russell (2010) asserts, “VET is not equipped, adequately funded, nor appropriate to provide the broader educational and social needs of the community” (p. 22). Finally, it would define a nationally recognised series of frameworks to ensure transportability of qualifications, build a nationally recognised set of key competencies and help to engage industry in the provision of quality vocational education and training.

Historical developments and implementations of NFROT, ARF and AQTF policy have been complex and ever-changing. Bowman and McKenna (2016) describe the complex and ill-defined nature of VET between the early 1990s and 2015. Their summary figure of frameworks (see Bowman and McKenna, 2016, pp. 20-21) is a demonstration of the complexity, an indication of how challenging navigating each facet would have been for industry and State authorities. The underlying principles though persist, in that each has tried to provide a set of regulations for the operation of RTOs and a set of principles in the recognition of training. As these have developed, they have brought with them considerable change which, in many cases, has been to the detriment of the sector. Many of these relate to quality of implementation and training, use and appropriation of funding and recognition of training and qualifications. As reported by Ryan (2011), industry
satisfaction of VET has not changed between surveys conducted in the 1980s and 2007, which would indicate little has changed for these stakeholders. Ryan (2011) goes on to suggest changes to the rhetoric of VET to more substantially respond to the needs of industry, specifically “the non-engagement with VET and the majority of Australian industry” (p. 21). The difference in approach between States for VET in Schools is one example, as is the TTC program, of the rhetoric that surrounds VET at various levels and how it can shape the perception, value and outcomes of VET.

In the context of this study, establishing stakeholder perspectives of the operational nature of VET can capture this rhetoric, whilst considering individual and macro (institutional) positions within the system to better understand how the system could respond. Further, there is an opportunity to analyse how each sector has responded to competitive market conditions under competency-based training, and how this has affected sector relationships.

3.2.3 The Australian Qualifications Framework

The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) was introduced in 1995 as a consequence of the frameworks before it and a need to clearly define qualification pathways for education and training. These frameworks, and the AQF, are greatly influenced by two factors. These are the necessity for agreement of the provision of such a framework from the States and Territories due to constitutional limitations, and historical influence of European settlement (Keating, 2003). Its intention is to limit the power of institutions to define and deliver its own qualifications that can limit the transfer of credit from one place to another (Wheelahan, 2011).
The AQF defines qualifications from Certificate I to Advanced Diploma, which are primarily the responsibility of TAFE and private RTOs, though in more recent times this has shifted to Universities as they start offering more Diploma and Advanced Diploma courses. Higher qualifications, Bachelor to Doctoral degrees, are aligned with academic, university-oriented study. This tiered system of qualifications arranges Certificate I to Certificate IV, Diploma, Advanced Diploma, Bachelor, Masters and Doctoral levels into a set of standards that is delivered universally across Australian education (Australian Qualifications Framework Council, 2013). It achieves this by maintaining national standards in delivery and assessment of skills and knowledge. However, the AQF is distinct from general education, usually identified by year grades offering subjects such as mathematics, science and language studies. Figure 3.1 provides a visual perspective of the AQF (Australian Qualifications Framework Council, 2013, p. 19).
Although defining qualifications that span both VET and university sectors, the university sector enjoys much greater autonomy from the AQF than the VET sector (Keating, 2003), particularly in that they have had this autonomy from the State since their inception. This was a consequence of their design and European heritage, and that they could act as an educational authority separate from State department schools from early on (Keating, 2003).

Qualifications pathways under the AQF exist to provide a progressive credentialing system that stretches from primary school all the way through the high-
level tertiary degrees. Figure 3.2 provides an outline of the Australian Qualifications Pathway available through primary, secondary and senior school, VET and university.

![Australian Qualifications Pathway](image)

**Figure 3.2 The pathways of certification under the Australian Qualifications Framework (“Australian Qualifications Framework,” n.d.)**

Qualification design is usually based on a premise of what Young (2005, cited in Wheelahan, 2011) describes as two conflicting assumptions of input-design or output-design, and that of difference and similarity. In an inputs-based system measures of time establish the completion of skill development. Further, “qualifications that are based on inputs assume that they cannot be defined independently of the syllabus, processes of learning and assessment and the
institutional setting in which learning takes place” (Wheelahan, 2011, p. 327). This model is referred to as an un-tracked model, in which learning is undifferentiated in the context of its outcomes where students leave school qualified for tertiary study (although in Australia this is primarily university). This is a system built on the principle of similarity, in that education is provided without a difference between two systematised tracks. Outcomes or outputs-based systems use competency or capabilities to measure skill development and are a feature of tracked systems. Australian tertiary education is tracked in that it has two specific types of qualification that can be achieved, namely a VET qualification of one from a university, defined previously under the AQF. This is a system built on the principle of difference, in that there is an obvious variance between the two systems providing a qualification. Tracked systems train students for a specific job or career.

Comparatively, the Germanic1 perspective is built on the premise that neither school-based nor apprenticeship-based learning alone would provide the totality of education required in a future work force; a tracked system of general, academic tertiary and vocational education. Kerschensteiner (2011, cited in Hoffman, 2011, p. 28) “sought to bridge the pragmatic and humanistic”. Germanic Vocational Education prepares workers for an occupation, which incorporates “a body of systematically related theoretical knowledge (Wissen) and a set of practical skills (Können) as well as the social identity of the person who has acquired these” (Wheelahan & Moodie, 2011, p. 13). For Germany, social identity refers specifically to a person’s social and economic status. The knowledge and skills of their vocational training is

1 The term Germanic refers to Austria, Germany and Switzerland (Hoffman, 2011).
systematically bound to a person’s social identity, work status and wage. Built on a ‘dual system’ of either apprenticeship or university study, the German VET system’s specific strengths lie in youth employment and maintaining the status of VET qualified people (Cantor, 1989; Hoffman, 2011; Madhukar, 2003).

In the context of governmentality, Australia’s system is well defined for retaining power with the State in the organisation of education. The system provides an equity-focused program up to senior school that provides choice and differentiation of career options. As students enter tertiary education, qualifications are controlled by a framework. This framework forms the rules and regulations between stakeholders to manage their behaviour and ensure transference of credit where that is due. In an open-market system, this is important as it ensures fluidity between the systems and supports the user-choice model, a consequence of deregulation and contestability (Wheelahan, 2011). This will be discussed at length in a coming section (3.2.5) as it is critical to the evolution of VET in Australia and a substantial portion of the perceptions of stakeholders in this study.

A current problem in the education sector is the blurring of suitability of graduates for a particular job. The lack of differentiation between education sectors, particularly VET and Higher Education such as university, means students with VET advanced diplomas are competing with students from university with a Bachelor’s degree for the same job (Wheelahan & Moodie, 2011). The complexity this creates is for students with a VET qualification, the balance of power rests with a Bachelor qualification in a perception of value and quality of the certification. Wheelahan and Moodie (2011) also identify that recognition of a Bachelor qualification as entry level for many jobs “undermines occupational outcomes of diplomas and advanced
diplomas” (p. 15), however it can have an effect of improving pathways to further education. This creates a substantial consequence socially, as students who achieve tracked degrees that are aligned to a job can be made underqualified quickly, or it may force them to undertake higher level qualifications as entry-level for many jobs (Wheelahan, 2011). Furthermore, the loose fit between qualifications and jobs in Australia results in only about 30% of VET graduates finding post-completion employment in the career they were trained for, limiting the value of these qualifications (Wheelahan, 2011).

3.2.4 From competency to capabilities

Moving into a new era around 2011, proposals were made to move from competencies to capabilities (Wheelahan & Moodie, 2011). Not a replacement for generic or employability skills, the core capabilities framework was an additional way to define “what people needed to be able to do to exercise complex judgements at work, and what they needed to be able to do in the future” (p. 2). This extensive proposal described that for competency-based training, there were a number of outcomes that were less than desirable. These included only 30% of graduates working directly in the job they were trained in, a lack of relevance for their training outside that job and declining study and employment rates for young people in markets that should have supported otherwise. For disadvantaged people, outcomes were poor with a pronounced saturation of enrolment in Certificate I and II courses that did not lead to improved employment or further study. Finally, whilst there were benefits to completing higher level qualifications the intention of VET was to provide introductory training that would help people move into higher skilled jobs, though this
was not the case. In fact, there was little evidence that lower-skilled qualifications had similar benefits to higher level qualifications. Wheelahan and Moodie (2011) write,

> We are not suggesting that these outcomes are solely attributable to CBT, however CBT was meant to result in more efficient outcomes, higher skilled jobs, better outcomes for young people and disadvantaged people, and enhanced educational pathways. These are the explicit policy objectives that underpinned the introduction of CBT. This has not been the result (p. 17).

To date, capabilities have not made their way into mainstream VET certification. This may be due to the major caveats of the approach; a reliance on contextualisation and the social situation in which the capabilities were achieved and assessed (Wheelahan & Moodie, 2011). As these authors explain, VET provides the environment in which we can develop these capabilities but may not provide the opportunity to realise them in particular workplaces. Further, there may not be an opportunity to develop or exercise them effectively, given the conditions in which opportunities arise. For all students, particularly given the discussion of disadvantaged and ‘at risk’ students, this could be prohibitive.

In a response to the Productivity Commission report on the VET Workforce (Productivity Commission, 2011), capabilities have been used in Australian VET teaching and practitioner contexts by way of a framework formulated in 2011. Developed by Precision Consultancy in collaboration with Innovation & Business Skills Australia Ltd (Innovation & Business Skills Australia, 2012; Precision Consultancy, 2011), the framework provides practitioners an opportunity for professional development and evaluation within four domains, each with four areas of
capability. The four domains are Systems and Compliance, Teaching, Assessment and Industry & Community Collaboration. Using the framework in recruitment, professional development and evaluation provides RTOs with the ability to analyse their workforce and ensure quality teaching experiences for students. A follow up to the initial framework (Precision Consultancy, 2012) defines alignment with the Certificate IV Training and Assessment (TAE) qualification (required by practitioners in VET for training and assessment) and provides a refined version of the framework illustration, provided as Figure 3.3.

![Figure 3.3 The VET Capability Framework graphic, as developed and distributed by Precision Consultancy and Innovation Business & Skills Australia Ltd (Precision Consultancy, 2011)](image)

Capabilities, whilst an important facet of VET from the perspective of the practitioner, is limited to RTOs and not necessarily used across all sectors. It has not replaced competency-based education and has no indication of doing so in the
immediate future. It provides a substantial opportunity for professional development but has limited applicability for cross-sector research in the context of this study.

3.2.5 Contestability

A most pressing issue between 2009 and 2015 is contestable funding arrangements, a consequence of early reform agenda that fought to bring a competitive market agenda to VET (Carmichael, 1992; Committee for Economic Development of Australia, 1995). The Carmichael report in 1992 had indicated that by making VET competitive it would reduce pressure on governments, break down the monopoly of VET in TAFE, and improve client/provider relationships (Committee for Economic Development of Australia, 1995). Being again recommended by the Federal Government (Noonan, Brown, Long, & McKenzie, 2010), dramatic changes to the way State VET enrolment funding is provided was imminent. Previously, contestability arrangements were substantially narrower, though it was not the first time considerable change had been recommended (Skills Australia, 2009). Under these arrangements, private RTOs were restricted to contract arrangements with employers or provision of training for apprenticeships and traineeships (Noonan et al., 2010) and TAFE provided the majority of funding for non-apprenticeship or traineeship qualifications. Moving forward, contestability provided equitable arrangements for public and private providers to apply for funding for enrolments (Department of Industry, Skills and Regional Development, 2016; Queensland Department of Education, Training and Employment, 2014). It was designed to solve issues of enrolment numbers slipping and respond to a weakening skills market, provide greater choice to employers and participants, and release more funding to a private market that could provide training in a more diverse range of
industries. It would also provide support for growth in an industry that had been restricted due to policy. In their mind, the VET system was “coasting” (Skills Australia, 2010, p. 8).

The financial fallout of the policy was substantial. A review of the arrangements (Hamdhan, 2013) details that between 2009 and 2011 there was increased competitive tendering for funding, an increase in ‘user choice’ training arrangements and a fall in government funding for TAFE provision where there was a substantial increase in non-TAFE funding. Competitive funding arrangements increased to 21% in 2011, which is substantial given only two years prior it was at 1.7% of total VET funding payments. ‘User choice’ is an arrangement under which a client negotiates the terms of agreement for training. Once this is agreed, funding is provided to the TAFE or private RTO for the training. The uptake of this style of agreement decreased 1.4% from 18.9% to 17.5%. Government funding into VET expenditure in TAFE dropped 11.4% in NSW, 16.1% in Victoria and 17.3% in Queensland. South Australia saw the greatest depreciation of 20.5%, where other States saw less than 12%. To non-TAFE providers, there was an increase in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland of 74%, 277.1% and 195.6% respectively. This is important because it demonstrates the significance of the issue and the degree to which private RTOs took advantage of the arrangement. The arrangement did anything but create a level playing field between TAFE and private RTOs (Hamdhan, 2013).

In a report sanctioned by the Senate, the outcomes of this change in legislation were damning. For instance, the report committee indicated substantial discrepancies of over $15,000 between a course offering from a private and public RTO (Education
and Employment References Committee, 2015). The difference was primarily attributed to the contestability clauses written into State legislature, giving private RTOs greater power over course enrolments with a perceived value for students. The same report indicated substantial concerns over advertising and recruitment practices of these RTOs, such as offering unrealistically short training durations for courses, or such that it was against the quality standards of the AQF. Courses were offered as “government-funded” and often pushed through cold-calling techniques or pushy sales people on the disadvantaged community. This practice had become institutionalised amongst private RTOs, a catalyst for initiating an enquiry.

In total, 89 submissions were made to the inquiry, covering many contributors from industry, education and government bodies. The submission by NCVER (National Centre for Vocational Education Research, n.d.) indicated substantial increases in enrolments for private colleges, nearly doubling from 267,300 in 2009 to 537,600 in 2013, coinciding with contestability arrangements. It also declared substantial increases in revenue for private sector RTOs. Their submission also showed employment for post-completion students of private colleges was higher comparatively to TAFE, which could be attributed to industry perception of private training status over TAFE.

The Australian Institute of Fitness defended its position as a private provider (Australian Institute of Fitness, 2015). Their perspective was for the critical role private providers play in the delivery of VET. Their submission indicated provision of choice for students, quality outcomes (by quality providers) and value for money as driving factors for their continued operation. They conceded the current system was
flawed and allowed many poor-quality providers to take advantage of funding policy, such as VET FEE-HELP.

From some institutions, incentives were often provided to students by the RTO in the form of inexpensive laptops and tablets or offered as fully-funded courses at inflated prices. Some of these providers made their own submissions to the inquiry, defending their appropriation of funds and application of the guidelines. In one example, an individual who worked for an offending organisation provided a submission to the inquiry on the unscrupulous practices of her previous employer, who responded in defence of the college’s position (Gordon, 2015). It was later found the college committed major infractions on the appropriation of public funds, with many students seeking damages (Australian Parliament Senate, 2015; J. Taylor & Branley, 2015).

The ability for private RTOs to leverage the system and gouge huge margins in course fees was made available by government policy. As a matter of recourse for the funding issues, a recommendation was put forward to lower the salary cap at which VET FEE-HELP loans were to be repaid to as little as $30,000. This essentially penalised lower-income earners for a government failure in legislative management and was dismissed by the inquiry committee. In response to the significance of the issue, a government authority was setup to help students who had been duped into signing into courses they were unaware of to recover their debt or have it expunged.

3.2.5.1 Historical drivers

The catalyst for the change into contestability came some 20 years prior in the emergence of an open training market, resting on poor State performance of VET
(Hamdhan, 2013). It was also a result of commercial activities TAFE had embraced as a result of the changing marketplace. Analysts saw it as an opportunity tied up in controversy, particularly as TAFE was a public provider, and could not be seen to be turning a profit from publicly funded training in a commercial environment. The Deveson Report (1990) provided a number of recommendations to this end, though of greatest relevance here was an increasing need for market competition for commercial training. Employers and employees wanted choice in tailored training, so they needed external trainers to provide it, though a critical element was accredited certification for skills. Industry was reaching out to private trainers for upskilling anyway; individuals wanted the options whilst ensuring skills and knowledge were recognised and portable (Carmichael, 1992). Deveson (1990) further recommended market expansion and qualification certification should be accomplished through appropriate regulatory channels. Somewhat ironically, though, this was quickly clarified that it should be applied with a ‘light hand’, at the consequence of increased costs.

As importantly as choice, the costs of training for employers was considered. There was a perspective that if employers demanded specific training, they should be responsible for the costs of training. The result would be increased market competition that could drive the price down or increase quality of training. For core training one option was to provide potential students, particularly apprentices and trainees, with vouchers for paid training services outside the government run TAFE system (Committee for Economic Development of Australia, 1995). This would provide greater choice of provider based on their offering and contextualisation of training. Further, it was possible for private training providers to offer training cheaper than TAFE, which would have been enticing for governments and industry, both heavily affected by costs of training.
In response to the Deveson Report (1990), Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) was established to oversee the implementation of many of these recommendations. It was also established as a result of the then prime minister Paul Keating’s push to restructure the TAFE system, even potentially to the detriment of the various States. Victoria and New South Wales negotiated heavily, with Victoria’s Premier Joan Kirner proposing a reorganisation of TAFE that would include a tripartite of industry, State and Commonwealth representatives, forming ANTA. Their work was to implement a funding strategy at the Commonwealth and State level, whilst working with public and private sector providers to improve the quality and outputs of VET. A strategy published by ANTA (Australian National Training Authority, 1994) describes the process undertaken to deregulate the industry and provide choice for training options across the public and private sectors. A critical feature was restructuring of the Australian Standards Framework to ensure industry alignment of certifications and training.

Over the coming years, the Queensland government in 1997 proposed to further deregulate the TAFE sector and allocate an increased proportion of funding to private VET providers (Queensland Department of Employment, Training and Industrial Relations, 1997). Their intention was to increase quality, efficiency and accountability of training and certifications. However, a change of government saw these intentions quashed and strengthening of TAFE in Queensland (Goozee, 2001). Their proposal was to ensure TAFE was the head of VET policy and a valued provider. In Victoria, TAFE institutes retained their autonomy too, with many being strengthened into discrete institutions and others amalgamated into Swinburn University of Technology and the Victoria University of Technology. NSW adopted a new Department of Education and Training, under which TAFE was incorporated but
remained discreet. Throughout this, pressure on TAFE increased financially through reduction and static funding, a greater requirement to provide certification through schemes such as the New Apprenticeships. Quality was being sacrificed whilst demand increased under lowered funding arrangements. Industry pressure was mounting for customised courses, too.

The contestability arrangements seen in the mid to late 2000s was a direct result of the need for diversification of choice, to provide quality where it was seen to be lacking and to lessen the pressure on TAFE. These were not new drivers, however the breadth and opportunity for private providers was substantially greater than that of the early 1990s. Given the historical developments, it could be predicted that at some point this is where policy would result. The fallout of enormous deregulation has meant substantial changes to accreditation and regulation of the institutions that provide training, as discussed earlier in this section. Given these points and policy developments, it is well established that aspects of quality, value of qualifications and student outcomes should be investigated.

3.2.6 Summary

Prior to the National Training Reform Agenda, development of education was primarily driven by a liberal and middle-class agenda, though as the working class expanded it became obvious that education required expansion (Partridge, 1973). It was those with greatest influence over the operation of the initial schools, and their agenda, that drove this development. The advance of public education came as a result of needing the working class to provide service to the middle class. The changing nature of work and industry saw a need develop, which could only be filled with education. However, what the working class needed was much less an academic
education than a practical one that could equip them with the necessary skills to be employable in manufacturing industry. Technical education made way for a more practical education, offered after primary schooling, which continued to develop into the early 20th Century, further driven into expansion by war. This is discussed in a later section of this chapter (3.5), as it provides context for the understanding of how VET evolved before introduction of CBT.

Evolution of the sector is inevitable, but it is important to know the current state of play so a response can be made. Also, knowledge of how each stakeholder interacts with the system is critical to these changes, as historically industry, organisations and governments have had varying levels of interaction and success as a result of system policy. Further, it is critical to understand how each facet of the system functions as a part of the whole, as each influences the success of others.

3.3 Features of VET in Australia

The following section selects and examines some of the features of VET. Apprenticeship has been a substantial feature of vocational education since its inception and warrants discussion. Work placement is a substantial feature of training packages and impacts employers, institutions and students, whilst having a prominent position in the fabric of VET given the need for practical skill development. Generic skills, also known as key competencies or employability skills, have been the topic of great discussion since the Finn report. These are a significant aspect of VET in Australia and form an important part of its implementation. Pathways is included here as it is more an abstract policy that sits alone from the core aspects of VET. In its own right, VET is an educational framework, where pathways exist because of a local agenda to ensure students have the greatest potential for life-long learning. VET in
Schools was an important early development of VET in the 1990s which has persisted in various forms since this time and has an enormous impact on institutions, industry and pathways for students. Examination of the progress and effects of this policy provides a better understanding of the process and interconnectedness within the greater sector. Finally, teacher and trainer qualifications, and the impact of these on teachers, institutions and industry are discussed, as they have a broad reaching impact and have often been a topic of discussion.

There are literally hundreds of policies in VET that have influenced the shape and operation of the sector. To discuss all of these would be drastically beyond the scope of this review. The aforementioned policies were selected for their capacity to persist in the discourse of VET, for their breadth of influence across stakeholders and States in Australia, and their inclusion in the major shifts in VET policy over time.

3.3.1 Apprenticeship

Apprenticeships are a driving factor in the development and evolution of the VET sector, as the two are intrinsically linked (Productivity Commission, 2011). Apprenticeships also provide a critical service to young people in upskilling for trade carers. Since inception, apprenticeships have been the foundation of trade training, providing individuals with strong career options (McDowell et al., 2011). Completion rates in VET are starkly lower at 48% than, in comparison, university degrees, which have an approximately 80% completion rate (Fieger, 2015). The complexity of this reality is the influential factors, which includes such aspects as perception of the value of VET qualifications and the quality of training (McDowell et al., 2011). Skills shortages are often an opportunity to provide incentives to people looking to complete trade training, particularly in times of economic growth. When other options, like
university degrees, seem like a preferential option less individuals opt for apprenticeship training, contributing to a shortage of people to fill skilled roles (McDowell et al., 2011).

For some time, there was a universal expectation that apprenticeships were essentially based on time served. This failed to recognise quality skill development or ensure participants achieved skills appropriately before completion. The premise of this was explored earlier when examining input and outputs-based training systems. Alternatively, a competency-based model could enable apprentices to fast-track trade certification by demonstrating competency before time is served, a feature of previous models. This was recognised and established in 2011 (Commonwealth of Australia, 2011; McDowell et al., 2011). Flexibility in the delivery of training is a further incentive, particularly when training can happen on and off the job or during school (part time, for example, so school students can access training through VET in Schools).

There is a responsibility from industry, government and trainee stakeholders for investment into quality training. Employers would be wise to invest in apprentices (and employees) due to the potential return on financial outlay (Gospel, 1994), known as human capital development. This is complex however, as employers may be hesitant to invest if employees move away from the business and take their skills elsewhere (Snell & Hart, 2007). To incentivise employers, for a time Australia paid incentives to employers for indenturing apprentices, the only country to do so (B. Knight, 2012; Zoellner, 2013). Sheldon (2005) highlights the potential fallout of this arrangement, which provided similar incentives to employers of trainees and apprentices. Both attract the same financial incentive, which rewards employers with
a lower commitment to training relative to those with a high commitment. Ultimately, if employers see little value in apprenticeship, they may be less inclined to invest, and evidence would suggest their commitment to skill formation has been in decline (Productivity Commission, 2011; Sheldon, 2005).

Data show decreased uptake of apprenticeship, primarily a result of altered funding arrangements such as user choice and a lack of incentives to take up apprenticeship training (Australian Council for Private Education and Training, 2015). In 2011, a panel review of apprenticeships shows a completion rate of 48% (McDowell et al., 2011). Fieger (2015) provides a detailed examination of the disparity between commencement and completion rates. The research indicated that lower value qualifications have lower completion rates, particularly for younger students, and that teaching quality had little impact on completion. In the context of school-based research and evaluating opinion as to the function of apprenticeships for VET in Schools, this can help understanding of how school-based providers perceive the success of the arrangements for young people. Harris and Simons (2005) discuss factors of non-completion, which include gender, age of commencement and level of schooling at the time, amongst other person-oriented factors that affect retention. Context-oriented factors could include employer, social networks, flexibility and structure of the arrangement, and the type of work being undertaken during the contract period.

Establishing the current status of apprenticeships is critical due to the breadth of impact amongst stakeholder groups, which is especially true for school-based apprenticeships. The status of apprenticeship in Australia is limited, highlighted by the attrition rate in apprenticeships. By establishing an understanding of how these
function across the sector, there is greater possibility stakeholders can respond and provide the necessary support to apprentices. Further, there is potential to consider characteristics of apprenticeship that may improve retention and experience.

3.3.1.1 Early apprenticeship provision

Historically, apprenticeships were one of the few ways to gain a ‘vocational’ education (Attard, 2008; B. Knight, 2012; Wonacott, 2003), although the term had not entered into vocabulary before 1900. Apprenticeships were often the work of private organisations, and seen as an extension of learning that happened in the home (Snedden, 1910). The evolution of apprenticeships, which were primarily offered to boys except for hairdressing, has a deep history in relation to Vocational Education (B. Knight, 2012).

During the period 1950 to 1972, very little was done to actually improve the governance of apprenticeships and technical education (Ray, 2001a). The first nationwide enquiry into the state of apprenticeships and early VET only came in 1954 (Commonwealth-State Apprenticeship Inquiry, 1954). The Wright report focused on public opinion through sittings and submissions, where the main participants were organisations and individuals. This, and other reports, provided a number of recommendations though few were actioned. During this time, it had been particularly difficult to make change to the apprenticeship system, as the Commonwealth Government lacked the commitment and power to do so; they were at the mercy of employers and trade unions (Ray, 2001a). The Tregillis Report of 1969 (Tregillis, 1969) made the first indication of a shared financial responsibility for apprentices and a need to cut costs for employers hiring apprentices. Its contribution was to initiate Commonwealth funding and highlight a need for industry to train (Ray, 2001a). One
significant benefit of the period was that it enabled apprentices to attend day classes at TAFE, increasing flexibility and reducing out-of-work commitments.

In 1973, the Commonwealth Government in Australia introduced the National Apprenticeship Assistance Scheme (NAAS). This provided incentives to employers who indentured apprentices. The initiative “marked the beginning of what was to prove to be continuous Commonwealth funding for apprenticeships and put apprenticeships firmly on the policy agenda of . . . Governments” (Ray, 2001a, p. 26). This brought about Commonwealth funding for TAFE and updates to their facilities. It also enabled funding to be directed to apprentices and employers for participating in and completing training.

Changes to the structure and operation of apprenticeships took shape in 1996 when apprenticeships and traineeships were brought together into a single framework as a national ‘New Apprenticeships’ initiative. This policy brought about options for adults to access trade and non-trade apprenticeships (Harris & Simons, 2005). As a result, there has been a substantial increase in numbers since 1996 in adult apprenticeships being undertaken (Hargreaves, Stanwick, & Skujins, 2017). This had a positive impact on career options for adults, as well as increasing competencies for mid-career participants, although the trend discontinued after many of the incentives and benefits discontinued from around 2014 (Hargreaves et al., 2017). The scheme also provided a significant opportunity to school students. Many students were affected by the ‘earning-or-learning’ initiative, which required students to either attend some form of schooling or gain employment (NCVER, 2011) Those completing formal schooling would be able to participate in a School-based Apprenticeship. In time, this also fitted into the User Choice funding model which
enabled many students to select their school as the training provider, improving access to the system through flexible training (Ray, 2001a).

Apprenticeships and traineeships provided no end of contention into the 2000s, where employers were deliberately misusing the system to obtain cheap labour, collecting incentives and conducting subpar training that in some cases. At times this even led to credentialing regardless of the quality of training (Hampson, 2002; Ray, 2001a). Historically, this seems to be a consistent feature of apprenticeship; cheap employment options for exploitation under the guise of a credentialed trade. Snell and Hart’s (2007) analysis of VET in Victoria, Australia is a sound indication of the many issues plaguing VET apprenticeships and traineeships. Moving forward, it is necessary to evaluate the relationships between stakeholders and consider the value and benefits of apprenticeships in Australia (Couldrey & Loveder, 2017).

3.3.2 Work Placement

The history of work placement begins in 1994 with the introduction of “unpaid ‘work placements’ (or vocational placements) for secondary school students… that involve the achievement of workplace competencies. The [arrangement] covered up to 240 hours of unpaid work, a provision that was subsequently included in the training legislation of three States and the Australian Capital Territory” (Ray, 2001b, p. 30).

In time, the States took control of work placements under the Commonwealth Workplace Relations Act 1996, which made possible unpaid work placements that
could exceed the original 240-hour limit, though this did not eventuate. Some of the issues identified in the provision of work placement in Australia are examined in this section to establish domains for exploration as part of this study.

Problematically, there is inconsistency between States and their operation of VET in Schools, particularly in work placement and workplace learning (Gemici & Curtis, 2012) These inconsistency lead to some students not participating in work placement at all, where some commit to substantial hours of workplace learning. Much of this could be attributed to the limited understanding of work placement by VET Co-ordinators in schools (Mulraney, Turner, Wyatt, Harris, & Gibson, 2002).

In the context of work placement outcomes, Le Clus (2011) suggests informal learning needs to incorporate conversation, social interaction, teamwork and mentoring strategies. Furthermore, informal learning in the workplace should be coupled with formal learning experiences. Interaction between students and trained workers is necessary to create and share knowledge beyond what is predefined. This is akin to the process of engaging in social capital where we learn based on others’ knowledge, sharing what we know to create a bigger and more refined body of knowledge.

There is an issue with commercial gain: if students are used as labour in these experiences, they may end up doing more menial tasks rather than learning complex or higher-value tasks due to their limited knowledge and interference with commercial gain (Vallance & Palmer, 2011). This is particularly the case in low-yield industries such as hospitality where profit margins are narrow.

A common complaint is access to placements. Often these are limited due to a narrow scope of knowledge and capability in VET students. Vallance and Palmer
(2011) offer a comparison between VET in Schools and university students who are more likely to gain placement due to their skill level and perceived value. This is a complex reality when historically, there is a measurable benefit for students accessing work placement (Fullarton, 1999; Gemici & Curtis, 2012). Furthermore, many students who will participate in work placement have completed a workplace learning program, teaching them skills to participate in the workplace (Fullarton, 1999). These students are generally less academically inclined but benefit greatly from these programs.

Host employers, those offering to provide work placement opportunities to students, are low in number given the required placements every year. In more recent times, access to work placement has become more limited (Productivity Commission, 2011). Statistically, between 2005 to 2011 more employers decided to terminate their host status than were recruited as a host workplace (Vallance & Palmer, 2011). The issue was less focused on recruitment and more centred on retainment of host employers. The authors cited personal favours for students as one-off placements the likely culprit. Nonetheless, the complexity of work placement is still a consideration, particularly the number of employers and placement opportunities. There is evidence that employers feel more needs to be done for work placement to be successful, such as greater respect for their operational constraints in organising placements, more contact with supervising trainers and improved feedback from students on the experience (Mulraney et al., 2002).

Workplace learning needs to involve reflective practice, too (Le Clus, 2011). By setting goals and measuring achievement against these, we can assess learning that needs to take place that will enable achievement. An extensive analysis of small
enterprise and work placement by Mulraney et al. (2002) indicates small enterprise is looking for ways to engage in more structured feedback on the work placement experience and the assessment of student capability. Often, the process is “too much one way” (p. 30). This has links to the generic skills frameworks, a topic of further discussion in this chapter (3.3.3).

Historical progress of work placement arrangements in schools has provided a great benefit to students. The program provides an opportunity for students to engage in work experience in a target environment aligned with a training package. This helps students make informed decisions about their career choices and assists in developing skills aligned with competencies. As Smith, Dalton and Dolheguy (2004) write,

In [these] ways the agency of young people in their decision making can be enhanced. The opportunity to experience vocational studies at a secondary school level, in parallel with more academic experiences serves to increase those signposts through experience, and the opportunity to engage in work placement extends that experience further (p. 263).

The scope for further investigation exists in the success of these programs from an operational perspective. Relationships between industry and schools are critical, as are the benefits to both stakeholders in the provision of work placement. By examining this further, it is possible to illustrate the current state of work placement arrangements.
3.3.3 Employability Skills

In conjunction with technical or work-based skills and knowledge are the employability skills people possess as a product of training and education. In high education, these are called graduate attributes, whilst in Australia they are embedded into training packages as employability skills, under the Core Skills for Work framework (DIICCSRT & DEEWR, 2013). The development of employability skills was based on a need to respond to a changing need of industry to have a more highly performing workforce. A measurable set of skills was also needed that could indicate the work-readiness of an individual. To this end, the Employability Skills for the Future research project was initiated and reported in 2002 (Australian Department of Education Science and Training, Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, & Business Council of Australia, 2002).

The project connected with over 700 people from various sectors including industry, education and training, government bodies and schools to establish the Employability Skills Framework. The qualitative study focused on two understandings of personal attributes that characterised an individual for their capacity to work in various contexts. The report concluded these were loyalty; commitment; honesty and integrity; enthusiasm; reliability; personal presentation; common sense; positive self-esteem; sense of humour; balanced attitude to work and home life; ability to deal with pressure; motivation; and adaptability. The key skills that eventually formed the Employability Skills Framework included communication; teamwork; problem-solving; initiative and enterprise; planning and organising; self-
management; learning; and technology (Australian Department of Education Science and Training et al., 2002).

These skills were designed to empower young people to transfer knowledge and build capacity in work readiness that transgressed the boundaries of job specific skills and knowledge. The problem with this notion is the way in which subject-specific language, for instance, can impact skills like communication. The capacity to communicate is still contextualised by the situation in which it is utilised (Wheelahan & Moodie, 2011). Even more complex is the notion that these skills would be assessed under the framework (Australian Department of Education Science and Training et al., 2002). As Young (2005) asserts, it is complex enough to consider teaching the skills in a generic context such that they can be applied in both. Further, in a situation where there is a saturation of similarly qualified individuals, soft skills can take primacy in evaluating a new recruit (Wheelahan & Moodie, 2011). It can separate potential applicants given enough evidence to support their claims of capability. The complexity of the Employability Skills framework was its single-layered and simple approach to categorising skills (Hutchison, 2013). This provided a lack of depth to the capacity to apply and assess capabilities in people.

Prior to the distillation of these key skills and attributes, The Mayer Report (Mayer, 1992) devised and delivered a set of competencies in response to earlier work by the Finn committee (Finn, 1991). The perspective of the Mayer committee was that Australia needed a competitive workforce that could have improved productivity and adapt to the scale of change occurring. The Finn report had identified and made a recommendation to identify and define Key Competencies within a ‘standards framework’ to assist graduates in preparation for employment. The initial work of the
Mayer committee to complete the framework consisted of reviewing alignments with international similarities and the Australian Standards Framework. The resulting key competencies and performance indicators provided a basis under which a person could be seen to be able to ‘do’ something, as well as ‘know’ something; skills and knowledge (Mayer, 1992). They believed that amongst these things, people needed creativity, initiative and entrepreneurial and critical thinking on how to improve work practices, which these competencies could deliver.

Limitations of this framework were evident in their decision to exclude attitudes and values, remaining focused instead on skills, emulating the British models used in their conception of the framework (Williams, 2005). They felt:

Key Competencies can only contain those things which can be developed by education and training, which do not require some innate predisposition or adherence to a particular set of values and which are amenable to creditable assessment. On these tests and, in some cases, the test of conceptual coherence, the Committee considers that attitudes and values fall outside the field of the Key Competencies (Mayer, 1992, p. 13).

Their focus on objective and subjective assessment of the key competencies precluded the inclusion of those they felt could be directly attributed to training and education, though this ran against recommendations of industry and educational stakeholders’ feedback in the development of the framework (Williams, 2005).

3 The Australian Standards Framework defines the eight competency levels which are a broad description of the full range of jobs people do. This is now incorporated under the Australian Qualifications Framework.
The Employability Skills framework was an attempt to introduce the personal attributes into these key competencies, as enterprise feedback indicated a critical need for these to be included (Australian Department of Education Science and Training et al., 2002). Some have evaluated the use of employability skills in teaching practice (Riebe & Jackson, 2014; Riebe, Roepen, Santarelli, & Marchioro, 2010). The use of rubrics for assessing student capacity under the Employability Skills framework was found to be positive, yet possibly time consuming (Riebe & Jackson, 2014). Peer assessment and deliberate evaluation of teamwork in the higher education setting had positive outcomes with similar implications for transferability (Riebe et al., 2010). However, a report by Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR, 2012) found despite the length of time since implementation and ongoing work in the framework, there were still issues in its use. These included:

- Differing definitions and interpretations;
- The depth of context-dependency within the framework;
- Incorrect assumptions of transferability of these skills;
- Lack of explicit use of the framework in education and training and workplaces;
- Insufficient confidence of teachers and trainers to address the skills; and
- Difficulty measuring, assessing and reporting on the skills (p. 5-6).

The DEEWR report proposed an amended framework that tried to overcome these issues. Though not explicitly, it also incorporated aspects of the Australian Blueprint (MCEECDYA, 2010). The Blueprint is a framework devised to align employability skills to career development, though it too was grossly underused and understood (Atelier Learning Solutions, 2012; Wright, 2008). The amended
employability skills framework, known as the Core Skills for Work Framework (DIICCSRT & DEEWR, 2013), sought to provide a more succinct and measured integration with common language for developing learning and assessment products. It incorporated the employability skills prior to it and career development.

The fluid nature of the employability skills framework and its subsidiaries has meant that a substantial level of work has been invested into something that was underutilised and poorly integrated. The development of replacement frameworks that continue to grow indicates an ongoing need to understand the enormous breadth of ‘soft skills’ and technical or work-specific skills and knowledge a person needs to be work-ready. Therefore, within this study it is pertinent to establish how stakeholders perceive the employability skills frameworks and how this has impacted their teaching and employment strategies.

3.3.4 Pathways

The VET system was designed to improve portability between competency-based education and university education. Since the review period of 1991-1992 (Carmichael, 1992; Finn, 1991; Mayer, 1992) and shift into a nationalised competency-based model, there was a perception students would be able to transfer their skills and knowledge in the form of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), from vocational qualifications into university. Beddie (2014) describes the complex nature of this historical arrangement, thus,

looking back on the policy, Don McNicol, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sydney, listed several reasons why transfer of credit from the college sector to university was so difficult to negotiate:
incompatibilities in the curriculum; lack of enforceable policies on credit transfer; and university suspicion of the standards of college courses (cited in Meek & Harman 1993, p.23). We have not learned from history (p. 7).

These three issues plagued transferability recommendations set forth in the Finn report (Finn, 1991). Specifically, it stated that “the competency-based nature of the system should also facilitate articulation with higher level vocational qualifications and credit transfer to higher education programs” (p. 87). In Australia, inconsistencies in recognition by universities undermined the intentions of national frameworks, most recently the AQF. One substantial issue is the lack of collaboration between institutions and their management of these pathways (Beddie, 2014; Hebdon, 2015). This has been improved, though it is still at the mercy of specific institutions and their internal policies (Bandias, Fuller, & Pfitzner, 2011).

Simmonds (2010) provides a detailed look at the contentions of pathways from VET to tertiary education since 1992, highlighting the successes and steps needed to continue growth and solidify these pathways. Simmonds examines the practices in spite of policy, of new tertiary providers starting due to user demand, creating a series of institutions between school and university, whilst universities partake with their own offerings in VET. Whilst beneficial to users for the breadth of choice, it creates a complexity in muddying the waters of VET provision, widening offerings that create a regulatory nightmare. These offerings should exist, though there needs to be a “new tertiary sector” (Simmonds, 2010, p. 37) that could provide a more equal status to VET and higher education, more efficient regulatory and accountability frameworks, greater flexibility for users, greater cross-sector offerings
with primary and secondary missions across these, and a more unidirectional pathway arrangement (Simmonds, 2010).

For those who do transition there are benefits. A study completed by the University of Technology, Sydney (Barber, Netherton, Bettles, & Moors-Mailei, 2015) focused on transition of students from VET to the University. It explored student feelings toward adjustment to university and influence of VET experience for settling into university life. Their results showed that of 124 students who completed a survey, 90% reported positive adjustment to university. They also reported 36.3% of students felt VET influenced their transition and that these students had a more positive adjustment to the expectations of university.

3.3.4.1 Sector expansion: Historical factors

Universities and VET providers enjoyed a substantial period of growth since the implementation of frameworks that provided opportunity for transition, a positive effect of pathway arrangements between sectors. Bandias, Fuller and Pfitzner (2011) describe a massive expansion of the VET sector throughout the reform period, particularly for private providers. In 1994, as funding arrangements had changed, there were 1200 RTOs, when by 2009 there were more than 4960 RTOs listed on the Federal Government’s National Training Information Service [NTIS] (Bandias, Fuller and Pfitzner, 2011, p. 587). Their research suggested that whilst the expansion had offered greater diversity to a range of students from differing backgrounds, it retained limitations in transition from one educational sector to another. Particular difficulty was noted for credit transfer for work completed and qualifications attained when transitioning into university, consistent with related reports (O’Shea, Lysaght, & Tanner, 2012).
Introduction of pathway arrangements legislatively initiated an opportunity. Students saw it as a way to overcome the failure associated with not obtaining a university position directly from school and use vocational education as a stepping stone into university (Bandias et al., 2011; Finn, 1991). In 2010, the NSW Review of Tertiary Pathways (NSW Government, 2011) indicated a committee conducted a consultation with key stakeholders in transition arrangements from school to higher education. Of the many key messages, some stood out as limiting potential transition. For instance, there was a general undervaluing of VET qualifications amongst the tertiary and school sector, the quality of VET in Schools was variable, and the Universities Admissions Centre (UAC) procedures has limited processing capability for non-ATAR pathways\(^4\). Significantly, they found contestable market conditions meant TAFE was often in competition with university colleges offering similar degrees, which could limit collaboration between the sectors and credit transfer with universities was often complex and restrictive for students leaving VET in Schools.

Pathways between school, VET and higher education are broadly discussed (Curtis, 2008; Harris & Rainey, 2012; Polesel, 2010) and under constant review. There is potential to understand the arrangements, benefits and potential pitfalls more deeply, particularly in the context of the relationships between the institutions. The effectiveness of this could be limited, however, as this study does not engage university stakeholders, however as the first VET experience occurs in schools, it is possible to shed light on transition and pathway arrangements from this perspective.

\(^4\) A non-ATAR pathway is for students who achieve the NSW Higher School Certificate but do not receive an Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR) in consideration for placement into a university course, due to their pattern of study.
3.3.5 VET Teachers and Trainers

Since the introduction of VET in Schools as part of policy shift in the Carmichael report (Carmichael, 1992), substantial pressure has been placed on teachers and institutions for delivery of VET courses (Dalton & Smith, 2004). The different style of competency-based training, emphasis on job-specific skills and adult learning principles presented a challenge to teachers trained in secondary education practices (Guthrie, 2010). Many of the challenges associated with teaching extend to attainment of appropriate qualifications for teachers to conduct VET training, which can be a mixture depending on the specific sector in which they teach. Beyond this, there are challenges associated with industry experience and translation of skills appropriate to the workplace.

The varied requirements of VET practitioners to hold certain qualifications is of concern to some (E. Smith & Yasukawa, 2017), especially due to the diversity and age range of students accessing training. A Productivity Commission report (2011) indicated a concern with the capacity of teachers in VET. This included “meeting the needs of vulnerable learners; delivering higher level qualifications (e.g. Diploma and Advanced Diploma courses); information and communication technology skills; skills in assessment and in workplace delivery” (E. Smith & Yasukawa, 2017, p. 25). For some, this extends to job-specific skills and capabilities taught in schools, which can often be different from those experienced in the workplace. For example, Mulraney et al. (2002) provide evidence that in schools students are taught one way, and in the workplace often short cuts, or a more appropriate way to complete a task, are taught. Nonetheless, there have been no moves to improve or raise the minimum expectation for teachers to accommodate these shortfalls (Productivity Commission, 2011; E.
Smith & Yasukawa, 2017). For teachers of VET in Schools, industry perception of their capacity is often clouded by their perception of the experience and qualifications they have to teach the subjects (Dalton & Smith, 2004).

The Certificate IV TAA (and current TAE) was seen as a ‘ceiling’ level qualification in the industry for teachers and trainers (E. Smith, Hodge, & Yasukawa, 2015). It has been described as a “minimalist, regulatory approach” (Guthrie, 2010 in Smith et al., 2015, p. 420). One argument for raising the minimum qualification to a diploma or graduate diploma is a lack of evidence of improved quality teaching as a result (E. Smith et al., 2015). Redmond (2017) summarises research that reported practitioners felt ill-equipped to deal with classroom issues, manage diverse learning and undertake assessment. It was acknowledged that the Certificate IV minimum requirements were not appropriate for dealing with these issues, preparing educators for quality teaching practices; teachers needed ongoing professional development to improve outcomes.

Industry holds a specific concern for the lack of industry currency and capacity held by teachers. As Clayton, Jonas, Harding, Harris and Toze (2013) write, “being industry-current gives them an understanding of the current workplace structures, practices and cultures, as well as an awareness of the emerging technologies and practices that may have a future impact on local industries” (p. 5). There is an expectation that teacher / trainers are providing students with industry and work-ready skills, specifically trained to be able to be immediately employable. Governments, too, expect to have a return on the investment they have made into the VET sector (Clayton et al., 2013). It is critical to move beyond pedagogical capability and engage teachers in quality, industry skills that keep them current in their
transmission of up-to-date skills and recognised industry practices (Clayton et al., 2013; E. Smith et al., 2015). It has been suggested, particularly for VET in Schools teachers, that work placement provides a substantial opportunity for teachers to connect with industry (Dalton & Smith, 2004). Clayton et al. (2013) explain that industry placement is not synonymous with industry currency; a range of activities need to be undertaken to generate currency for individual practitioners.

The requirement of qualifications for teachers and trainers has changed much over time (Guthrie, 2010). In the early days of TAFE, the Fleming report (Fleming, 1978) indicated teachers needed formal preparation to become effective teachers. It was further recommended these be at an advanced education level, and that the institutions providing these should be restricted to maintain standards. The base requirements of diploma or graduate diploma were common, where some held either an associate or bachelor level degree. This was to be coupled with industry experience, a mandate for all TAFE teachers. Over the coming years up until 1991 a number of reviews saw teachers undertake mentoring and observational programs to improve practice. The length of teacher training course came under scrutiny, which paved the way for a recommendation that all TAFE teachers would require a bachelor qualification. There was, of course, great support for this as it would improve numbers for course providers (Guthrie, 2010).

In the 1990s, delivery of the Certificate IV (BSZ) Assessment and Workplace Training qualification became highly contested, with many completing the course in very short periods of time or utilising the RPL processes afforded under the Australian Qualifications Framework. The updated Certificate IV TAA of the early 2000s suffered the same fate, with questions raised about their ability to provide
sufficient training for teachers in quality practices. As explained by Guthrie (2010), the regression of qualification minimums is hard to fathom, but likely a consequence of rising costs of training teachers for governments and the need to contain these costs, a reduction of the importance and value of teaching and a low mandate for entry-level VET teaching qualifications.

The impact of these decisions is possibly quite diverse. In the context of this study, establishing perspective of the various stakeholders on the minimum qualifications necessary to teach VET will provide some insight into the impact future change to these may have. Furthermore, there exists an opportunity to analyse stakeholder expectations of issues such as experience and currency, the impact of these requirements on time, and the necessary minimums to maintain qualifications and currency.

3.3.6 Summary

Apprenticeship forms the foundation of the VET sector as it is today. From the outset, bringing together technical education and apprenticeship has shaped modern VET. Plagued with complexities and developments based on political influence, it has been the subject of ongoing shift. This has possibly impacted uptake, with trade apprenticeship enrolment declining. Numerous programs have been implemented to reform apprenticeship, such as VET in Schools and Trade Training in Schools.

Supporting students training in VET is work placement. Required by training packages to provide opportunity for learning skills, a number of stakeholders work together to provide required training. Inconsistent implementation, complex
arrangements and limited industry buy-in have restricted success. A key feature is the relationships between stakeholders that impact outcomes.

Generic skills have taken shape over a number of decades, impacted by a political and industry need to know students and their abilities beyond skills and knowledge. With numerous frameworks and varied success for implementation, employability skills frameworks have seen a complex existence.

Pathways for students through VET featured in this review due to the complex arrangement of options afforded students since the implementation of school in Australia. Most importantly as the breadth of options, courses and providers increase, so too does the confusion for students. Again, sector relationships, communication and clear transfer arrangements feature as complexities in the VET system.

Over time, teachers of VET have found difficulties in maintaining regulatory requirements for delivering VET courses. The ever-changing nature of these requirements, constant upgrade requirements and industry expectations are noted as substantial issues for teachers and trainers.

These five core issues are featured throughout the evolution of VET, shaping its operation and governance. The multitude of stakeholders impacted, varying levels of input and complex arrangement of these features provide a prime opportunity for further investigation.

3.4 Stakeholders and VET

Stakeholders in VET are numerous, spanning employers and industry, institutions and providers whether private, public (such as TAFE Institutions), schools, the regulatory sector, students and consumers. The complex nature of the
system results in a vast array of organisations with influence, and as a result it is important for policy and administration of programs to be the responsibility of only a few organisations. In Australia, the departments of education and State authorities control the implementation of VET, whilst State and Territory Training Authorities (STAs) plan and organise national VET objectives, such as apprenticeships and training contracts, RTO compliance and VET funding. The organisational document, *Quality in the VET system* (Australian Skills Quality Authority, 2018), provides a perspective on how complex the arrangement of stakeholders is across the sector.

### 3.4.1 Political influence

In Australia, VET, and education more broadly, is part of the political agenda, with social and economic drivers. The institutions themselves are a mixture of public and private, whether schools, RTOs or universities. The changing nature of a democratic government brings with it a slew of complexities and idiosyncrasies; as governments change, so too do the agenda and enactments of education. Each government works to address a particular issue or deliver reform on the back of a ‘failed, existing’ system. VET reform in Australia between 2009 and 2015 is a prime example of this experience; a federal review (Productivity Commission, 2011) indicated deficiencies within the system for the Federal and State governments to address, which formed the basis of deregulation for funding amongst the States (Department of Industry, Skills and Regional Development, 2016; Queensland Department of Education, Training and Employment, 2014; Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2016). This led to considerable damage to trust amongst stakeholders for quality training and student outcomes.
Zoellner (2017) examines historical Australian contexts of VET, particularly within the Northern Territory, where the study proposes to demonstrate the influence and impact of interested parties on policy making and distribution of public funds. The author argues that the highly politicised VET system is at the mercy of ministerial agenda, whilst participants and stakeholders generally only prompt policy direction. One facet is the market participation of government, which provided flow-on benefits to private industry that would not have been otherwise possible. This influenced the implementation of public policy and ongoing industry direction. Butlin et al. (1982, p. 352), as cited by Zoellner (2017, p. 4), state that ministerial and industry policy development had allowed Australia to become “something of a social laboratory in the Western world”, where Government support for private interest had become an expectation throughout the early parts of the 20th Century. The implication is the redistribution of public funds to private interests. Consider this in light of recent deregulation for funding of private RTO training. Students were enrolled to degrees they would never complete, with specific targets made of those on welfare, immigration support and government benefits. It raises questions as to the legitimacy of the reform, the underlying purpose and intent for it, and the relative ‘success’ of the program.

Politically, it is generally accepted that education and the investments made into education, are a consequence of economics. This chapter captures aspects of this through a brief analysis of growth theory and its application in the evaluation of economic return on the investments made into education; substantial policy from federal and State governments supports economic drivers. Bourdieu (1986) argues for the careless nature in which we assign monetary value to everything and by which everything can be accounted for economically. This is supported by the notion of
capital accumulation, in which social and economic forms can account for the accumulation of wealth; it is of the field in question that determines how capital can account for the value of the item, whether tangible or not (Bourdieu, 1986). An example is knowledge or mastery of a particular craft; the social capital of this embodies its value, not simply the education that took place in the initial instance of acquisition. Bourdieu goes on to argue that for education, there is a misrepresentation of the value of education in the return on investment. The contribution of education to social capital is greater than the simple sum of the transferability between certification and income. For Foucault, the argument is one of power and knowledge; imparting of knowledge and the transmission of power. Politically and socially, education policy has the capacity to serve a purpose beyond economics, of which two seem pertinent, namely the compulsory nature of vocational education and the vocational curriculum.

Historically, education has morphed from an opportunity to an enforced program of curricula and compulsory education (C. Robinson, 2000). There is a notion that compulsory schooling is a form of control, where the power of government to enforce a certain type of education, and education more broadly, defines a form of biopower and governmentality; a form of biopolitics (Green, 1998). But the use of the term government does not specifically relate to the concept of a ruling party or State, but of the organisation and direction of others.

"Government" did not refer only to political structures or to the management of states; rather it designated the way in which the conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed: the government of children, of souls, of communities, of families, of the sick. It did not only cover the legitimately constituted forms of political or economic
subjection, but also modes of action, more or less considered and
calculated, which were destined to act upon the possibilities of action of
other people. To govern, in this sense, is to structure the possible field of
action of others. The relationship proper to power would not therefore be
sought on the side of violence or of struggle, nor on that of voluntary
linking (all of which can, at best, only be the instruments of power), but
rather in the area of the singular mode of action, neither warlike nor
juridical, which is government. (Foucault, 1983a, p. 221)

Green’s (1998) account of the English teacher and curriculum exposes the
governance and transformation of governance in the way English is taught and the
shift toward student voice, the pedagogies of English and the relationship between
teacher and student. The words of Foucault above form the foundation of a nexus
between the teacher, the curriculum, the voice of the student and discipline.
Politically, then, it could be seen that enforcing vocational education, such as the
mandate for students to complete compulsory schooling in NSW until the age of 17,
acts as a form of political control and discipline, as equally as it is of economic value.
As control and discipline students are required to undertake further training, education
or engage in full time work, or otherwise be ineligible for social welfare payments. As
an example of biopolitics, this embodies governmentality by the State to enforce
specific actions or face social, economic and cultural hardship. Discipline, then, also
takes the form of the training packages and certification (qualification) as a result of
completion. Thus, students take courses that have a set curriculum, the certification
that ensues aligns them with a single domain of employment, after which further
training is required to progress, or change jobs altogether. The economic nexus is
between a further investment in education and the resultant human capital
development, which has implications for economic growth. There is no doubt each factor has a part to play, but politically, the implications of each are potentially considerable.

As this study develops, it becomes apparent the influence political agenda has on the state of vocational education. The complexity is analysing it as part of the study. This literature view considers the major developments of vocational education as part of the development of the country, or internationally as an influence on Australian education. Data collection focuses on the outcomes of VET, to examine the perspective of stakeholders, and at a macro level, the interactions of politics on VET and the nexus of power, knowledge, discipline and context.

3.4.2 Senior Secondary schools

Schools have a particular complexity in their perspective. Schools are subject to the perspectives of teachers and bureaucrats, which are often competing. Schools, as an organisation, also have the purpose of catering to diverse student needs, improving student outcomes and developing confidence in the qualifications it provides (Polesel & Clarke, 2011). A report on VET in Schools (Currie & McCollow, 2002) argues that teacher focus is on student achievement, motivation and self-improvements, and is attuned to the basic functions of social capital. However, there is a broad lack of evidence in engagement of institutional perspectives in development, implementation and review of VET and VET in Schools policy.

Schools are a valued element of the VET system, providing students with access to VET courses as part of the senior secondary schooling. Their footprint in terms of VET enrolments is considerably large (NCVER, 2016); in 2015 the number
of enrolments in VET in Schools courses was 257,100 compared to TAFE, University, community, enterprise providers and private RTOs, which was approximately 4.2 million. Whilst only representing 5% of enrolments, VET in Schools represents approximately 25% of all students enrolled between the ages of 15 and 19 in government funded training. Hence, schools provide a unique point of reference for VET in the broader picture of the entire sector.

3.4.3 TAFE and RTOs

TAFE (is synonymous with VET. Its place in the Australian VET market has been well established as the prime provider of VET since its inception in the early 1970s. But it is also in a constant state of flux, especially as it has the greatest responsibility to providing an enormous diversity of training options across a number of industry sectors (Goozee, 2001). This is mainly due to the political and governmental influence over TAFE, given it is required to operate within a public administration framework (Goozee, 2001).

Most substantially is its access to funding. For example, the Liberal Government in 2012 introduced broad spectrum changes to contestability laws, allowing private providers to bid for greater funding for enrolments. The changes resulted in $300 million in losses to TAFE, whilst the reality of the contestability changes was not as positive as expected. The greater impact of this is discussed at length later in this chapter. Yet in 2014 the newly appointed Labor Government offered a TAFE Rescue Fund to the tune of the same $300 million lost in enrolment funding.
3.4.4 Government and Authorities in VET

Governments and policy authorities have the primary objective of ensuring growth and economic stability are maintained. This is, in part, achieved by enhancing the qualifications, comparable test scores and levels of achievement in education and training (Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency, 2013a; Barro, 2000; UNESCO, 2012). Essentially, it is the perspective of government that education has the primary purpose of improving human capital to enhance growth. Governments also have the secondary responsibility to ensure young people are provided with labour opportunities. It is recognised that training, therefore, must be relevant to current labour markets (UNESCO, 2012). However, in Australia this is not necessarily achieved, as competency based training is characterised by being rigid and specific, lacking innovation, locked to work application without underpinning knowledge, behaviourist-focused in that processes are tied to skills, and qualifications lacking credibility and trust in the community (Wheelahan & Moodie, 2011, pp. 14–16). Further, Anderson, Brown and Rushbrook (2004) argued the reorientation of VET toward improving productive capacity is to the detriment of its primary goals of enhancing social labour outcomes. VET learners have become a resource, used to improve economic output. Specifically, reorientation has “displaced the social and educational roles of VET” (D. Anderson et al., 2004, p. 237).

There is a relationship between stakeholders to Industry Skills Councils (renamed Skills Service Organisations) who represents industry and education for policymakers in Australian VET. They also oversee and approve all VET Standards for RTOs, regulators, courses and training packages.
3.4.5 Industry

In Australia, policy is often considered the strongest influence over the structure and delivery of VET (Barnett & Ryan, 2005; Sheldon, 2005). It has been argued that employers are taking an increasingly prominent role in the direction and development of VET (Hampson, 2002; Schofield, 2002; Watson, Buchanan, Campbell, & Briggs, 2003). Ryan (2011) describes industry engagement with VET as limited, however, and a potential catalyst to change the rhetoric of VET in order to improve engagement. There are benefits to industry engagement, such as productivity and improved business outcomes. If industry drives the direction of VET training, it is able to gear education to improve productivity. Further, employers are continuously reducing their commitment to employees, expecting them to be more highly educated and to invest in their own training (Sheldon, 2005). Irrespective of the influence employers have on VET, there is a divide between practitioners, teaching practice, content and industry involvement and engagement that has great potential for improvement (Hawke, 2004).

3.4.6 Learners

Research on learner perspectives are often engaged in learner engagement or participation in a particular aspect of VET (Callan & Australian National Training Authority, 2003; Gemici, 2013; Misko, 1998). Learners are often represented by the needs of employers and government and no formal process exists for gaining learner feedback on VET policy (Schofield, 2002). One specific example is the VET Products for the 21st Century report (National Quality Council, 2009) where individuals, consultants, auditors, researchers and students represented only 6.6% of the consultative group, collectively. Learner perspectives in research tend to mirror the
promoted outcomes of VET broadly, such as providing greater career options and improving employment opportunities (Clarke, 2013a; Polesel, 2004).

For the purpose of this study, learners remain the focal point of research as part of the greater system, as opposed to a stakeholder case. This eliminates learners as a case of investigation and includes them in the institutions for investigation.

3.4.7 Cases for investigation

Conducting this study requires appropriate cases for investigation. Whilst political, government and authority stakeholders are an important facet of the VET sector, there are others that are more deeply operational. Investigation of the outcomes of VET, arrangements between the operational aspects and the analysis of power relationships is possibly more valuable between the operational providers. As a result, Industry, TAFE and private RTOs, and schools (referred to as Institutions), should be included in the cases for investigation, as these are substantially interconnected in the operation of VET in Australia.

3.5 How did we get here? A brief history of VET in Australia

Education in Australia was largely imported and as such, took major transformation for adaptation into Australian life, which was vastly different to the lifestyle known by English settlers (Partridge, 1973). There was a reliance on skills that few possessed, such as farming or agricultural and mechanical aptitudes. These were normally the consequence of an apprenticed younger man and a shortage of people voluntarily settled to Australia with these skills. In England, technical skills once passed on by means of apprenticeship were increasingly seen as irrelevant, especially where industrial and mechanised alternatives were taking hold. The crime
which perpetuated as a result of decreasing opportunity populated the fleets of people\* settled in Australia, leaving the first settlers without the necessary skills to effectively use the land to which they had travelled. This was compounded by a lack of tools and machines, unable to be shipped to Australia (Murray-Smith, 1966).

Before 1880, the primary concern of farming and agricultural industry left little time for a holistic education beyond the age of 12, being more focused on vocational skills and necessities. Australian education before 1901 was essentially focused on either technical skill, provided through private technical schools, and liberal education strategies, which separated themselves from technical education and focused on a more academic strategy.

3.5.1.1 The first vocational schools

The Mechanics’ Institutes in Australia of the 1820s, which experienced a rapid increase in numbers in 1825, were the first iterations of technical institutions, though these were mainly designed for middle-class citizens, as in the United Kingdom and Ireland (Inkster, 1975; Murray-Smith, 1966). Similar institutions in the United States of America existed, with varying levels of success, and some were considered early iterations of vocational education (Barlow, 1976). Initial export of the Mechanics Institutes to New South Wales was initially unsuccessful; the uptake was minimal, though in Van Diemen’s Land these took hold in 1833. These spread to Melbourne and Adelaide in 1839 and were more or less influenced and controlled by master-mechanics and artisans of the time, with negative public commentary around the political influence of schools, of which they remained in defiance. One of the most basic principles, however, separating them from ‘vocational’ schools of the future, was their adamant stance that they were not there to provide a vocational skillset; the
focus was on the principles of industrial technique that could be applied in various contexts. This was important from a liberal education perspective, as it separated these institutes from the labour-initiatives at the time, though the necessity of these were recognised by Governor Bourke and Henry Carmichael (Murray-Smith, 1966).

The educational intents were starkly different and to a point, were fuelled by political and class agendas of the time (Dunn, 2011; Turney, 1969). Interest and membership in these institutions wavered throughout the 1840s, though in two later phases they were revived and rebuilt, establishing a new direction that accommodated two driving concerns; delivery of a range of subjects including arithmetic, algebra, mechanical and architectural drawing, chemistry and music (Murray-Smith, 1966) and greater emphasis on developing the social aptitude of those in attendance. Working-class people could apply with reduced fees. The institutes ultimately failed in their original aims due to limited uptake. However, they were successful in developing the network of class citizens they fought to retain and cater for, and ultimately served an important role in the development of Australia’s technical schools.

3.5.1.2 Public education

Public education was introduced after recession in the 1840s made it impossible for religious institutions to continue to provide education, and also being accused of not providing education for up to half of the colony’s children (NSW Department of Education, 2017a; Partridge, 1973). This made the ongoing argument from those who vehemently supported public education, such as Sir Henry Parkes, stronger, but it was apparent the religious orders, primarily Anglican and Catholic, could not provide the resources, teachers or facilities to support such a widespread education, and as established this was not the education provided by the middle-class
alternative. A “free, compulsory and secular” (Partridge, 1973, p. 9) education emerged over the course of 30 years from the 1840s, which was the cause of much public debate, particularly opposed by the Catholic Church, and discourse on the structure and implementation of public education helped shape its form. This was not as simple as allowing it to conform to the National Schools in Ireland (NSW Department of Education, 2017a), as the system required significant levels of innovation, such as a State-controlled provision that could make better use of systemic resources. This was also agreeable to the community, as State-support for denominational schools was disagreeable to most and going forward most State systems provided a mixture of State funded, voluntary and State assisted denominational schools (Partridge, 1973).

Throughout this period, significant gaps were experienced between primary education (Banerjee & Wilson, 2016), offered to young people up to about the age of 12, and universities or technical schools of the time, which only a few private schools were able to fill. The courses universities offered were often too complex for some, did not provide the necessary practical skills required, and too basic for others. The courses waned in numbers and failed in their objective to win confidence of the community and governments as places of quality education that would provide options post-school (Murray-Smith, 1966).

### 3.5.1.3 Social and political shifts

Education continued as a significant feature of public discourse, particularly in the 1850s, drawing a correlation between moral values and education, founded on the perceived influence of the gold rush and feminist attitudes. At the time it was said, “If we do not educate [the people] on what is good, they will be educated without our
assistance with what is bad” (Reverend James B. Laughton, 1955 in Murray-Smith, 1966, p. 88). Socially, a shift was occurring between the middle and working classes, with the rights of the working class improving and becoming more widely recognised in a relatively short period of time, and a recognition that any person had the capacity to build wealth and be educated.

By the late 1890s, the political and social state of Australia had changed dramatically through population expansion, a growing labour movement, and development of greater government influence on public policy (Murray-Smith, 1966). Depression in the 1890s was brought about by decreased exports and increased international debt, the banking crisis in Britain, collapse of mortgage brokering and banking in Australia and reduction of employment (Attard, 2008; Parliament of New South Wales, n.d.), impacting each State significantly. Political parties expanded rapidly, and changes to policy allowed a vast number of smaller parties to emerge. The consequence was a greater level of influence on regulation and over market conditions, commodity prices and industrial competition. Australian political parties instigated the drawing up of Australia’s constitution, with Federation finally being approved and the constitution signed by 1 January 1901 in an attempt to bring the colonies together, solidify military protection across the country and improve immigration policy (Parliament of New South Wales, n.d.).

The ongoing movement in political structure also brought about changes in educational requirements, which in each State saw the introduction of compulsory primary education for children aged 6-13 in all States (Banerjee & Wilson, 2016; at minimum, see NSW Department of Education, 2017b). The first significant acts of education were entered into Parliament between 1870 and 1895. Each of the States
provided very similarly provisioned legislations (for comparison, see The Victorian Education Act 1890 (Legislative Assembly of Victoria, 1890) and the New South Wales Public Instruction Act 1880 (Legislative Assembly of New South Wales, 1880), which has perpetuated to the current day. This foundational system, which started with elementary education, was built on throughout the early 20th Century to offer secondary education in various forms (NSW Department of Education, 2017b). There was, however, no inclusion of technical education subjects; the opposite could be seen as true. The acts focused mainly, for boys, on education for university in subjects such as history, languages and mathematics, in preparation for university. Girls were offered similar subjects for education, though no mention of preparedness for university was included. A similar reality was the case in the Unites States of America, with education primarily seen as a liberal agenda, providing little in the way of education for those who chose to pursue trade-sector careers in support of, or beyond, apprenticeships (Wonacott, 2003).

3.5.1.4 Integrating general and vocational education

The first real disruptive innovation in schools came from Western Australia, when in 1897, Cyril Jackson was appointed as Inspector General of Schools, gathering significant support of Minister George Randell (Murray-Smith, 1966). Whist still primarily focused on technical education, it was his vision that technical education and skills be brought alongside the general education initiatives. He moved quickly to establish technical instruction in later years of primary school and provide evening classes for those who wanted to extend their education beyond primary school. It cannot be said more clearly than by Murray-Smith (1966), who wrote:
It was not a matter of vocational training or of orientation to economic pressures, but of a conviction that the anti-scholastic battle had to be fought resolutely in order to make the schools meaningful to those who attended them, and thus a puissant force for individual and moral, as well as social, betterment. Thus the views of men like Jackson were distinct from those of men who wanted technical education because of its immediate industrial and vocational usefulness, and eventually, as the latter voices were heard more strongly, a compromise had to be struck with them (Murray-Smith, 1966, pp. 661–662).

The Perth Technical School, opening in 1900 and under the directorship of Alex Purdie, announced its intention to stay true to technical education and not be in the business of teaching trades, as these were the focus of apprenticeships. Over time however, it took to teaching trade subjects, like fitting and turning, plumbing and blacksmithing. Further, their ties to the University of Adelaide provided a segue into higher level education, should the opportunity and need arise. They had benefited from waiting and establishing technical schools later than other colonies. Although general attendance was low, the technical schools around Australia were well established; Sydney about 1883, Melbourne in 1888, Adelaide and Brisbane in the 1890s, and Tasmania and Western Australia by the late 1890s.

3.5.1.5 Feuding school providers

Throughout this period, in colonies other than Tasmania and Western Australia who had similar approaches to technical education, there was a greater focus on general education. Secondary schools had been provided for students wanting to pursue education beyond primary school, within mining and farm schools taking the
majority of students outside apprenticeships. There was controversy over the operation and benefits of farm schools (*Farm Schools: An excerpt from the Report of the Royal Commission on Youth Employment and the Apprenticeship System, 1938*), which continued into the late 1930s. Throughout the Colonies/States (hereafter States), the recession of the 1890s saw significant change to technical schools, where mining groups creating unified curricula and examination inspired the greatest proportion of impact. Their decision to provide training in-house impacted the stability of technical schools, which were publicly renounced as failing (Murray-Smith, 1966). The bitter war waged between technical schools and mining schools that ensued was fuelled, in part, by policy changes that sought to regulate the schools, bringing about massive retrenchment and ongoing enrolment decline. This, along with economic factors without correlation to policy, emigration from Victoria and Melbourne, which bore the brunt of waning support, and falls in employment with manufacturing groups were the greatest influences on declining technical education numbers (Murray-Smith, 1966). Also, the majority of funding had been removed from these institutions for the purpose of expanding government operations.

In the years that followed the late 1890s, similar debates took place as had in England and America, where industry desired high-level industrial and technical skill, but did not want it to occur at their expense. There existed some synthesis between general and technical education, summarised by Phillip E. Muskett in around 1899, as quoted by Murray-Smith (1966),

“A young nation is awaiting her development,” he wrote. “Why, then, should a system of education, which is indispensably necessary for us, be delayed?” If ever there was a national question, it is that of technical
education. “It has directly to do with the future occupations of
Australian children; with the commercial and industrial activity of the
whole community; and with the progress and prosperity of all Australia”
(p. 708).

Public opinion and pressure had been mounting for some years that the
government to do something about the widening gaps between state implementation
of technical schools, though this was more the direction of opinion makers, as Frank
Tate, an educationalist and unionist, remarked, the public were apathetic.

The Age newspaper in Victoria was particularly vocal about the topic, often
taking aim directly at schools of the mines (The Age, 1892), which were run by the
Education Department, though the idea was renounced (Department of Education,
1898; Murray-Smith, 1966). Ultimately, the declining state of technical education was
examined and argued at length, driven by editorial commentary in The Age, which
has been summarised at length by Murray-Smith (see Murray-Smith, 1966, pp. 715–
721). Two important events occurred as a result. First, Minister Alfred Deakin waded
into the debate, destroying the reputation of Victorian Schools in a speech that was
supported by other political members, after which The Age commended the argument
(which, according to Murray-Smith (1966), carried indications of collusion) and went
on to provide a highly positive review of the success of South Australian education.
The pursuit of The Age was relentless (R. Ryan, 2011), and over the coming years
impelled a second important event; the Government announced a royal commission
into the Education Department in Victoria, to investigate technical education. The
findings of the commission were scathing of the Education Department and included
28 recommendations, although the findings were not as enlightening as they could
have been, and to some even expected. Reform was lacking, but still there were fairly notable implications for the Education Department in reorganisation; the Technical Schools escaped much impact. Of the recommendations, the most interesting was for an integrated and national approach to technical education, provided on the basis of success by national systems in Europe and America (Victoria Royal Commission on Technical Education et al., 1901), to make it more competitive both internationally and within the Commonwealth.

Interestingly, the class war that raged in England during the 19th Century seemed to make a delayed pathway through education in Australia quickly after the commission published it findings (Murray-Smith, 1966). First, the commission had indicated no intention of recommending technical schools be integrated with secondary schools, provided primarily for the lower classes (Murray-Smith, 1966; Victoria Royal Commission on Technical Education et al., 1901). It was a widely held perspective that technical education should remain with the working class, though social class denomination was developing more distinctly, with political and editorial commentary driving this agenda significantly. Such was the volume, some even called that the working class be refused entry to the technical schools, too (Murray-Smith, 1966).

3.5.1.6 Primary school teach manual arts

In 1901, Anderson (1901) explored a perspective of manual training defined by elementary schools teaching students dexterity through interaction with basic mediums like wood, cardboard and metals. Doing so was for the purpose of exposing students to manual arts, particularly for those who may have wanted to pursue trade or special education beyond school. A commission conducted in Michigan, USA
(Commission on industrial and agricultural education Michigan, 1910), in their analysis of schools in the area, found the process of teaching students manual arts in elementary school to be of great benefit. The commission did also note that in 1910, local opportunities for trade training beyond this were limited, and recommended options like the continuation schools of Germany be considered. More recently, there is some recognition that Australian VET mirrors more of the Germanic system than that of Britain, given the heavy State-supported funding arrangements and federalised curriculum that is essentially reflected at State level (Pickersgill, 2005).

3.5.1.7 Trade schools

Two royal commissions into juvenile labour and apprenticeships in New South Wales brought about changes to vocational education in 1914, instantiated by Peter Board, the Director of Education and James Nangle, the Superintendent of Technical Education (Goozee, 2001). These saw alterations to the courses offered at the Sydney Technical College, where three-year trade certified or five-year trade competency courses replaced vocational and daytime-trade courses. This was bought about by reports from industry that current courses did not meet requirements. Advisory boards were established along with the changes to Sydney Technical College to oversee the needs of industry were reflected in the new courses and most technical colleges were renamed “trade schools” (Goozee, 2001; Murray-Smith, 1966; Neill, 1991). Murray-Smith (1966) examines economic circumstances of the time, indicating improved exports and diminishing reliance on imports a driving factor for higher requirements of trade value labour. Further, the conditions of labour Australia had previously ‘enjoyed’ were failing. Apprentices were poorly indentured and paid and trained improperly. Skilled immigrant workers made up the greater portion of
Australia’s skilled (trade) workforce (Pickersgill, 2005) and with little political or legal support, uptake of local trade training was limited. The aforementioned royal commission afforded industry the opportunity to provide feedback and indicate their preference for greater training initiatives and the conditions of labour under scrutiny evinced grounds to make changes to the structure of technical colleges. Hence, formal vocational education began to make a more substantiative impact on skill development amongst young people in Australia as there was an increasing need to focus on improving local human capital and making use of established social capital.

3.5.1.8 Requirement for indenture

One of the most significant aspects of the change to technical courses was that students, previously free to enrol in any course they wanted, after 1913 were required to be an apprentice within the trade to be able to enrol. This was the work of Nangle, who had dismissed them as ‘dilettante students’ (Neill, 1991, p. 26); justification for exclusion was founded on concentrating vocational education in students who are contributing to the trades, and an economic use of funding in an already critically underfunded system. Neill (1991) proposed this as a political question. Should Sydney Technical Colleges be willing to work within a tighter budget, or offer more courses and argue for funding? The result, for Nangle, was the “small but efficient option” (Neill, 1991, p. 27). Throughout the rest of Australia, there was an almost simultaneous move to similar protocols, which Queensland coming under government organisation for trade training, with colleges and technical schools being absorbed into the State system (Murray-Smith, 1966). Technical education in Tasmania had significant shortcomings and failed to command public support (Murray-Smith, 1966 as cited by Goozee, 2001, p. 15). In Western Australia, the Department of Education
controlled technical colleges, which were found to be providing a more substantiative education than what could be provided by employers. By 1910, employers were required to fund classes for apprentices, provided by technical colleges.

3.5.1.9 The Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme

In 1916, as the effects of the First World War were felt and servicemen were returning home; a number of disabled ex-servicemen were offered free training in trade-based occupations (Neill, 1991). It was realised, however, that many more ex-servicemen and women had also been disadvantaged by war-time efforts, failing to start occupational training. The Repatriation Vocational Training Scheme provided classes in a range of occupations free of charge, though the intake was significantly greater than anticipated and required amendment early on. Wage subsidies were offered for employers to accept these tradesmen though as these were scaled back, it is understood many would have been left unemployed. In a similar move post the Second World War, Governments sought solutions to post-war training of ex-servicemen and women to minimise impact of an influx of people looking for work. There was a need to ensure people returning from war were sufficiently trained in work appropriate for local trades, and that training would meet demand. The Commonwealth Reconstruction and Training Scheme (“Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme,” 1947; “Fact sheet 178, Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme,” n.d.) provided this support. Enacted between 1944 and 1951, it was a significant investment into re-training, ensuring economic stability in light of the period of depression occurring after the First World War. Training was offered in University, Technical and Rural occupations, though a majority undertook trade training through technical institutions. The Wright Report (Commonwealth-
State Apprenticeship Inquiry, 1954) indicated support for programs, although stated it could only be possible given war-time conditions. Throughout the lifetime of the scheme 300,000 people had been approved to commence training, making it one of the most significant strategies for education and social change in Australia (“Fact sheet 178, Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme,” n.d.). The intention and success of these programs remained in their ability to provide training and build capacity in people disadvantaged by war.

3.5.1.10 Summary

This historical account demonstrates how VET has adapted to the needs of industry and society, but in many cases provided only to those it sought to benefit. Where there was political or social influence, it was to the benefit of those who designed and implemented the system rather than those who would receive from it. Over time, evolutions of VET started to provide more for disadvantaged people and as a way for those leaving school without intention for a higher education (through a university) to gain employment.

Moving ahead to the most significant reform in the history of VET, we now explore three substantially influential reports delivered in the early 1990s. These completely reconfigured VET from the vocational skills and time orientated provision it was to a new, competency-based model that would alter the perceptions of VET into the 21st Century.

3.6 Capital

The use of capital as a driver for the construction of policy is not new or unique. Capital is used in models of growth and economics as a foundation to policy.
For example, using a neoclassical growth theory model (Mankiw, Romer, & Weil, 1992), Whiteley (2000) argues for the relationship between growth and social capital. It is found that social capital has a similar effect on growth as human capital or education. It may also improve productivity and worker value. In order to realise the potential of human capital, there is a reliance on social contribution and interaction, or social capital (Winch, 2000). Social capital is an identity with social norms, social networks and interpersonal trust to facilitate cooperation within or between groups of people (OECD, 2001). According to Winch (2000), as well as knowledge and skill, human capital is possessed as a result of education and training. As individuals contribute human capital through social networks, it becomes socially collective. Hughes and Hughes (2012) argue that human capital is initially latent, realised through social interaction.

In either neoclassical (Solow, 1956) or endogenous growth theory (Aghion, 2009; Aghion & Howitt, 1998; Barro, 1996), explained previously, education variables including years engaged in formal education, certification level, numbers of enrolment, or internationally comparable test scores are often used in empirical study (Barro, 2000; Becker, 1962; M. Knight, Loayza, & Villanueva, 1993; Mincer, 1958). These variables are measures of human capital. Policy in Australia is often driven by needs in human capital (see Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency, 2013a). Education policy, such as the Melbourne Declaration (MCEETYA, 2008), also references aspects of human capital including skills, knowledge and productivity. Further, considerate considers aspects of social integration and contribution of these skills. Moreover, frameworks such as the Employability Skills framework, embedded into VET curriculum documents, focus on social aptitude and contribution of human capital to work.
In the assessment of capital, this study seeks to establish the interplay of various positions of capital and their position within policy. An overarching notion of pure economic principles dominates policy production and justification of VET, aligned with the outcomes of productivity, work-readiness and capabilities, benefiting only the employee as a singular entity; a worker produced to ‘do work’. As policy is examined in light of stakeholder opinion and the questions of quality, outcomes and benefits are asked, data are interrogated to consider how the various forms of capital are interwoven in policy and curriculum outcomes. In doing so, there is an opportunity to examine the depth to which teachers, institutions and industry position their work. In responding to theory, it is considered how various forms of capital are essential in developing vocational education policy, and the integration of these critical in the implementation of curriculum, activities and outcomes.

3.6.1 Human Capital

Chapter 2 explores the theoretical fundamentals of economic and social capital in detail. This review has developed an illustration of how human capital forms in VET, under the auspices of competency and certification through training. This developed the nexus between capital and economic circumstance, which has political and social implications. Issues such as teacher qualifications and contribution to student capability are a strong example of this relationship. The contribution of generic skills in training shows the depth of learning that occurs in VET and its applicability to the long-term employability of individuals trained in VET. The purpose was to develop a relationship between human capital and educational policy development, such as the focus on benefits to and drivers of industry, educational
dualism, funding and economic ties, and the use of training to increase human capital in times of need, such as post war.

Human capital is defined by the OECD as “the knowledge, skills, competencies and attributes embodied in individuals that facilitate the creation of personal, social and economic well-being” (OECD, 2001, p. 18), and is often attributed to the return on investment of education; an ability to use that capital (investment) for the overall improvement of self and the economy. From Bourdieu’s perspective, this is economic capital. Human capital is the underpinning driver of economic circumstance that forms economic capital.

Historically, human capital has contributed to education policy decisions (M. McHugh, 2007; Quiggin, 1999; Sweetland, 1996). In some contexts, there are ties between productivity improvement and standards of living, of which reliance falls to the workplace to better utilise human capital (Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency, 2013a). With greater enterprise investment in training, there is a potential to see improved productivity. Zoellner (2017) shows how politically this is a strategic way to distil value into human capital development, as where vocational education is seen as limitless and free, it runs the risk of lacking value for the recipient.

Human capital has been a driver for development of organisational and structural elements of VET in Australia. This is evidenced in its use as a tool for improvement of productivity, organisation of curriculum and development of strategies for implementing vocational education to develop skills and knowledge. Capital development continues to be a significant driver for education policy. The Bradley Review (2008) asserted that all capable students should be able to participate, and the effectiveness of the higher education sector makes a significant contribution
to this in the context of national productivity and global competitiveness. It goes further to state that Indigenous human capital should have a part to play in our tertiary education sector, and recognised for its contribution, too. (Noonan & Allen Consulting Group, 2010)

This study considers the effects of human capital development through the lens of policy by examining effectiveness, quality and outcomes of Vocational Education. In doing so, there is a chance to explore the ways in which VET contributes to the economy in terms of human capital. In the context that a student is more employable, has greater competency, and is effective in the workplace, there is a greater chance that the policy driving education has succeeded in developing the human capital necessary for them to participate in work. However, where industry or other stakeholders feel these aspects of the student condition are not of a high standard, there is an impending need for policy to reflect the needs of industry. This may point toward issues of flexibility, contextualisation, innovation and relevance of VET courses, or the capacity of teachers to deliver the content in ways that encourage students to develop mastery.

Human capital, however, is not a concept deployed in isolation. Although a more mature concept than social capital, there is increasing evidence to support the importance of understanding both and the resulting influence on implementation and benefits of, vocational education.

3.6.2 Social Capital

Hughes (2012) argued through the lens of intentions established under the Mechanics Institutes in the 1800s that VET in Australia, from its outset, was probably
more than strictly about the acquisition of knowledge and skills. It was Hughes’s opinion that the values developed within the VET frameworks are just as important as the skills. This is established through his proposition that whilst not expressly denied, exclusion of these as a significant aspect of VET fails to develop the possibility or potential. Further, Hughes identifies that according to the OECD, “competency is more than just accumulated knowledge and skills – creative abilities, motivations and attitudes are also drawn upon in coping with today’s challenges” (Hughes, 2012, p. 3). In this way, VET is as much about developing social networks and the values and norms associated with these networks, as it is the skills and knowledge.

Black, Balatti, & Falk (2010) research the effect of a specific program to build student social capital. Their perspective of social capital is that it is the networks and social connections that enable positive learning outcomes. In their experience, students who attended the program and TAFE as an alternative pathway to school had better social relationships and a more positive social network as a result. A consistent feature of students is that at the time of the study, they could be considered ‘at risk’. Whilst previously explored literature indicated it was complex to label students as ‘at risk’, where it is appropriate alternative pathways show a positive influence from a social and human capital perspective. Black et al. (2010) also found classroom structure and program flexibility, explicit shifts in social networks and a focus on teacher-student relationships as they would exist in normal social networks, had a positive impact. The combined pedagogical and social approach enabled students to feel more connected and socially accepted, despite the ‘at risk’ status.

There are ties between social capital and productivity, the perceived value of VET and social networks and the strength of desire for VET to contribute to these
networks (Hughes & Hughes, 2012). Where there is greater value placed on VET and the contribution it makes more broadly, there is greater potential to exercise these networks within an organisation. The consequence is an increase in productivity. That said, Hughes and Hughes research focuses on the value of VET, and the broader want for VET to contribute to social capital networks. Without some appreciation for the contribution of VET, there is a lesser chance VET can contribute to building quality social networks.

In analysing the value proposition of VET in this study, and ‘want’ for VET to contribute to social capital through implicit conversation with stakeholders, data could be analysed in light of the Hughes and Hughes work to find points of similarity. Further, there is a potential opportunity to consider how stakeholders view students and participants of VET, as employers and teachers are often a major contributor to their experience in VET.

3.6.3 Cultural Capital

It is difficult to examine cultural capital in the context of VET, as little is written about it explicitly. Much of the research focuses on social or human (economic) capital. For many, economic capital has greater synergy with human capital in a financial sense; most assimilate the two more readily and it is how this study defined it within Bourdieu’s notions of capital, explored in Chapter 2.

This literature review has examined a number of cultural aspects of VET including certifications, the value of these and the context of value as a greater influence on the evolution of VET from a macro perspective. These important characteristics form a great part of the empirical knowledge generated through data
collection in Chapter 5. In Chapter 6, analysis of data will consider the implicit and explicit manifestations of cultural capital as stakeholders discuss the value of VET, qualifications and issues such as work placement.

### 3.7 Growth Theory and Neoclassical economics

At some point, when examining the policies that underpin education, growth, economic factors and the nexus between these and human capital is established. Much of Australia’s policy that pertains to education is rested, perhaps balanced, on economic factors. Whilst throughout this study it is argued the reality is much broader than pure economics, it is essential to provide some context to the economic position.

Growth theory is a framework used to model growth based on a variety of fixed and variable measures. Such measures may include education, certification, productivity, forms of capital, and many others (Aghion, 2009; Barro, 2000; Domar, 1947; Harrod, 1948; Solow, 1956). A commonly referenced specific model of growth theory, known as endogenous growth theory (Aghion & Howitt, 1998; Grossman & Helpman, 1993), has become a core framework used in economic growth analysis. However, the ongoing evolution of economics and shifting directional emphasis means other growth theories are also developed and used in growth modelling (Galor, 2005).

Human capital plays a significant role in economic policy development in Australia, a recognised characteristic of growth theory (Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency, 2013a, 2013b; Quiggin, 1999). Specifically, human capital is the value of formal and informal training, experience, educational credentials and
knowledge and skills acquired. Consequently, the fundamental relationship between
growth theory and the education of the workforce is human capital.

Keynes’s (1936) General Theory argued that unemployment might be caused
by a lack of demand for production. Previously, classical growth theory put
unemployment down to labour market fluctuations alone. However, Harrod (1948)
argued that Keynes’s theory, whilst not deficient, did not account for the more
dynamic elements of economics which include involuntary unemployment. Further,
Domar (1947, p. 37) argued Keynes’s approach for the “treatment of employment as a
function of income” can actually be assumed to be “the percentage of labour force
employed [a]s a function of the ratio between ational income and productive
capacity”. The Harrod-Domar model, therefore, provided a more dynamic approach to
growth economics. The model argued that employment is directly affected by a
Nation’s income and its ability to produce goods. Harrod-Domar also acknowledges
the effect of quantity and productivity of labour and capital on productive capacity.

Solow (1956) provided a neoclassical growth theory model, and whilst not
accommodating human capital, argued that the Harrod-Domar model made
assumptions causing economic instability in magnitudes of growing unemployment or
prolonged inflation. The basis of Solow’s neoclassical analysis is on alterations of
fixed proportions, adaptation of an exogenous rate of increase of labour force, price-
wage-interest reactions and relaxing of other rigid assumptions in the Harrod-Domar
model. More recent cross country studies have taken inspiration from neoclassical
models to include the element of human capital (Barro, 1996).

Mankiw, Romer, and Weil (1992) argued for human capital in analysing
deficiencies in the neoclassical model, proposed by Solow (1956). Adaptation of
human capital influences the measures of growth both theoretically and empirically.
Mankiw, Tomer, and Weil (1992) consider human capital in the form of education to
measure the rate of human capital accumulation. This is significant as it develops the
relationship between levels of schooling, qualification attainment and measuring
capital in terms of labour productivity and economic return on education.

Critical analysis of neoclassical growth theory models resulted in alternative,
endogenous models (Aghion, 2009; Aghion & Howitt, 1998; Barro, 1996). These
models are commonly used in examining long-run growth (Barro, 2000; Grossman &
Helpman, 1993), also taking into account aspects such as human capital and
technological change. Endogenous models, according to Barro (1996), provided
critical work in establishing the strengths of neoclassical approaches to growth
analysis.

A context of growth theory and economics is to explain capital accumulation
in Australian VET. It also acknowledges the influence growth theory and economics
has on education, with capital as a driving feature. The analysis is beyond the scope of
this study, but there is an opportunity to include aspects of capital accumulation in an
economic sense throughout this study, without delving too deeply into the impact of
growth and associated economic influences.

3.8 Domains for investigation

This literature review has outlined a great breadth of issues and historical
aspects of VET that have shaped and defined what we know as VET in the present.
Conducting this genealogically has enabled an introspection of the present whilst
setting the scene historically. The benefit of this approach is that it focuses on the
events that led to the present situation, bringing in the various perspectives as they are relevant and available. This breadth is as much a limitation though, as it is a substantial amount of data collected and discussed.

3.8.1 Empirical questions

Literature review has highlighted historical changes and issues in policy. It has illustrated the interplay of sectors and the effect policy has had on each. From here, it is pertinent to examine the current state of stakeholder perspective, so we can better understand the present. This was established in the theoretical framework of this study, which indicates a procedure of knowing the past, establishing a present and examining stakeholder discourse for understanding and knowledge. Hence, it was determined that the following are important aspects of VET to consider in the discovery of stakeholder perspective.

1. The influence of policy outcomes, such as
   a. quality teaching;
   b. education and training achievement for a diverse range of students; and
   c. work placement integration and benefits.

2. The impact of competency and capability-based outcomes on
   a. student pathways through further education and training; and
   b. transition to work and on employability.

These were determined by considering the impact of competency-based training and the substantial shift of training paradigms between 1992 and 2015. Changes throughout this period had a significant influence on the success of VET with many people, industries and sectors affected.
3. The influence of general education and higher school certificates in the pursuit of VET qualifications.

Historically, contention between the general and vocational education sector has created substantial issues. This includes training requirements for teachers, cross-sector transitional issues and bureaucratic red tape. In some cases, this is related to apprenticeship and cross-sector approaches to training. For students, it has been found to be beneficial in some ways and detrimental in others. By exploring perspectives on this issue, we can understand the current state of each sector in comparison to the other.

4. The VET in Schools system, including
   a. preparedness of students exiting this system for work;
   b. quality training; and
   c. school-based apprenticeships and traineeships.

The integration of VET in Schools was to bring lower-skill VET qualifications to students in high school, equipping them early for transition to work. It also enabled shorter post-school training options for apprenticeships and traineeships or diploma qualifications. By analysing the current state of VET in Schools we can evaluate the success of the various aspects of this policy and establish the benefits to schools, industry and possibly, students. Analysing school-based apprenticeship models is built on the notion that younger students have a lower success rate in VET, which may be compounded in apprenticeship. This may also have implications for attrition rates. Finally, there is potential to scrutinize relationships between the sectors and how these arrangements are serving each sector.

5. Qualifications of Teachers and trainers, such as
a. requirements for different sectors; and

b. university expectations.

Teacher and trainer requirements are diverse and substantial. Training, assessment, reporting and audit expectations place pressure on each sector as they navigate policy and authority requirements, which are often different between the states. Literature review details the constant state of flux this aspect of VET is under, which further examination will illustrate in the context of the present.

6. The evolution of employability skills, in whatever form they currently take, including

   a. influence on teaching and learning;
   b. benefit to employers and students; and
   c. visibility in assessment and reporting procedures.

Soft skills have influenced the sector substantially, as they have formed a seemingly underwriting framework of transferrable skills necessary for success in work beyond the core skills and knowledge of a training package. Various VET providers implement these differently and historically, they have been underutilised. Evaluating their current use can clarify their applicability in the current context.

What is expected to be revealed from this investigation are the power relationships between sectors and the way in which sectors interact, the issues as they pertain to the greater fabric of VET policy, such as funding, inter-sector relationships, and other issues as they align with these policies.
3.8.2 Power relations

Following on from the empirical domains of investigation, the study will seek to answer the research questions by examining the discourse for power relations and manifestation of capital. It will attempt to do this by approaching the discovery of power relations with an implicit approach.

In a practical sense, each issue and development of policy highlights a series of contentions between the stakeholders. Each has a position of power, defined within their needs, perspectives, desire for outcomes and ambitions. Not explicitly identified above, there now exists an opportunity to explore the state of each policy or experience in VET, defining the power relations that exist between stakeholders. As previously highlighted, this is the external viewpoint in which power can be observed (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983). Power is everywhere but asking of it directly is like pointing to the elephant in the room and asking for everyone’s opinion. The complexity is observing its appearance. By examining the interplay of stakeholders in the context of policy, there is potential to illustrate power relations without explicitly requesting their definition of influential factors.

The various policies discussed in this review have the potential to reveal power relationships, as they are substantially cross-sector and have caused contention between the sectors before. For example, contestability and funding arrangements, provision of training and pathways across the sectors feature heavily in the literature as having issues across providers and stakeholders. Examination of these in an empirical sense allows for greater external reflection. There is a greater responsibility than simply highlighting the power-relationships and discourse of power between the
stakeholders. It is enough to examine the discourse of truth between the sectors and highlight this for evaluation.

In light of three interpretations of Foucault’s work, Butin (2006) argues the intention of voice is not to establish correctness but overcome unidirectional relations of power-knowledge and dominance over the voice of change; how it is ‘constrained’. The intention is to establish the influence voice can have from the perspectives established as a result. Hence this study does not seek justice from wrongdoing or oppression, or liberation from entrapment, rather it is to establish how power and knowledge can influence systemic practices and outcomes through informed speech (Butin, 2006, p. 379). Furthermore, a subject’s voice may be dominated by those with greater power, and in the context of this study, we should consider how the voice of change or desire in activism within the system is constrained; this is the discourse of truth and acceptance of truth. This has the potential to influence the way policy is produced and enacted in the educational setting into the future. Hunter (1996) proposes that whilst the use of Foucault’s work to criticize and highlight the failings of schools in general is commonplace, it “misses a chance that Foucault’s work holds…to reconsider [the theorist’s] ethical and political relation to the actually existing school system” (p. 144); essentially that Foucault’s work provides a bigger opportunity than to simply consider the failings of the school system, but to observe its disciplinary actions and capabilities, which Green (1998) seems to achieve.

3.8.3 Cases for investigation

Investigating these aforementioned points requires appropriate cases for investigation. As such, a number of policy changes has consistent areas of influence. Whilst political, government and authority stakeholders are an important facet of the
VET sector, there are others that are more deeply operational. Investigation of the outcomes of VET, arrangements between the operational aspects and the analysis of power relationships is possibly more valuable between the operational providers. As a result, Industry, TAFE and private RTOs and schools should be included in the cases for investigation, as these are substantially interconnected in the operation of VET in Australia.

3.9 Conclusion

This literature review has covered massive ground. First, an outline of the specifics of modern VET included features and operation, governance and the discontinuations that have shaped it in the present. These characteristics describe the interplay of political, sector and industry stakeholder influences. Examining these provides an insight into the drivers of shift in VET, and how interplay between stakeholders has influenced outcomes in modern VET.

The objectives of stakeholders have shaped, shifted and morphed VET to the implementation of the present system of VET. These objectives are wrapped up in the discontinuity of the past, which was explored to provide a foundation for how VET evolved in Australia. This defines past objectives and present manifestations.

By defining the features of capital in VET, it is possible to illustrate the characteristics of VET in the context of capital. This provides the basis for considering links between VET, capital formation and stakeholder objectives.

From this point, the study formulates the methodology under which an investigation into the present formation of VET is conducted, utilising the domains of inquiry extracted from literature to define an investigation into empirical concepts.
with a deeper exploration into theoretical notions of power, capital and
governmentality.
4 Methodology

The following chapter describes a dialectic paradigm that wraps up a genealogical and pragmatic lens under which the methodological approach of the study sits. An argument is made for dialectics as a paradigm, which provides a foundation for data collection and analysis within each phase of the study. Methodologically, the study employs a case study design from the perspective of Yin (2014). This perspective is used to define the research design and define the units of analysis, set boundaries for each case, explain sampling logic, determine instrument design data collection and analysis. An explanatory sequential design characterises the mixed methods data collection (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

4.1 Situating the study

This study examines attitudes toward implementation of Vocational Education and Training policy and explores the relationship between them. Foucauldian concepts of power relations and governmentality in conjunction with Foucault’s and Bourdieu’s principles of capital set the theoretical context. Evidence of these are collected through empirical aspects of Vocational Education policy, on the opinion of stakeholders in the time at which the study was conducted. Therefore, the study is situated between the discontinuities of the past, present policy, and implications for future policymakers. The intention is to examine how historical discontinuities contribute to current policy development and attitude. The study aims to extrapolate the attitudes and perspectives of those who influence development and implementation of policy. It uses these data to examine the deeper influences and relationships of power relations and implications of capital for policy. To achieve this,
a dialectic approach is used as a paradigmatic stance; the lens under which the study is scrutinised. Methodologically, it employs a multiple embedded case study, as it affords the depth of investigation into each case, comparisons across case, and considers the assumption that power, governmentality and capital are embedded within each case and the phenomena under investigation. Hence, the study is situated at the crossroads between stakeholder cases, observing institutions of schooling, industry and policy to discern the empirical and theoretical domains proposed. It does so from many angles at many points, to maximise the potential for valid and robust identification, enriching results, findings and discussion. This situation will now be illustrated fully.

4.2 Design of Methodology

Employing a multiple embedded case study (Yin, 2014) provides several sites of analysis which can be used as comparative cases, whilst the embedded design considers the propositions of the study, namely power relations, governmentality and capital, as embedded in the cases. These are examined by asking ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions, in a contemporary context of concrete, empirical topics to collect evidence (Yin, 2014).

The paradigmatic stance is characterised by a dialectics, utilising genealogy and pragmatism (Greene & Hall, 2010; Shannon-Baker, 2015). The approach utilises the strength of both through juxtaposition. This dualism can be seen as enabling a unique perspective in data analysis and discussion. Genealogy is used in literature review, which identifies the historical discontinuities that have shaped the present situation under investigation.
The case study is conducted in two phases, an initial quantitative phase that informs a second, qualitative phase. This is known as an explanatory sequential design, which enhances value of data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Statistical analysis characterises the first phase, thematic synthesis the second.

The results of thematic synthesis are used directly to form the findings of the domains of investigation from empirical enquiry. This acts as a wrapper around the two phases, used to examine and establish the discourses of truth and presenting findings that respond to the theoretical propositions. Figure 4.1 illustrates the design. The following sections in this chapter detail the design, providing a justification for the paradigm, design, data collection and analysis.
4.2.1 Paradigm

The utilisation of mixed methods was once one of contention, a war between quantitative and qualitative methodologies wrapped up in paradigms, such as positivism or constructivism, or indeed adopted as paradigms in their own right. Further, for some, the practice of qualitative and quantitative terms being assigned a paradigmatic value is troubling, as they are more methods than worldviews (Greene & Hall, 2010; Shannon-Baker, 2015). Beyond these ‘paradigm wars’, there is an established need, and indeed discourse, for developing a foundation on which mixed methods is conducted. To illustrate this point, Koopman (2011) provides a narrative for the importance of considering the value of various worldviews, and their
contribution to knowledge. Others call for acceptance of a worldview that uses mixed methods to broaden understanding (Hall, 2012; Shannon-Baker, 2015; Sommer Harrits, 2011).

The adoption of a paradigm that supports mixed methods, and mixed methods in evidence collection, is now broadly accepted as a suitable approach to research (Biesta, 2010; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Hall, 2012; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Pearce, 2012; Sammons, 2010), but selection of appropriate paradigm is important to the focus and report of findings from the study (Shannon-Baker, 2015). The adaptation of pragmatism in a mixed methods enquiry is one solution, supporting each method as a complimentary approach to collecting and analysing data. However, caution should be exercised in falling back to pragmatism as the ultimate paradigmatic solution to mixed methods (Greene & Hall, 2010). It is important to understand the nature of the philosophy, as this can impact the response to problems and action taken as a result of findings in the study.

Taking a dialectic approach, however, “seeks not so much a convergence as insight…the generation of important understandings and discernments through the juxtaposition of different lenses, perspectives and stances” (Greene, 2005, p. 208 in Greene & Hall, 2010, p. 124). To wit, it is the consideration of data from differing worldviews for the purpose of understanding and appreciating various perspectives that arise (Shannon-Baker, 2015). For Hegel (Betzner, 2008), a dialectic approach compares two conflicting findings for synthesis and analysis. In some ways, this culminated in a thesis-antithesis argument, but neither took priority nor were explicitly identified in his work. For the purpose of enquiry, dialectics is a tool of data analysis, as opposed to an overarching epistemology. It is to adopt a position that
acknowledges various worldviews that may provide insight into the data, produce issues of investigation, and incite iteration between data and analysis (Greene & Hall, 2010). In this study, pragmatism and genealogy collectively embrace quantitative and qualitative methods to accomplish this goal. Genealogy has a greater contribution to literature review but provides a lens for data analysis. Pragmatism provides the lens under which data are examined for present and future knowledge. Both support the use of quantitative and qualitative methods in the conduct of data collection.

4.2.1.1 Justification

Foucault conducted enquiry as genealogist and archaeologist, of which this study has adopted the former approach throughout literature review to examine historical events that contribute to our understanding of the present. For data within a study, as McHugh (1989) states, Foucault “argues for the necessity and importance of ‘local’ and ‘specific’ contexts, multiple and unique, that may overlap in some areas or share common features, but that never add up to a unity, simple or complex, expressive or structural” (McHugh, 1989, p. 97). Hence, a carefully considered approach to mixed methods is necessary, as it needs to align with Foucault’s perspective.

Koopman (2011) examines Foucault’s approach in the context of genealogy and pragmatism, presenting a dualist paradigm that sits within the construct of dialectics. It is proposed that the two work in tandem to provide a historical and forward-facing approach. Pragmatism is summarised as a “forward-facing practice of philosophical critique that looks toward the responsive reconstruction of problematic situations in which we sometimes find ourselves” (Koopman, 2011, p. 6). Genealogy is a “historical backward-facing practice of philosophical critique that looks to
articulate, so as to intensify, the problematisations which condition our possibilities for doing, thinking, and being in the present” (Koopman, 2011, p. 6). The key characterisations are reconstruction and problematisation, which provide the formula by which this study interrogates data in a historical and present context. As the study progresses through understanding the present, it can propose a method for reconstruction.

Therefore, a dialectic stance engages genealogy and pragmatism to provide a unique comparative opportunity between these worldviews (Koopman, 2011). Through genealogy, we can examine the problematisations of the past, the discontinuities discussed in Chapter 2, using them to create a picture of the present. It is with this suspicious lens by which Foucault is known that this study is conducted; a deep and critical analysis of the data with reference to context in the ‘present’ that this study is situated. A use of genealogy that documents historical events in literature and establishes influence on the present. By turning 180 degrees, the study faces forward into the future to reconcile these problems, considering literature and future scenarios that can benefit from this knowledge. The formation of understanding that reaches VET policy, power-knowledge and subjectivity there is a breadth that is both empirical and philosophical. The implications of this have the potential to be substantial. And so, the ever-winding spiral is between these two perspectives that narrows down on a finding. This enables any proposal to be clear, well considered and positioned by history, and ready for the present.

4.2.2 Methodology – Establishing the Case Study approach

Case study research is a complex, rigorous and challenging methodology for research, which lends itself to much scrutiny and criticism (Bryman, 2012; Harrison
et al., 2017; Yin, 2014). Further, it allows flexibility in selection of ontology and epistemology, and is as suited to positivist and realist perspectives as it is relativism or naturalism. This allows the study to be conducted within the rigorous framework of a case study, whilst providing versatility in the lens under which the findings are interpreted (Harrison et al., 2017). This is particularly appropriate under the established dialectic stance.

It is recognised that case study is subject to numerous variables and depth of data, often providing a distinct opportunity for ‘holism’ as opposed to ‘reductionism’ (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 289). One major strength of case study is the ability to research real-world contexts and capture data from participants in the way they ‘see’ the world within the case. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) observe that in this way, case study is capable of providing “powerful human-scale data on macro-political decision making, fusing theory and practice” (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 291), using examples by Ball (1990b, 1994) to illustrate this point. Consequently, a case study methodology is an appropriate means with which to examine the context of this research.

Yin (2014) indicates an increased complexity of case study designs that employ mixed methods, as the breadth of data can be greater and requires careful planning and selection of tools for collection and analysis. However, mixed methods, specifically the dialectic approach previously established, delivers a deeper level of knowledge of the cases, which is desirable. This develops a contextual reality of the data and the individual (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 41; Sammons, 2010, p. 701).
4.2.3 The components of design

Yin (2014) writes that case study design is the logical sequence that links the empirical data to the research questions and hence, to the conclusions. When selecting a design appropriate for a study, it is necessary to consider the logic of the design, how that affects selection of the case based on what is being observed, and how to define the units of analysis, case boundaries and participant sample (Yin, 2014). Consequently, case study methodologies are more than one potential design logic which require a number of decisions to be made. Specifically, there are 5 components of research designs that need to be satisfied (Yin, 2015). These include

1. a case study’s questions;
2. its propositions, if any;
3. its unit(s) of analysis
4. the logic linking the data to the propositions; and
5. the criteria for interpreting the findings.

The following sections define each in the context of this study.

4.2.3.1 Research questions

The definition of the questions for the study were provided in Chapter 1. Yin (2014) recommends these are primarily ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions. This provides the depth of data and analysis to be able to describe each case.

For sake of clarity, the primary question is
Under what circumstances are power relations exercised insomuch as they construct stakeholder perspectives within the systems of differentiation in VET and influence the implementation of policy in Australian VET?

Where the primary question is broken into the following sub-questions, or

- How is the implementation of policy affected by stakeholder objectives, and how do the actions of others that act on these objectives enhance the effect?
- What implication do power relationships have for capital formation within VET policies or programs?
- How do stakeholders rationalise power relations in their context?
- How does governmentality shape discourse or implementation of policy?

4.2.3.2 Propositions

Case studies can provide propositions, as recommended by Yin (2014). A proposition is an identification of the comparisons, replications or specific observations to be made amongst the cases. It can relate to the specific phenomena being observed within the case study. This is usually aligned with theory (Yin, 2014). The propositions help to define the ways in which evidence will be discovered. In the context of this study, propositions are defined in Chapter 2, entwined in the notions of power relations, governmentality as it relates to biopower, biopolitics and capital. Essentially, my proposition is that there are differences in the ways stakeholders perceive, implement and define policy. To the theoretical, these define and shape the manifestations of power relations, which interact with concepts of governmentality, biopower and biopolitics, and capital in Vocational Education in Australia. These propositions are wrapped tightly in theory (Yin, 2014), providing a purpose for the
research. The purpose is to illustrate the perceptions of policy through empirical investigation, which will in turn explain the theoretical implications.

4.2.3.3 Logic design

Whether to use a single holistic, single embedded, multiple holistic or multiple embedded design is a question of logic design. Yin (2014) defines the various logic designs. Single case designs have potential issues for replication, reductionism and generalisation. They are also inherently weak designs, as they focus on a single case or unit of analysis. Single holistic cases occur at a single, global level. These can be unduly abstract and disconnected from a practical outcome. Multiple case designs use a series of sites, each their own case; this is a recommended approach. Holistic designs pool the data across cases, removing the potential for comparative data or analysis. Embedded cases analyse sub-units within each case, whilst the multiple case design ensures data stays with each case. Data can be used across, between and within each case in analysis of the embedded phenomena. Others have described this design as an instrumental case study design, which provides insight into an issue with the potential to develop generalisations (Stake, 2005; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). As such, this study takes a multiple-embedded case study approach using a replication design as defined by Yin (2014).

Replication or sampling logic refers to the organisation of multiple cases, and the way in which the researcher employs the case study. Sampling logic design was one option, although Yin (2014, p. 59) argues case study research that follows this logic is misplaced, as it lends itself to investigating phenomena, for which case studies are not the best method. Participant sampling rates would be too high due to the need to cover both the phenomena and the context. Further, it would not be
possible to represent the entire population, for which sampling logic is designed.

Alternatively, replication design seeks to create replication across the studies. Yin (2014) likens it to an experiment, where variables are tested in multiple circumstances to consider alternative results. There can also be replication for sake of disparity. In this situation, cases are selected for the differences they may present. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) also argue for replication design. They establish case studies as an opportunity to develop descriptions of real contexts and situations. Further, case study research is an opportunity for ‘holism’ as opposed to ‘reductionism’, which goes against sampling logic due to a focus on phenomena and reduction of data to this focal point. Comparative design is discussed by Bryman (2012), however this perspective leans more toward comparative in the context of phenomena and seeks to identify specific differences in observation between the cases, based on hypotheses. Hence, this study utilises replication design. To establish and illustrate the course by which this study will follow, the following diagram is included, as adapted from a similar version by Yin (2014, p. 60).

The original approach presented by Yin (2014) includes the following adaptations. First, it incorporates the cases within a survey design as opposed to three separate surveys targeted at each case. This follows the replication logic design approach. Second, case reports are written as one rather than separately, as results from data analysis. This is due to the extent of the survey questions and helps to minimise repetition using the case within a survey design; see Chapter 5 for data analysis and results. Cases are kept separate, and cross-case results are written into Chapter 5, through post data analysis and results. Chapter 6 employs interview, which is the second addition to the process. This identifies further detail of empirical and theoretical arguments. What is critical is the tight alignment with empirical data, used
to extrapolate theoretical findings. Hence, empirical findings and implications are discussed in Chapter 6, whilst a contribution to theory is captured in Chapter 7.

Figure 4.2 An adaptation of Multiple Embedded Case Study, Replication Design (Yin, 2014, p. 60)

The coloured boxes in Figure 4.2 define the stages of the multiple embedded replication design procedure. The solid lines indicate a typical path through the procedure. The dashed line provides a point at which the embedded case study may be altered or redefined, due to some significant finding that may alter the path of the case
study. Yin (2014, p. 61) emphasises importance of this process, as the researcher may be accused of ignoring a discovery within the case study.

In summary, as a case study is designed by the researcher, particularly in the case of replication design, there is an emphasis placed on the discretionary judgement of the researcher in both the selection of the number of cases, and selection of sampling for the development of the case (Yin, 2014, p. 61). It is argued this judgement is apparent in non-case study research, such as in the selection of confidence in statistical analysis and is a feature of case study research in the number of cases to be selected, reflective of the strength of replication and comparative opportunity. Further, as a sampling logic is not used, but a replicative one, arguments about the size of sample are irrelevant (Yin, 2014, p. 61). Consequently, the replicative design employed by this study allows discretionary judgement for the sample size within the cases, and for the number of cases. This, the units of analysis and participant sampling, is now discussed.

4.2.3.4 Units of analysis

According to Yin (2014), the cases of a study are referred to as the units of analysis. In this study, it would be easy to assume the units of analysis are the policies in question. However, the units of analysis are firmly grounded in the stakeholders, this is because the cases are identified through the research questions (Cohen et al., 2011) and are concrete (such as a specific phenomenon, industry, organisation or individual), rather than abstract (as in an argument or topic). The number of cases, whilst discretionary, must also be considered in light of the strength and relevance of
alternative perspectives (Yin, 2014). To this end, the research questions specifically identify stakeholders as the focus of developed perspectives, which consequently defines the units of analysis. Further, it supports the notion of a multiple case study that is comparative and replicative for the purpose of exploring the differences between the cases. This study focuses on the practical, day-to-day implementation of VET activities and policy by stakeholders, and their perspective on these activities. Therefore, the units of analysis represent stakeholder groups, namely teaching institutions and employers. The complexity of the VET system lends itself to considering secondary school providers as a separate case, as the style of VET they deliver is different from that of TAFE and RTOs. Therefore, the defined cases or units of analysis for this study include schools, TAFE and RTOs, and industry. Figure 4.3 identifies the divisions of separate cases.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Units of analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schools (Institutions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAFEs / RTOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 4.3 Cases or units of analysis defined for this study*

Further to defining the cases, it is important to also create boundaries for these cases (Yin, 2014). In this context, boundaries are necessitated for the sources of enquiry within the cases and the specific phenomena the case will investigate, ensuring the cases are clearly defined (Yin, 2014). Stakeholder roles in their sector are used to define the boundaries for each case. These are identified early in the survey deployed in Phase 1, after which participants are grouped into the appropriate case. Figure 4.4 defines the participant boundaries.
Role types are collected in the first data collection phase, in which survey participants are required to select one area they are most closely aligned with in their job role. These are then grouped by boundary into the relevant case. The purpose of this is discussed in greater detail in the instrument design and analysis sections of this chapter.

Furthermore, other boundaries may include time, geographical area and evidence collected. Established in Chapter 2, the time of this study is 2015, the ‘present’ selected in light of Foucault’s arguments on identifying a period in which a study is conducted. The geographical area selected was NSW, Queensland and Victoria, given the substantial change, differences in VET and similarities in particular areas of policy.

### 4.2.3.5 Analysis logic

Identifying a logic that links data to the propositions, it was necessary to consider the instruments deployed and resultant data, whilst considering the propositions and how they will be presented. Yin (2014) presented 5 models of analysis that can be used in analysing data from case studies.
Four of the models are suitable for multiple and single case studies, whilst one additional model is suited only to multiple case studies. Thus, the five models include

- Pattern matching, which relies on predictions made and subsequently, patterns established across the cases;
- Explanation building, which follows pattern matching as a process but focuses on building an explanation. It is suited to exploratory studies particularly;
- Time-series analysis, where complex patterns are extracted over time;
- Logic, considering cause-effect through operationalised events over a given period of time, usually extended; and
- Cross-case synthesis, which focuses on the data between the cases for discrepancy or comparison.

From these, it was easy to eliminate pattern matching, time-series analysis and logic. Pattern matching relies on predictions, which were not the focus of this study. Time-series analysis requires a longitudinal study, which would not be appropriate for this research design. Logic models are similar; the focus on cause-effect was initially appealing though the longitudinal focus caused complexity.

One solution is to select explanation building, as the iterative patterns and building of an explanation through data and case analysis lends itself to multiple cases and examination of phenomena (Yin, 2014). A complexity of this approach, however, is the treating of cases as separate entities that can somehow build on the already analysed data. This study set the proposition early that there is contention and discontinuity between the cases, identifying and establishing case differences. Stakeholders who represent each case possess alternate perspectives on policy. Building an explanation may be an appropriate process, however the iterative nature
potentially limits comparisons that can be made. Further, it could make the dualist approach to empirical and theoretical discussion tedious. Hence, a possibly more appropriate analysis approach is cross-case synthesis.

Yin (2014) describes cross-case synthesis as particularly attuned to multiple-case scenarios where comparisons between cases can be drawn. Cases are still regarded as separate entities, but limited iteration retains the intention of the proposition, phenomena or theoretical notion being observed. Yin (2014) recommends the use or “word tables” (p. 166), though latitude is afforded for developing themes. Hence, a thematic analysis of cases can be utilised, in which the evidence of thematic coding provides the basis for comparisons. These comparisons are used as results, and thus, the foundation of discussion of findings. Tabulation of the themes may be a complex and limiting feature (Cruzes, Dybå, Runeson, & Höst, 2015), for which thematic synthesis would be more appropriate. The use of this approach allows for broad themes across the cases to be developed, interpretations made, and relationships established. Hence, thematic synthesis is selected for analysis of case results as it leverages the power of cross-case analysis in a multiple case scenario and allows for thematic development from case data and interpretation of these to present results (Cruzes et al., 2015).

As defined by Cruzes, Dybå, Runeson and Höst (2015) there are 5 steps in thematic synthesis. These are initial readings, identifying segments of text, coding segments of text, translation of these into themes and creating a model of the higher order themes. The process is illustrated in Figure 4.5. Statistical analysis took place in Phase 1, which provided a range of results and broad themes. In Phase 2, initial readings of interviews took place, which were progressively highlighted (coded)
according to the themes determined in Phase 1. Emerging themes were also identified and coded. Translation of coded text as themes are presented in Chapter 6; some development of context was afforded as themes were developed and synthesised in conjunction with Phase 1 data. Phase 1 data are appropriately cited to develop and contextualise themes discussed. Chapter 6 organises findings within these themes in discussion and summary. Higher-order themes are presented as a consequence of thematic synthesis and interpretation.

In Chapter 7, theoretical focus takes primacy where the important discussion of power relations is offered. This is the construction of the discourses of truth achieved as a result of thematic synthesis and interpretation of empirical results. This incorporates time-oriented texts to establish how each forms a statement of truth according to the stakeholders. The approach is detailed in Chapter 7.

In summary, a thematic synthesis approach in the second phase accomplishes two objectives. First, it examines data from qualitative study and extrapolates themes and results from interview. It achieves this by assigning codes to the text and arranging these thematically. Second, it takes into account each case and draws comparisons, presented in the same discussion of results. This highlights discrepancies and similarities in the text. A worked example is provided in Chapter 6.
4.2.3.6  Summary

The design of the study is complex, as there are many frameworks and components that make up the structure of the approach. Figure 4.1 provides an illustration of the design. What is clear is the utilisation of multiple-embedded case study approach, characterised by an explanatory sequential design. Units of analysis are clearly defined and bounded.

The sequential design employs a quantitative phase, which uses statistical analysis to construct results from data. Data are collected in a single survey across
cases. Themes are identified from the results. The second phase uses qualitative interview to further an understanding of the themes and results from Phase 1. Thematic synthesis is used to extrapolate cross-case themes, broaden understanding of themes from Phase 1 and identify emerging themes. Cases received the same instruments to strengthen case comparisons.

The results are offered in two stages. The first focuses on the empirical enquiry, as a response to the specific questions asked in survey and interview. These are thematically arranged and delivered as findings in Chapter 6. The results of Phase 1 and 2 are then utilised as a foundation for establishing power relations, considerations of the influence on capital and the theme of governmentality in Chapter 7, developing a response to the manifestation of power in the context of VET policy. This seeks to establish the discourse of truth, the statements amongst the discourse that arrange the power relations between and amongst cases, according to the analytic grid of power relations presented in Chapter 2. Further, it presents findings in the context of capital formation, governmentality and the impact on policy development.

A dialectic stance in the study recognises the value of genealogical knowledge of policy for empirical topics and theoretical foundation. Further, it acknowledges the influence of history on the present. A pragmatic stance throughout interpretation looks futuristically at implications of findings.

Whilst complex, the flow of the study is well established and clear in its intentions. There is strength in the use of each framework to provide a specific outcome that feeds into the next. The following sections detail the phases and
evidence collection instruments for the topics of investigation, participant sampling and ethical considerations.

4.2.4 Logistical elements

As the approach is now well defined, it is appropriate to describe collection of evidence and participant sampling techniques. The remainder of this chapter defines each, as well as each phase of the study and how instruments were deployed. It defined the construction of questions and the topics of investigation, filtered down from literature review.

4.2.4.1 Phases of the study

As the study progresses, it will shift between phases of collection and analysis, culminating in final discussion of findings. Figure 4.6 provides clarity of this design.

Figure 4.6 Flow of case study design including specific activities within each stage of the case study

The initial phase is primarily quantitative, with analysis taking place to establish trends and identify themes within the data. Some qualitative data were collected in Phase 1, too, though these were limited to collecting final remarks. The results of Phase 1 are used to inform the second phase of the study, which uses a
qualitative interview method to clarify themes identified in the quantitative phase. This procedure is known as an explanatory sequential design, of which a critical feature is employment of mixed methods (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

4.2.4.2 Collecting evidence to support the logic

As data collection occurs in two phases, each are designed to build on the data incrementally, in establishing a range of facts and common truths, then exploring underlying meaning. The theoretical layer of this is defined in Chapter 2. From a design perspective, this is recognised as an explanatory sequential design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011), a multiple phase design for collecting data in the first phase that is analysed (usually quantitative in the first phase) and used to inform the second phase. The approach can be described as “numbers and a story” (Spalter-Roth, as cited in Sammons, 2010, p. 699), where quantitative methods and statistical analysis provides numeric indicators as results, whilst qualitative investigation and analysis provides thick descriptions of the cases, questions or lines of enquiry. Both can then be interpreted as findings. In this scenario, developed knowledge goes beyond that of quantitative or qualitative enquiry can achieve independently.

In the first phase, a survey was conducted which is consistent across all three cases. This is recognised as a case within a survey approach (Yin, 2014), where a survey is employed within cases to extrapolate data and provide comparisons amongst cases, as opposed to a reduction of data to find the case (Yin, 2014). The second phase is characterised by qualitative data collection through interview, employing volunteer sampling. This second phase is informed by the first but takes a unique approach to asking questions of participants, encouraging honesty and perspective to shine through in their response. These phases will now be detailed, including
instrument design, participant sampling and data collection strategies within each phase.

4.2.4.3 Data collection instruments

Two instruments will be used in two phases of inquiry. The first instrument is a questionnaire; questions are devised through domains of investigation in literature review. The second instrument is interview, informed by the first phase of the study and through the identified areas of investigation.

4.2.4.4 Constructing questions

Colin Gordon, who writes the introduction for Foucault’s (2002) work *Power*, writes:

[Foucault] does not believe that knowledge confers ultimate acquaintance with reality, or that means of verification used to determine truth are available to us in forms which we know to be definitive. Truth… is a ‘thing of the world’ – meaning that truth exists of is given and recognized only in worldly forms, though actual experiences and modes of verification (p. xviii).

In considering Gordon’s quote above, there are two key messages. First, knowledge needs to be verifiable, but that knowledge is not necessarily reflective of reality. In this sense, reality is possibly linked more deeply with perception (opinion) than knowledge. Knowledge is essentially learnt rather than experienced, as opposed to opinion, which is developed as a result of experience, what Foucault (2007) refers to as “the discourse of truth” (Foucault, 2007, p. 164). Second, that truth is linked to an experience of the world, in that experience defines truth, and that it is verifiable
How to uncover and reveal the truth when the means of extraction is beyond the means we have to employ that achieve this objective? The answer lies in examining the discourse of truth by questioning the subject’s experience, whilst analysing their experience within the grid of power-relations (see Chapter 2).

Hence, the intent was not to directly draw attention to power-knowledge or capital directly, but to allow the nuance of these relationships to emerge from the data. With this in mind, the survey questions were defined. The key features were that (a) they focused on the key areas of investigation identified in literature review, which included VET system, work placement, school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, teacher qualifications and employability skills; (b) each explicitly asked for the participant’s opinion of the topic, situation or activity, and; (c) an attitude (Likert) scale was used to measure their response, as opposed to providing a nominal or linear scale. Using Likert scales have greater strength when evaluating participant opinion and attitude (Cohen et al., 2011; Sudman & Bradburn, 1982).

The implication of Foucault’s formation of truth for this study is that as data are collected and analysed, the mode of collection is focused on the experience; a participant’s perspective of a worldly interaction. It also meant that in doing so, we expect to infer their personal reality, and as a collective introspect reality as a norm. Therefore, survey and interview questions focus on opinion and perspective to extract truth, which in turn evaluates a situation for what it is in the eyes of the participant. To focus on these, we turn to the topics of investigation.
4.2.4.5 **Topics of investigation**

For identifying the topics for investigation within cases, Yin (2014, p. 34) argues they must be concrete and not abstract, such as an argument or claim. To be concrete, these domains must be experiential and part of an agent’s reality; they are participants of the emergence of this reality (M. Taylor, 2008, p. 138). In light of literature review and this expectation, topics of investigation were identified to answer the research questions, as defined in Chapter 1.

When establishing the focus of this study, it was necessary to narrow the field to specific topics within VET for investigation. This was a complex process, as so many activities exist within VET that could be relevant. It was decided the topics of investigation had to meet three specific criteria, which included that

- the topic must maintain a relationship between at least two stakeholders at a practical and policy level;
- each has an impact across States in Australia, but particularly New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland; and
- the topic should have historical significance to the implementation of VET, in that it has been subject to implementation and review.

These criteria provide a focus for selection of the topics. Literature review, conducted with a genealogical approach, identified five specific, concrete and practical topics of VET in Australia and fit within these criteria. Most particularly, to obtain the richest data possible from survey, each are influenced by political, institutional and industry stakeholders, in that to some degree there is a relationship between each stakeholder and the activity. The topics of investigation include
• core objectives of Vocational Education and Training;
• Workplace Learning;
• School Based Apprenticeships / Traineeships;
• the Employability Skills framework (in its current form, Core Skills for Work); and
• teacher qualifications.

Each is detailed in Chapter 3 where they are examined through literature review.

4.2.4.6 Phase 1 - Quantitative data instrument

The first phase of the study focuses on quantitative data collection. It employed a questionnaire distributed among participants using random sampling. This section primarily details instrument design, methods of analysis applied and use of results and findings to inform the second phase.

There are a number of stages in the creation of a survey instrument (Cohen et al., 2011). Many have been completed in the formulation of this study, such as defining the research questions, defining the areas of focus and justifying sampling. There are three stages of importance. These include

1. generating the data collection instruments;
2. pilot instruments and refine; and
3. collecting data.

The remaining steps, analysis and reporting, are defined earlier in this chapter.
Generating collection instruments focussed on developing a number of small sections dealing with separate issues. These sections include demographics, broader issues in VET, VET in Schools, Workplace Learning, Formal Training, Work Placement, School Based Apprenticeship and Traineeship Arrangements, Teacher Qualifications and Employability Skills. As demographics is only concerned with understanding participants, there are therefore eight complete sections within the survey. The largest section of the survey contains 11 questions. Questions focused on the empirical nature of VET, policy, implementation and outcomes. They were practical in nature, in that they asked about the policy and its functionality. These were generated using the prefix, “In your opinion…” for most questions, where a Likert scale response was provided. This scale included the points strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree. A matrix was provided for each question group, with the question placed to the left and the matrix to the right.

Calculating reliability rested on the final survey outcome. Piloting the survey was complex as it required access to a substantial subset of the participant group. Cohen et al. (2011) recommend up to 50% of the final participant pool. Instead, the survey was administered to a number of colleagues who provided feedback on leading questions, issues with wording and spelling, consistency and placement of questions within each section. These were rectified according to this advice. At the conclusion of the survey, Cronbach’s alpha was used to determine reliability. The result ranged between $\alpha = 0.939$ and $\alpha = 0.943$, which indicates a strong level of internal consistency in the survey (Field, 2006; Laerd Statistics, n.d.). A measure above $\alpha = 9$ is considered high, though is acceptable (Taber, 2018). This measure of consistency indicates reliability of the scale used, which validates the data for use in analysis.
For data analysis techniques, a detailed explanation is provided in Chapter 5. In summary, statistical analysis takes place on primarily Likert scale data, examining mean data and statistical significance in defining results using ANOVA and Scheffe post-hoc analysis. Some questions rely on percentage data. Themes are identified in and amongst data and described.

The following sections define each part of the survey.

4.2.4.6.1 Section 1: Demographics

This section was used to verify spread of participants and define cases within the established boundaries defined in Chapter 4, Figure 4.4. It also gathered simple demographic data if, during analysis, it was deemed necessary to utilise these for separating participant groups within or across cases. Questions in this section requested

- participant location by postcode of business or place of work;
- age and Gender; and
- participant role within organisation / institution.

4.2.4.6.2 Section 2: VET System

In this section, questions focused on the core structure of the VET system, such as value, quality and long-term benefits to students, employers and political stakeholders. Chapter section 3.2 details the issues of inquiry. Chapter section 3.3.4 details issues on pathways, whilst Chapter section 3.2.2.1 provides context on the development of VET in Schools. Each question was devised to request opinion of the participant, where they were expected to respond based on their current knowledge or
perception, rather than assume an informed, essentially academic, response. The specific topics of investigation included

- sufficiency of pathways;
- value in experience and outcomes;
- quality in training and qualifications;
- employability;
- pathways to further tertiary or higher education, or work;
- measures of aptitude;
- transfer of knowledge;
- secondary school certificate choices; and
- VET in Schools, including
  - opportunities and expectations; and
  - outcomes and market response.

4.2.4.6.3 Section 3: Work Placement

Questions on work placement focused on the arrangements themselves and gathering perspectives on benefits of work placement. Questions were developed from the requirements of work placement and associated literature, detailed in Chapter section 3.3.2. The specific topics of investigation included

- requirements for hours and pre-requisites;
- arrangements with employers;
- training effect and impact;
- integrated training options and stakeholder preferences;
- benefits of workplace training versus simulated training;
• additional scope for workplace learning and work experience; and

• challenges for implementation of VET work placement.

4.2.4.6.4 Section 4: School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships

As established in Chapter section 3.3.1 and 3.2.2.1, apprenticeship plays a significant role in the provision of VET. VET in Schools is a major provider of these through the School Based Apprenticeship and Traineeship system. The limited impact of SBAT and narrower implementation in secondary schools resulted in a lesser number of questions offered for response. It was assumed mainly school and industry participants would offer their opinion, and as questions were non-mandatory, those unqualified to answer could leave responses blank. The topics of focus in this section included

• SBAT effect and benefits; and

• additional requirements for SBAT learners.

4.2.4.6.5 Section 5: Teacher Qualifications

As discussed in literature review, teacher qualifications are a heavily deliberated topic with a number of historical changes to requirements. Chapter section 3.3.5 details this topic. The outcome of teacher qualifications affects all stakeholders. Industry is often called upon to provide updated training and work placement venues, whilst TAFE, RTO and school teachers and trainers require constant upgrades. Therefore, the questions in this section targeted

• minimum experience expectations;

• minimum qualification expectations;
• professional development;
• teacher upgrade rigour; and
• challenges associated with retraining or maintaining qualifications.

4.2.4.6.6 Section 6: Employability Skills

The employability skills, or more recently Core Skills for Work framework is used heavily by some and not by others; stakeholders have a varied level of exposure to the framework and its use is sporadic. The developments and issues of this are detailed in Chapter section 3.3.3. The questions in this section were used to focus on the benefits and relevance, whilst non-responses or ‘unsure’ feedback could be used to determine knowledge of the framework across the sector. Hence, questions in this section focused on

• relevance of the framework;
• purpose of the framework and outcomes; and
• applicability of the framework to a range of purported benefits.

4.2.4.6.7 Section 6: Volunteer participation for Phase 2

The final section of the survey elicited contact details from willing participants of the questionnaire for completion of an interview as part of Phase 2. Hence, this section required volunteers to provide contact details and preference for communication.

4.2.4.6.8 Summary

Phase 1 of the study is characterised by a strong quantitative survey, demonstrating reliable use of Likert scales. The breadth of data collection is broad
and focused on participant capturing opinions. The sections of the survey are designed to focus attention on the topic at hand. The results that rise from data were used to inform Phase 2 in an explanatory sequential design. Participants of Phase 2 are volunteers, offering their participation through the survey of Phase 1. In keeping with ethical requirements, these are stripped from data to retain anonymity in the first phase. The following sections define Phase 2 instrument design and data collection.

4.2.4.7 Phase 2 – Qualitative data instrument

Data for the second phase were collected by follow up semi-structured interview. Questions were devised from results of data analysis of Phase 1. Interview analysis was conducted using thematic synthesis, as previously defined. The following section describes the interview type employed for this phase.

4.2.4.7.1 Interview type

The selection of interview type is important for the study, as it guides discussion with the participant. A range of interview types is available for qualitative interrogation. These include informal conversational, interview guide approach, standardised open-ended and closed quantitative interviews (Cohen et al., 2011). Given the need to extract detail and clarity from Phase 1, this discounted standardised open-ended and quantitative interview. The complexity with these two approaches was the rigidity of questions and lack of ability to redirect the interview if opportunity permitted. Hence, an interview-guide approach was designed and utilised. This was developed with the results from Phase 1.

Interviews should follow an unstructured protocol, posing ‘how’ rather than ‘why’ questions (Yin, 2014). The distinction is in the threatening way in which ‘why’
questions can be presented to the participant. It was also important to focus on the same content of the questions and focus areas of research from Phase 1 (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). This provides the most appropriate follow up to the topic areas.

Yin (2014) advocates asking questions that make the interviewer seem genuinely naïve about the topic, allowing the “interviewee to provide a fresh commentary” (p. 111). Consequently, interview questions would communicate big ideas identified rather than specific results. A short and general summary was provided for context. This was because the purpose of the interview was to continue to extract perspectives of these trends and big ideas rather than simply qualify them explicitly. An interview guide is provided in Appendix A.

It is divided into sections similarly to the questionnaire in Phase 1. The interview was constructed in five sections, one question from each section of the questionnaire. An information statement was offered, then a primary question with follow-up probing questions asked if needed. Participants were interviewed over the phone, recorded digitally and data stored on local encrypted drives. Transcription took place via a professional transcription service, and each interview checked for validity and consistency. Resulting transcriptions were loaded into NVivo software for coding and analysis. A worked example is provided in this chapter. The construction of the interview guide took place after Phase 1. As such, an explanation of how it was developed is included in Chapter 6.

4.2.4.7.2 Coding example

Coding of interviews was a substantial undertaking with the three facets of analysis, however as the study progressed it became relevant to ensure all three were
given equal attention. The theoretical aspects of the study require analysis of responses for power relations, with capital an important component of this notion.

The empirical contribution extends our understanding of each issue under scrutiny. As a result, both can be used to inform policy production with a critical attitude. The remainder of this chapter addresses the results of interviews specifically. It uses coded results and memos to paint a picture of the theoretical and empirical aspects as they developed.

Figure 4.7 An example of how interviews were coded. Areas in blue or green indicate annotations.

The example of coding in Figure 4.7 illustrates operational process of a thematic content analysis for interviews. In text, NVivo uses colour to define regions annotated and coded. For coding, parent and child nodes are arranged hierarchically, which can have colours associated with them. For this analysis, a parent node might have been Capital, with Economic Capital, Human Capital, Symbolic Capital or Social Capital situated under the parent as children. A darker variant of the colour indicates a child node of a parent. Colours to the right of the image details sections coded according to either empirical or theoretical aspects. Colours are not defined as
they are not used beyond recognition by the author in analysis. The text shows coloration of sections that are coded or annotated.

To code, the text was read and considered in light of the nodes available for coding. Highlighting the text provided a number of options for coding either singularly or with multiple assignments. Oftentimes many nodes were added to one section of text. Annotations were made to clarify thoughts and provide notes for later analysis and discussion.

NVivo provides a number of views for coded text. Generally, selecting a node from the sidebar provided an aggregated view of all coded text for that node. Amassing children nodes to parent nodes allowed for analysis of all text in that parent section. By working through coding systematically, discussion of each node could take place. The following section deals with presenting analysed text from interviews.

4.2.4.7.3 Summary

Phase 2 of the study employs an open-ended or semi-structured interview, developed from the results of Phase 1. Interviewees were provided with a summary and asked open-ended questions in the five categories identified from literature review. These mirrored the categories from Phase 1. Interviews were recorded, transcribed and loaded into the analysis software, NVivo. Thematic synthesis took place to code and analyse data, which was collated into broad themes. These were synthesised across cases for comparison, looking for relationships and discrepancies. The results are presented in Chapter 6.
4.2.4.8 Participant Sampling

There is little consensus about the sample size required for the quantitative aspect of a study. Tabachnick and Fidell (2013) recommend there should be at least 5 respondents for each item in a questionnaire. Sudman (1976) holds an alternate perspective, that the number of participants should be 5 times the number of questions in the largest part of the survey. It is further acknowledged that statistical results are easily influenced by inappropriate data when sample sizes are small (Cohen et al., 2011). There is, however, potential to develop strong correlations between the cases, which can overcome issues of low sampling and error (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996, p. 640). Also noted in Chapter 5, the confidence level for quantitative analysis was set at 5% or \( p = 0.05 \) in this study, which also improves reliability in randomly sampled statistical analysis (Bryman, 2012, p. 178; Yin, 2014, p. 61). For qualitative work, sample sizes should be balanced and represent variety of participants, known as heterogeneity (Stake, 2005). Case study relies on participant numbers representing effective weight of cases to provide suitable grounds for comparison and replication (Yin, 2014, p. 61).

4.2.4.8.1 Phase 1

Sampling for the quantitative phase of this study was stratified, especially due to the large number of organisations targeted. In was agreed the study required a quantitative phase that most highly represented Schools, TAFE and RTOs, whilst industry needed to be approximately one third the representation of the other two cases. The intent was to ensure providers of VET had a substantial voice, whilst saturation of industry could easily occur with a higher number of participants.
The survey was distributed to a large group of organisations, including secondary school institutions, Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institutions, RTO and industry businesses. Targeted states included New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria, due to their proximity and larger population, in comparison to the remainder of Australia. Targeted organisations represented a diversity of schools across public, Catholic and private education sectors. There are approximately 6406 registered institutions in NSW, QLD and VIC, including secondary school institutions, TAFE and RTOs. The total potential participants exceeded requirements for data collection, to the point of saturation. Consequently, only fifty percent of the total institutions were selected. It was expected, for institutions, that approximately 10 people per organisation would be potential participants, resulting in $n = 30,350$. Business contacts were sourced using Sensis (Yellow Pages) data, available publicly, where $n > 4000$. These represented trade industry sector, including (but not limited to) electricians, mechanics, construction, beauty therapy, cafes and restaurants. It was expected that at least 1 participant from each business would complete the survey. In total 15,419 emails were distributed, inviting participants to complete the survey. Institutions received 3,035 emails, which were later followed up with a reminder email. Employers received 9,190 in two waves, an initial invitation and reminder. Participants also received relevant documentation, including ethics approval letters and participant guides.

This data collection phase concluded with a significantly lower than expected participation rate. The total number of participants, including invalid responses was 318. Invalid responses consisted of those that had completed only the demographic aspects of the survey and not completed any aspect that related to the questions of the study. Such responses were discarded. After removing invalid responses, 281 valid
participants completed the survey. Therefore, $n = 281$. It was determined that this was sufficient across the cases for analysis (Yin, 2014).

4.2.4.8.2 Phase 2

Sampling for qualitative research is complex, as it is not necessarily representative of the entire population, group or case (Cohen et al., 2011). Instead, it is often a single person’s opinion of the phenomena of study. Qualitative studies that employ an interview instrument usually require a smaller sample than quantitative studies, due to possible issues of data saturation and complexities of analysis where participant numbers are high (Sim, Saunders, Waterfield, & Kingstone, 2018; Stake, 2005). Qualitative interviews provide a stage for discussion of results and clarification of ideas within data from the previous phase. This follows the explanatory sequential design process and experiencing some of the strengths of such an approach.

The qualitative phase required a heterogeneous sample that was representative of the cases (Cohen et al., 2011). The expected number was between 10 and 12, which follows a consensus for a suitable participant count (Sim et al., 2018), though again this is subject to the intentions and outputs of the study (Yin, 2014). It was also suggested that data saturation was required to maximise the potential of data but going beyond this point provided complexity without great benefit (Sim et al., 2018).

To achieve such an endeavour, a number of criteria needed to be determined (Yin, 2014). For the purpose of this study, the criteria included that

- participants represented each case;
- there was a selection of cases from New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria; and
• for the TAFE/RTO case, there were at least an even number of each.

It is conceded that volunteer sampling is less than desirable for ensuring unbiased data (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009), however obtaining the breadth of participants and context would be complex if other sampling techniques were used. It was also necessary to obtain participants who had also completed the survey in the quantitative survey, as recommended by Creswell and Plano Clark (2011).

4.3 Ethics

It is important in any study to consider the ethical implications of the research (Cohen et al., 2011; Stake, 2005). Recommendations made are specific to the participants of the survey, in which confidentially and anonymity, safety from harm and consideration of their wellbeing is paramount. To achieve these outcomes, a detailed application was presented to the University Human Research Ethics Committee, which was granted (approval #014012S). In addition, as this study was conducted across multiple States and education providers in Australia, applications were made to Departments of Education in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland and numerous Catholic Dioceses. Private institutions accepted the University HREC ethics approval. Only those who provided approval were emailed.

In the quantitative phase, careful attention was made to the anonymity, consent and avoidance of harm to participants who completed the questionnaire. The survey was conducted online. Participant schools and individuals emailed were provided with Participant Information sheets, notice of informed consent and contact details for any complaints or issues arising. Links to this information was also
available in the header of the survey and on request via email. The email contained a specific link to the survey.

In conducting the survey, no identifiable information was collected at the beginning of the questionnaire. The final section requests volunteers for interview to provide their detail; on completion of the survey this was stripped from the downloaded data and stored separately with no identifying information that could correlate responses.

The qualitative phase required participants to be contacted by email for approval and organisation of interview date and time. Consent forms and participant information sheets were emailed to participants and completed consent forms collected in conjunction with verbal consent at the start of the interview. At the end of the interview, audio files were coded with a randomised alphanumeric label and stored securely. The label was stored alongside participant names in a secure spreadsheet to ensure participants could remove their response at any time. Audio files were carefully checked for any names and transcribed.

Throughout the study, there were no issues raised by participants who participated in the study. No-one elected to remove their response from the qualitative phase. A summary of the study will be provided to all who volunteered for interview as well as being sent to Departments of Education, Catholic Dioceses and private institutions initially emailed.

4.4 Conclusion

Mixed methods frames this study as it builds the understanding through “numbers and a story” (Spalter-Roth, as cited in Sammons, 2010, p. 699). Dialectics
combines lenses to provide a unique analysis of data. This dovetails nicely into the processes Foucault utilises in establishing a knowledge of how we arrived where we are. Essentially, that engaging a genealogical review of historical discontinuity provides a substantial foundation, establishing a deep knowledge of the past and preparedness for understanding how this creates ‘present’ thought.

The use of case study as a methodology and approach allows the study to focus on the stakeholder and create cross-case comparisons for a more holistic view of the situation. It follows a well-defined framework of posing questions and identifying propositions, assigning a design logic and establishing the units of analysis, which is supported by an appropriate analysis logic. Utilising a two-phase explanatory sequential design allows for deeper analysis of data, whilst providing stakeholders with an opportunity to express perspective and opinion. By analysing data in Phase 1 and bringing that understanding to Phase 2, there is the opportunity to explore nuance, power relations, capital and empirical conception in different ways, which varies potential outcomes.

Hence, whilst the methodology and design are complex, there is a clear lineage between the underlying philosophical stance, methodology, design and phases of analysis to achieve a purposeful outcome. Furthermore, it provides a unique course in collecting, analysing and interrogating empirical data to illustrate power relations, capital and governmentality.
5 Phase 1: Quantitative data collection and analysis

Phase one, the quantitative data collection and analysis phase, employed a questionnaire instrument to elicit responses from participants. Data collection took place over a number of months, as participants were invited and reminded to complete the survey. As completion rates slowed the survey was closed, and a letter of appreciation emailed to invitees (as participants were not directly known). The following chapter presents the results and subsequent analysis, which includes the use of frequency and ANOVA tools of interrogation. This analysis is used for development of phase two of the study which takes the form of a qualitative interview, utilising a small subset of participants for establishing clarity and understanding of the findings from phase one.

This chapter took an unusual tack where data of each question are analysed, results presented, and a short discussion of findings and patterns ensues. The discussion is in the context of the research questions or patterns within the data that help to explain participant attitudes. The structure of this chapter is an effort to minimise complexity whilst maintaining relevance and sequence within the greater scheme of design as phase one of two phases. Chapter 7 details findings from results of both phases with relevant literature.

5.1 Case Boundaries

The case boundaries were pre-defined within the methodology. The cases were collapsed post-completion of the survey to conform to the case boundaries and ensure stakeholders correctly placed within a case. Providing a wide range of roles typical within an organisation ensured most participants would be able to identify
with at least one role. The first group, principals, deputy principals and 28 of the total 38 teachers, work within traditional school settings and were grouped as such. VET Head Teachers and the remaining 10 identified teacher participants formed the second group (given the teacher’s qualifications and specific area of work), representative of TAFE and private RTO’s. The third group identified as individuals from industry or workplaces. Therefore, the original values were grouped and recoded into three subgroups, a) School/Institutions, b) TAFE and RTOs, and c) Industry. Each of these formed a specific case. Each is a case within the study, which follows a multiple embedded case study methodology. Table 5.1 shows the breakdown of these groups according to case selections, which is also presented in Chapter 4.

Table 5.1
Coloured bands representing case boundaries from self-reported organisational roles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutions (Schools)</th>
<th>Coded as Group 1 - Institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy or Assistant Principals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Head Teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher’s Aide/Special Needs teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TAFE / RTOs</th>
<th>Coded as Group 2 – TAFE/RTOs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VET Head Teachers (or managers)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher/Trainers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>Coded as Group 3 - Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers / Team Leaders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employers / Business owners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprentices / Trainees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2 Analysis of variables

The results presented are representative of each case, with tables providing a view of each case and questionnaire responses. The survey was devised in five parts, the first was about the VET system, then VET in Schools, Workplace Learning, Teacher Qualifications and Employability Skills. Each section included a number of questions with a list of phrases that requested a Likert scale response. For instance, in Section 5.3.4.1 The efficacy of VET, the questions are prefaced with ‘In your opinion, does VET…’, with four phrases that elicit response on the Likert scale proposed below. This is the pattern used for each subsequent question in the survey; presentation of data in this chapter follows this pattern. First, each section is analysed for each phrase within each question for mean (the standard deviation is provided alongside the mean in parentheses). Each Table includes analysis of the data with subsequent frequency analysis or tests of significance where appropriate. A one-way ANOVA used in tandem with a Scheffe post-hoc analysis is a common approach, as they support ordinal data and provide insights for multiple case comparisons. Various graphs are used where visual representation was appropriate alongside or in place of tabulated data.
All responses to attitudinal questionnaire items were coded on a 5-point Likert scale, strongly agree (5 points), agree (4 points), neutral (3 points), disagree (2 points) and strongly disagree (1 point) as shown on Table 5.2.

Table 5.2
Likert scale representation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>O</th>
<th>O</th>
<th>O</th>
<th>O</th>
<th>O</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To compare mean score data containing decimal places, data were spread on five possible score descriptors, and scores were set across the spectrum 0-1 based on a 0.8 range, which is further described in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3
Score descriptors by mean ranges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score range</th>
<th>Score descriptor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$1.0 \leq x &lt; 1.8$</td>
<td>Strong Disagreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1.8 \leq x &lt; 2.6$</td>
<td>Disagreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$2.6 \leq x &lt; 3.4$</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$3.4 \leq x &lt; 4.2$</td>
<td>Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$4.2 \leq x \leq 5.0$</td>
<td>Strong Agreement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3 Statistical analysis

The following provides a statistical analysis of data collected in Phase 1 of the study.

5.3.1 Geo Locations by Postcode

Figure 5.1 provides a visual layout of the locations and spread of data collected for the study. The geolocations of participants covered New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland. Concentrations are around city areas, which is to be
expected. Some rural locations, such as far north Queensland, western New South Wales and south western Victoria, widened the participant pool. The purpose of only capturing these States is outlined in Chapter 4.

![Figure 5.1 Participant location by postcode of business or place of work](image)

5.3.2 Demographics

Table 5.4 indicates the frequency of gender for participants. Three respondents decided not to disclose their gender.
Table 5.4

Gender frequency of survey participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>39.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>59.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>98.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.5 displays a cross tabulation of gender and age. Following frequency analysis, gender statistics are similar to the averages represented in teaching and education nationally (Freeman, O’Malley, & Eveleigh, 2014), as more females than males completed the questionnaire with very few people under the age of 34 offering their response. Cross tabulation of gender and age indicates weighting toward females of age 45 plus, where there are more than twice as many participants. Age demographics is indicative of the national average in Australia at 43.4 (Freeman et al., 2014).

Table 5.5

Cross tabulation of Age and Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45+</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data in Table 5.6 describes the role of each participant within their organisation or place of work. Table 5.7 places these participants in to the case according to their role.
Table 5.6

Participant role within organisation / institution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy or Assistant Principal</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Head Teacher (or manager)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET Head Teacher (or manager)</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher (or trainer)</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher’s Aide/Special Needs teacher</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager / Team Leader</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer / Business owner</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprentice / Trainee</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.7

Frequency of participants in each case

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Institution Representatives</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>44.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAFE and RTO Representatives</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry Representatives</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>35.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The frequency of participants in each case is representative of the response rate from each sector. Schools were the most responsive, followed by industry and TAFE/RTO. The vested interest in the continuity of TAFE as a system should have elicited a greater response rate, as it could be assumed teachers and administrators of TAFE and RTOs would have a far greater investment in research and support of the VET sector, especially as funding is consistently in decline (Long, 2010) and the media report significant downturn (Cook, 2016; Pearson, 2016).

5.3.3 Reading tables

Tables in the rest of this chapter display three cases across the top, with data for each case presented in the column below each case name (Institutions, TAFE/RTO...
and Industry). The questions are listed down the left side of the tables, with the question prefix in the top left most cell. In most cases, the mean is provided with the standard deviation in parenthesis to the right of the mean value.

5.3.4 Core VET objectives

The following section refers specifically to the VET system as a whole, drilling down into some of the major policy intentions and objectives.

In this section, a trend emerged for TAFE/RTOs, who reported more positively for all questions. TAFE/RTOs and industry were the most statistically different groups, with industry consistently reporting less agreeably than the other two cases. Statistical significance is observed in a number of instances. Industry consistently reports a lower mean score than other cases. Very few incidences of neutral responses to questions exist, and no instances of disagree or strongly disagree occur, except in one case where the response indicates agreement due to the wording of the question. Institutions tended to agree more than any other response. There is substantial disparity amongst and between cases when evaluating the goals and objectives of VET in Schools.

5.3.4.1 The efficacy of VET

This section focuses on the core objectives and efficacy of VET. Results are provided in Table 5.8. It covers issues related to training quality, productivity and employability, contextualised learning and nature of training. When analysing data, patterns emerged which include a more positive response from TAFE/RTOs, distinction among cases for some questions, and a less positive response by industry overall.
The standout pattern that emerged is the distinction between TAFE/RTO and other cases. Results indicate a more positive perspective of TAFE/RTO overall. Higher means were observed for all questions except for *provide qualifications at the expense of quality*. To agree that quality is not sacrificed at the expense of a desire to provide qualifications, a participant would answer in disagreement (either strongly disagree or disagree) due to the wording of the question. This accounts for the alternative pattern in mean scores which has the same linguistic outcome. Industry reported a similar pattern, though as more negative than institution and TAFE/RTO cases for all questions.

Statistical significance is noted among cases for a number of questions; particularly, participants indicated either strong agreement or in the case of industry, agreement, for the capacity of VET to provide valuable learning for young people and adults alike. ANOVA results indicate a difference among cases ($F = 13.58$, $df = 2$, $p < 0.001$). Scheffe analysis indicated statistically significant differences between industry and institutions ($p < 0.001$) and industry and TAFE/RTO ($p < 0.001$).

One-way ANOVA test results for enhancing worker productivity show a statistically significant difference amongst cases ($F = 5.094$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.007$), where Scheffe post-hoc analysis indicated statistical significance between TAFE/RTO and industry cases ($p = 0.010$).

For VET enhancing employability, mean result for the industry perspective indicates agreement ($M = 4.08$) whilst TAFE/RTOs are in strong agreement ($M = 4.30$). ANOVA results show statistical significance was indicated among cases ($F = 10.66$, $df = 2$, $p < 0.001$). Statistical significance rested between industry and TAFE/RTOs ($p < 0.001$), and industry and TAFE/RTOs and institutions ($p = 0.004$).
All three cases had reported a neutral response for VET is providing qualifications at the expense of quality. Using a one-way ANOVA test, the overall results report as not statistically significantly different among cases \((F = 2.068, p = 0.128)\). Differences are noted amongst cases for providing quality training and assessment \((F = 3.20, df = 2, p = 0.042)\) whilst there was no statistical significance between cases. All three cases agreed with the question. No distinction was found amongst cases for contextualisation for local needs, and all cases agreed with this question.

**Table 5.8**

*Questions on the efficacy of VET to achieve its core objectives*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In your opinion, does VET:</th>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>TAFE/RTO</th>
<th>Industry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide valuable learning experiences for young people and adults alike?</td>
<td>4.33 (0.74)</td>
<td>4.54 (0.5)</td>
<td>3.90 (0.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance worker productivity?</td>
<td>3.75 (0.82)</td>
<td>3.94 (0.77)</td>
<td>3.51 (0.95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance employability?</td>
<td>4.08 (0.77)</td>
<td>4.30 (0.6)</td>
<td>3.70 (1.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide qualifications at the expense of quality?</td>
<td>3.11 (1.23)</td>
<td>2.78 (1.28)</td>
<td>3.19 (1.17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide quality training and assessment?</td>
<td>4.03 (0.87)</td>
<td>4.17 (0.66)</td>
<td>3.81 (1.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide contextualisation for local needs?</td>
<td>3.62 (0.89)</td>
<td>3.76 (0.91)</td>
<td>3.41 (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, the most notable pattern is the statistically significant difference in means scores between cases, the majority of which were identified between TAFE/RTOs and industry, where TAFE/RTOs held the highest scores. There are differences between industry and institutions which were also identified as statistically significant, where institutions held the highest score. This pattern supports a notion that TAFE/RTOs report highest in all questions and industry the lowest in Table 5.8. Cases reported neutrally to the notion of qualifications offered at the
expense of quality. All other questions are notably positioned from agreement to strong agreement.

5.3.4.2 Pathways

Pathways to further training and education are the cornerstone of VET education. This section focuses on the capacity of VET to provide these, with results presented in Table 5.9 and Table 5.10. The trend continues of high results for TAFE/RTOs and lower results for industry.

There is agreement amongst cases that VET does provide sufficient pathways to further education. TAFE/RTOs are the only case to have strongly agreed. The results are indicated as statistically significant amongst cases, \((F = 4.795, \text{df} = 2, p = 0.009)\). Scheffe post-hoc identified statistically significant differences for TAFE/RTO and industry cases \((p = 0.010)\). For equipping people for the world of work, cases agreed with the proposition. There is a difference in mean scores amongst cases \((F = 12.031, \text{df} = 2, p < 0.001)\). Statistical significance was found between TAFE/RTO and industry cases \((p < 0.001)\) and industry and institution cases \((p < 0.001)\).

Table 5.9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In your opinion, does VET:</th>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>TAFE/RTO</th>
<th>Industry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide sufficient pathways to further education</td>
<td>M (SD)</td>
<td>M (SD)</td>
<td>M (SD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.99 (0.98)</td>
<td>4.32 (0.67)</td>
<td>3.89 (0.78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equip people for the world of work</td>
<td>M (SD)</td>
<td>M (SD)</td>
<td>M (SD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.99 (0.79)</td>
<td>4.16 (0.6)</td>
<td>3.52 (1.1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, a difference in mean scores between cases for sufficiency of pathways is reported between TAFE/RTOs and industry. For pathways to work by equipping students with the skills and knowledge needed, all cases showed
statistically significant results except between TAFE/RTOs and institutions. TAFE/RTOs continued to report more positively than other cases, whilst industry reported the lowest.

5.3.4.3 Specific pathways

This section analysed specific pathway options, including further training in VET, University and work, with results presented in Table 5.10. TAFE/RTOs strongly agreed with the ability for VET to provide pathways to further training and work. Institutions and industry agreed. All cases agreed with the ability for VET to provide pathways to university.

Conducting a one-way ANOVA revealed statistically significant differences amongst cases for pathways to further training \( (F = 6.20, df = 2, p = 0.02) \), clarified by Scheffe post-hoc test which revealed a statistically significant difference between TAFE/RTOs and industry \( (p = 0.003) \). On pathways to work there was a statistically significant difference amongst cases \( (F = 10.50, df = 2, p < 0.01) \). This was positioned between TAFE/RTOs and industry \( (p = 0.001) \). Additionally, for pathways to work, statistical significance was revealed between TAFE/RTOs and industry \( (p < 0.001) \). No statistical significance was reported amongst cases for pathways to university.

Table 5.10
A closer look at stakeholder perceptions of the availability of pathways available to VET participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In your opinion, does VET provide pathways to:</th>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>TAFE/RTO</th>
<th>Industry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Further training (VET)</td>
<td>4.16 (0.82)</td>
<td>4.37 (0.65)</td>
<td>3.93 (0.73)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University education</td>
<td>3.53 (1.11)</td>
<td>3.66 (1.01)</td>
<td>3.45 (0.93)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>4.13 (0.78)</td>
<td>4.26 (0.62)</td>
<td>3.69 (1.03)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These results continue to illustrate that TAFE/RTOs have a more positive perspective than other cases, particularly industry. There is a difference worth investigating between cases for the strength of pathways to work. Given strong agreement in some cases for particular pathways, there is potential value in analysing university pathways, too.

5.3.4.4 VET certification and knowledge transfer

The comparative opinions of certification and transfer of knowledge is discussed in this section. The results of relevant data are presented in Table 5.11. Industry indicates a neutral response to using VET qualifications in measuring worker aptitude. Cases agree on the ability of learners to transfer knowledge and skills to further training.

On the topic of VET as a measure of worker aptitude, results reveal a neutral response from industry, whilst others agreed with the question. One-way ANOVA indicated discrepant results amongst cases ($F = 3.56$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.03$), though no statistical significance was reported in Scheffe post-hoc tests. There was discrepancy found amongst cases for transferability of knowledge ($F = 3.52$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.031$). Scheffe post-hoc test revealed significance between industry and TAFE/RTOs ($p = 0.036$). TAFE/RTOs reported the highest mean value for both questions, whilst Industry reported the lowest.
Table 5.11

Stakeholder perspectives on the capacity for VET to provide measures of aptitude and transfer of knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In your opinion, are:</th>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>TAFE/RTO</th>
<th>Industry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VET qualifications a suitable measure of worker aptitude?</td>
<td>3.55 (0.91)</td>
<td>3.64 (0.9)</td>
<td>3.26 (1.12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners able to transfer knowledge and skills to work or further education and/or training?</td>
<td>3.97 (0.72)</td>
<td>4.14 (0.64)</td>
<td>3.79 (0.95)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In sum, using VET qualifications as a measure of aptitude revealed a neutral position by industry and agreement from institutions and TAFE/RTOs. There may be some further qualification needed to understand how to measure aptitude. Cases reported in agreement for students transferring their knowledge from one field to another. TAFE/RTOs continue to report more positively than other cases, and industry the lowest.

5.3.4.5 Outcomes of VET in Schools

VET in Schools and the various intentions of the implementation of this system is analysed in the dataset in Table 5.12. Results illustrate a difference in mean scores amongst all cases for all questions with many measures of statistical significance, detailed in Table 5.13. TAFE/RTOs and industry were the most common combination of cases with statistically significant differences. For most questions, TAFE/RTOs strongly agree and for all questions, this case reports the highest mean scores. Industry reports the lowest mean score for all questions (agreement). No cases report less than agreement for all questions, revealing an optimistic view of the VET in Schools schedule across the three cases.
One-way ANOVA (Table 5.13) reports differences amongst cases for all questions. Scheffe post-hoc analysis is presented in Table 5.14 due to the number of results. This revealed TAFE/RTOs and industry as the cases with the greatest number of statistically significant different results. The TAFE/RTO and institution case combination features twice, and institution and industry comparison once. No instances exist where all three cases reported significance between them for the same question, potentially revealing an optimistic view of the VET in Schools schedule across the three cases.

Table 5.12
Stakeholder opinions on the capacity of VET in Schools to achieve goals and objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In your opinion, do you feel VET in Schools:</th>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>TAFE/RTO</th>
<th>Industry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provides quality training to young people?</td>
<td>$M \ (SD)$</td>
<td>$M \ (SD)$</td>
<td>$M \ (SD)$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhances outcomes for young people leaving school?</td>
<td>3.81 (0.95)</td>
<td>4.19 (0.7)</td>
<td>3.53 (0.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides opportunities for students who may not be traditionally academic?</td>
<td>4 (0.85)</td>
<td>4.32 (0.61)</td>
<td>3.56 (0.95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is relevant to the world of work?</td>
<td>4.17 (0.89)</td>
<td>4.37 (0.7)</td>
<td>3.91 (0.84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is a positive response to labour market needs?</td>
<td>3.94 (0.87)</td>
<td>4.23 (0.74)</td>
<td>3.66 (1.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides knowledge and skills to get a job?</td>
<td>3.64 (0.99)</td>
<td>4 (0.91)</td>
<td>3.41 (0.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is able to support student choices for VET in Senior School Certificates?</td>
<td>3.83 (0.95)</td>
<td>4.23 (0.69)</td>
<td>3.56 (1.01)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*In Table 5.13 and Table 5.14, non-significant results were removed for clarity.*
Due to the large number of results and substantial measures of statistical significance, Table 5.13 provides the ANOVA test results in a single table. Results have been discussed previously.

**Table 5.13**

*One-way ANOVA results for capacity of VET in Schools to achieve goals and objectives*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In your opinion, do you feel VET in Schools:</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>provides quality training to young people?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.033</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enhances outcomes for young people leaving school?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.94</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>provides opportunities for students who may not be traditionally academic?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.286</td>
<td>.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is relevant to the world of work?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.842</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is a positive response to labour market needs?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.174</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>provides knowledge and skills to get a job?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.021</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is able to support student choices for VET in Senior School Certificates?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.749</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.14 provides the Scheffe post-hoc analysis for each question. Every question in this section is characterised by a statistical significance between TAFE/RTO and industry; two statistically significant differences are observed between TAFE/RTO and institution cases. There is only one question where a statistically significant difference is observed between institutions and industry additionally to the TAFE/RTO and industry combination.
Table 5.14

Scheffe post-hoc results for capacity of VET in Schools to achieve goals and objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In your opinion, do you feel</th>
<th>Case (I)</th>
<th>Case (J)</th>
<th>M Diff (I-J)</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VET in Schools:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>provides quality training to</td>
<td>TAFE/RTO</td>
<td>Institutions</td>
<td>0.38*</td>
<td>.036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>young people?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>0.66*</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enhances outcomes for young</td>
<td>TAFE/RTO</td>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>0.76*</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>people leaving school?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Institutions</td>
<td>0.45*</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>provides opportunities for</td>
<td>TAFE/RTO</td>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>0.46*</td>
<td>.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>students who may not be</td>
<td></td>
<td>Institutions</td>
<td>0.57*</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>traditionally academic?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>0.59*</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is relevant to the world of</td>
<td>TAFE/RTO</td>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>0.59*</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>work?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Institutions</td>
<td>0.39*</td>
<td>.032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is a positive response to</td>
<td>TAFE/RTO</td>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>0.67*</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>labour market needs?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Institutions</td>
<td>0.53*</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>provides knowledge and skills</td>
<td>TAFE/RTO</td>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>0.53*</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to get a job?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Institutions</td>
<td>0.67*</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is able to support student</td>
<td>TAFE/RTO</td>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>0.53*</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>choices for VET in Senior</td>
<td></td>
<td>Institutions</td>
<td>0.39*</td>
<td>.032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Certificates?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>0.67*</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. * The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

In summary, all questions exhibit statistically significant differences amongst the cases. The majority of these are observed between the TAFE/RTO case and industry, with two between TAFE/RTO and institutions. This could be indicative of a strongly positive view of VET in Schools from the perspective of TAFE/RTOs in comparison to other cases. It is worth exploring the rationale of each case response in consideration of other cases. No results were indicated below agree as a response.
These data continue the emerging pattern of inflated TAFE/RTO responses as more positive than other cases. Industry reported the lowest mean scores for all questions, too.

5.3.4.6 Summary

This section focused on the efficacy of VET, pathways from VET to further education and work, certification in VET, and the outcomes of VET in Schools. The major observations made include the significant mean differences identified between TAFE/RTO and industry cases. It was observed that cases responded neutrally to the idea of qualifications offered at the expense of quality. Less support was indicated for pathways to university than others, though there was a statistically significant difference observed between TAFE/RTOs and industry.

There was a neutral response to VET certification as a measure of aptitude, whilst cases agreed students could transfer knowledge. In the context of VET in Schools, all questions reported statistical significance between TAFE/RTOs and industry, with one instance of TAFE/RTO and institutions and industry and institutions. These mean score differences strengthen the consistent theme emerging of differing opinions about success in VET.

Overall, TAFE/RTOs reported higher across all questions with the greatest number of mean questions reported as statistically significant between TAFE/RTOs and industry.

5.3.5 Work placement

This section details data collected on the topic of work placement. As previously established, work placement is an integral part of the VET system, and a
requirement of a substantial number of training packages. This section looks at the
nature of work placement and associated outcomes, frequency of placement for
participants, expectations of real versus simulated experiences, workplace learning
and barriers for implementation.

The results highlight a shift in TAFE/RTO responses to lower mean values for
some questions. Industry has the highest scores for questions relating to industry
contributions to work placement. There are less statistically significant results
amongst and between cases in means comparisons tests.

5.3.5.1 Nature of work placement arrangements

The functions of work placement are an important aspect of VET from an
operational and outcomes standpoint, as defined in literature review. Each domain
analysed in Table 5.15 is a functional part for the governance of work placement and
has implications for stakeholders. Results ranged between neutral and agree.

Institutions reported mean scores lower than industry for all bar two items,
which was a variance on previous themes. In vertical observation of mean scores,
TAFE/RTOs reported the lowest for access arrangements, with four out of six results
indicated as neutral, which is the same pattern for institutions. Institutions reported
the second lowest mean for access arrangements.

Where TAFE/RTOs and institutions offered neutral responses, industry
offered agreement except in one question on places of employment. All cases
indicated agreement for the required hours and prior training requirements for work
placement.
No statistically significant results amongst cases were indicated in these results.

Table 5.15

Stakeholder views on the appropriate nature of work placement arrangements in VET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In your opinion, how appropriate are current VET work placement:</th>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>TAFE/RTO</th>
<th>Industry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>required hours</td>
<td>3.49 (0.89)</td>
<td>3.61 (1.11)</td>
<td>3.47 (0.95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior training requirements</td>
<td>3.46 (0.74)</td>
<td>3.5 (1.01)</td>
<td>3.5 (0.89)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>access arrangements (connections between business and schools)</td>
<td>3.27 (0.88)</td>
<td>3.19 (1.04)</td>
<td>3.49 (0.92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quality assurance programs</td>
<td>3.25 (0.89)</td>
<td>3.39 (0.98)</td>
<td>3.48 (0.91)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>places of employment</td>
<td>3.36 (0.77)</td>
<td>3.35 (0.96)</td>
<td>3.32 (0.85)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>employer screening processes</td>
<td>3.2 (0.86)</td>
<td>3.28 (0.97)</td>
<td>3.51 (0.94)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, there are a number of neutral responses amongst cases for these questions. The standout difference is between the previous sets of questions, where TAFE/RTOs reported higher means consistently than other cases, where this is not indicated in these questions. Industry reported higher than other cases in some questions, which is a shift in the trend; TAFE/RTO cases still answer more positively than other cases in the majority of questions.

5.3.5.2 Specific nature of outcomes of work placement

When developing an understanding of perspectives for benefits of work placement, participants were asked to respond to the concepts of effectiveness for learners, skills and knowledge, employability, competency and adequacy of time requirements. Table 5.16 captures participants’ responses on student outcomes in work placement. For these questions, all responses for all cases were in the agree category. No other descriptors were represented.
For the question on enhancing learning knowledge, one-way ANOVA indicated statistical significance amongst cases \( (p = 0.004) \), and post-hoc Scheffe test exposed statistically significant differences between industry and TAFE/RTOs \( (p = 0.011) \) and industry and institutions \( (p = 0.027) \). Industry indicated the lowest mean value, whilst TAFE/RTOs maintained a higher score than other cases. Industry reported the highest mean value amongst cases for enhancing learning competency. One major shift observed is where industry reports a higher mean value than other cases for time requirements for work placement. Although no statistical significance is observed, industry reported the highest mean value and TAFE/RTOs the lowest.

No other statistical significances are reported amongst cases.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.16</th>
<th>Student outcomes in work placement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In your opinion, work placement:</td>
<td>Institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is effective for learners?</td>
<td>( M (SD) )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enhances learner skills?</td>
<td>4.12 (0.73)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enhances learner knowledge?</td>
<td>4.1 (0.77)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enhances learner employability?</td>
<td>4.08 (0.77)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enhances learner competency?</td>
<td>4.12 (0.75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time requirements are adequate?</td>
<td>4.06 (0.82)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, these results continue to strengthen the positive response trend for TAFE/RTO groups. The industry response illustrates agreement of each proposition, as does that of institutions. Only one statistically significant response exists, for learner knowledge between TAFE/RTOs and industry. A shift in highest-
mean value was indicated in the last question, where industry indicated a higher mean for adequacy of time requirements for work placement.

5.3.5.3 Work placement frequency

A requirement of formal training is to provide work placement experiences, and in literature review it was established that there was a relationship between improved outcomes and workplace learning (see Chapter section 3.3.2). Table 5.17 captures stakeholder perspectives on the effectiveness and appropriateness of these programs.

TAFE/RTOs indicated the lowest mean scores for all questions except in regard to hybrid work placement and on-campus learning; industry reported the lowest for this question, and the highest for the remainder. In regard to wholly on-campus learning, institutions and industry reported in disagreement, whilst industry reported a neutral mean value.

For internships post training, industry and institution results indicated agreement, a perspective shared by TAFE/RTO. Scheffe post-hoc tests revealed that between industry and TAFE/RTO cases there was a statistically significance difference in the mean scores \( p = 0.017 \), even though all cases agreed.
Stakeholder perspectives on support for formal learning in work placement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In your opinion, should formal training be coupled with:</th>
<th>Institutions $M$ ($SD$)</th>
<th>TAFE/RTO $M$ ($SD$)</th>
<th>Industry $M$ ($SD$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ongoing, consistent work placement (one day per week)</td>
<td>3.75 (1.04)</td>
<td>3.76 (1.04)</td>
<td>3.93 (0.92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a number of blocks of work placement of one week or more</td>
<td>3.83 (0.91)</td>
<td>3.78 (1.04)</td>
<td>3.87 (0.84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an internship following formal training</td>
<td>3.75 (0.91)</td>
<td>3.45 (1.03)</td>
<td>3.92 (0.89)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wholly on-campus workplace learning</td>
<td>2.56 (1.06)</td>
<td>2.47 (1.14)</td>
<td>2.85 (1.19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>both work placement and on-campus workplace learning</td>
<td>4.09 (0.77)</td>
<td>4.17 (0.91)</td>
<td>3.92 (0.7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, wholly on-campus learning had the lowest mean scores to which all cases except industry disagreed. All case results for the remaining questions indicated a mean value in the agree range.

5.3.5.4 Expectations of real workplace learning experiences

This question homed in on the concept of real (as opposed to simulated) work placement, capturing a more detailed picture of the outcomes associated. The intention was to drill down into the perceived outcomes and align these with those indicated by policy. All cases agreed or strongly agreed with all propositions. TAFE/RTOs returned to reporting the highest mean values, and industry the lowest in almost all questions.

For skills, knowledge, productivity and employability skills cases reported agreement or strong agreement. TAFE/RTOs reported the highest mean values in all cases. Industry reported a higher mean score for competency and demonstration of employability skills than institutions, though the remainder were indicated higher for mean score by institutions. Results are reported in Table 5.18.
There was a statistically significant difference in mean scores amongst cases for improved competency \((F = 5.695, df = 2, p = 0.004)\). Scheffe post-hoc indicated industry and institutions as the statistically different groups \((p = 0.007)\). Other data was not statistically significant.

Table 5.18

**Stakeholder views on the ability for real work placement experiences to increase various capabilities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In your opinion, learners who engage in real, workplace learning situations:</th>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>TAFE/RTO</th>
<th>Industry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>develop better skills</td>
<td>4.31 (0.7)</td>
<td>4.44 (0.73)</td>
<td>4.18 (0.68)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>develop better knowledge</td>
<td>4.27 (0.68)</td>
<td>4.44 (0.8)</td>
<td>4.15 (0.78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>are more competent</td>
<td>4.12 (0.83)</td>
<td>4.3 (0.86)</td>
<td>4.27 (0.89)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tend to be more productive</td>
<td>4.03 (0.87)</td>
<td>4.33 (0.8)</td>
<td>4 (0.84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demonstrate better employability skills</td>
<td>4.17 (0.75)</td>
<td>4.4 (0.7)</td>
<td>4.26 (0.65)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To summarise, data in Table 5.18 indicate a broad-spectrum agreement or strong agreement for all questions amongst all cases. Furthermore, TAFE/RTOs continued to report higher than other cases. This coincides with the consistently high reporting from previous questions.

### 5.3.5.5 Workplace learning

Workplace learning incorporates theoretical and practical experiences. Sometimes, schools or TAFE run established businesses to provide integrated experiences for students.

Table 5.19 provides data on workplace learning. TAFE/RTOs present the highest responses for the first three items, which include enhancing learner outcomes, engaging in additional work experience and providing a service. TAFE/RTO reported
lowest for the last two items, including reducing financial burden for learners or institutions. For all questions, cases either agree or strongly agreed.

For enhancing learning outcomes, providing additional work experience and providing a service, all cases agree or strongly agree. Cases agree workplace learning can reduce learner and institution financial burdens. Industry reported the highest mean value for this item, though it was the only value higher than other cases in this set. No measures of significance were found using either ANOVA or Scheffe post-hoc tests.

Table 5.19

Stakeholder perspectives on the benefit of workplace learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In your opinion, could in-school workplace learning experiences:</th>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>TAFE/RTO</th>
<th>Industry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M (SD)</td>
<td>M (SD)</td>
<td>M (SD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enhance learner outcomes</td>
<td>4.27 (0.73)</td>
<td>4.45 (0.61)</td>
<td>4.27 (0.57)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>engage learners in additional work experience</td>
<td>4.08 (0.73)</td>
<td>4.19 (0.89)</td>
<td>4.13 (0.74)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>provide a service (such as to other schools, community groups, local councils)</td>
<td>4 (0.84)</td>
<td>4.17 (0.86)</td>
<td>4.14 (0.83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reduce learner financial burden</td>
<td>3.6 (0.95)</td>
<td>3.42 (1.02)</td>
<td>3.67 (1.08)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reduce institution financial burden</td>
<td>3.51 (0.94)</td>
<td>3.35 (1.05)</td>
<td>3.42 (1.1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hence, there is agreement amongst the cases and no statistically significant differences. TAFE/RTOs show higher mean values, except where workplace learning is used to reduce financial burdens. In this section, institutions reported the lowest mean values for all questions except reducing institution financial burdens.
5.3.5.6  *Barriers for implementation*

Participants were asked to identify the issues experienced within work placement for response to capture those with greatest influence on success. The issues spanned all sectors. Figure 5.2 details the spread of responses across the entire participant pool. It was indicated the greatest challenge for integrating workplace training into learning experiences is industry engagement. Other responses of high value include issues of school timetabling, a lack of interest from institutional leadership, teacher allocation and teacher knowledge.
Figure 5.2 Participant identification of the greatest challenge for integrating workplace learning for students
In summary, the benefits of work placement are diverse, yet barriers exist for implementation. Further investigation may highlight specific areas of concern for particular cases, and how this may be overcome.

5.3.5.7 Summary

This section on work placement captured the perspectives of stakeholders on the nature and expectations of work placement, outcomes and barriers. There was a shift in lowest mean scores being reported by institutions, particularly in the case of the nature of work placements. All cases reported disagreement for wholly on-campus learning, with the highest mean scores going to a hybrid on-campus and work placement solution. Barriers for implementation showed similarity between cases with some variance in subsequent options.

TAFE/RTOs reported higher in many questions in this section, continuing the trend experienced in other tables and sections.

5.3.6 School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships

For some students a School Based Apprenticeship or Traineeship (SBAT) provides a way to achieve certification at a trade level whilst still completing higher school requirements. The following set of questions is focused on this concept to evaluate the success and effectiveness within the greater VET system. TAFE/RTOs report higher again in this section than other cases. There are a number of discrepancies amongst cases in mean scores, particularly in benefits to students.
5.3.6.1 Outcomes of SBAT arrangements

Data captured on SBAT arrangements are detailed in Table 5.20. This is the only question where industry reported a neutral response. For all questions and across all cases, responses were in the range agree, except for industry who reported a neutral response for demanding adequate time in training. TAFE/RTOs reported highest mean scores for all questions. There was difference in mean values noted amongst cases for learner knowledge, employability, competency and time in training, confirmed with one-Way ANOVA and post-hoc tests.

In analysis of mean values, one-way ANOVA indicated significance amongst cases for learning knowledge \((F = 6.277, df = 2, p = 0.002)\), employability \((F = 8.489, df = 2, p < 0.001)\), competency \((F = 7.798, df = 2, p = 0.001)\) and adequacy of time \((F = 10.851, df = 2, p < 0.001)\). Using Scheffe’s post-hoc test, it was established that industry and TAFE/RTOs had statistically significant responses on the question of learner knowledge \((p = 0.004)\), employability \((p < 0.001)\), competency \((p = 0.01)\) and adequacy of time provision \((p < 0.001)\). Statistically, there was no significance in their responses on general effectiveness or learner skills, though it would need to be clarified as to how each case perceives general effectiveness. The pattern of significance between TAFE/RTOs and industry is continuing throughout this section.

Similar testing exposed statistically significant results between institutions and industry for learning knowledge \((p = 0.0450)\), employability \((p = 0.02)\). Statistically significant results were indicated between institutions and TAFE/RTOs for adequacy of time \((p = 0.018)\). This is the only question where industry reported a neutral response. They were the only case to do so in this set of questions.
Table 5.20

Participant perception of outcomes for SBAT arrangements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In your opinion, School Based Apprenticeships or Traineeships:</th>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>TAFE/RTO</th>
<th>Industry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>are generally effective</td>
<td>M (SD)</td>
<td>M (SD)</td>
<td>M (SD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enhance learner skills</td>
<td>3.68 (0.89)</td>
<td>4.00 (1.04)</td>
<td>3.86 (0.99)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enhance learner knowledge</td>
<td>3.91 (0.79)</td>
<td>4.08 (1.01)</td>
<td>4.06 (0.92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enhance learner employability</td>
<td>3.86 (0.84)</td>
<td>4.08 (0.98)</td>
<td>3.51 (1.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enhance learner competency</td>
<td>3.82 (0.85)</td>
<td>4.13 (0.97)</td>
<td>3.47 (1.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>demand adequate time in training</td>
<td>3.54 (0.9)</td>
<td>4.00 (0.99)</td>
<td>3.21 (0.98)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For these questions, then, three of six reported as statistically significant, even though all cases agreed or strongly agreed to all questions. This is only with exception for industry who held a neutral stance on demanding adequate time in training. Most of the mean scores in the agreement category could indicate healthy opinions about the outcomes of SBAT arrangements. The trend of TAFE/RTOs presenting an inflated view continues with their responses higher than others in all categories for this question.

5.3.6.2 Situation for greater engagement for SBAT students

Often, SBAT participants are limited in contact hours. Three options are offered to survey participants, of which they could select all appropriate. These include unpaid hours (the current requirement for Certificate II students), simulated work placement (not a “real” environment with real customers, though operates with similar equipment), or on-the-job training (the current SBAT requirement). Results in Figure 5.3 illustrates selection of these by participants (selecting one only). Data analysis revealed highest participant count for unpaid hours (institutions \( n = 80 \), TAFE/RTO \( n = 37 \), industry \( n = 68 \)). Simulated learning environments and on-the-job training represented smaller participants counts.
Figure 5.3 Participant responses to whether SBAT students should be engaged in greater learning or training

Figure 5.3 provides the count of participants who indicated their agreement with a number of options. Hence, the total count could be higher than actual participant count and are unable to be represented as percentages.

5.3.6.3 Summary

This section analysed stakeholder perspectives on the outcomes of SBAT arrangements. Cases overwhelmingly agreed for the benefits of SBAT arrangements. TAFE/RTOs indicated a balance between work placement and simulated learning experiences, whilst less support for greater on-the-job training. A more graded pattern was observed for other cases from work placement to simulated industry and on-the-job training.

TAFE/RTOs reported the highest mean scores where available for analysis.
5.3.7  **Teacher Qualifications**

The context of teacher qualifications is complex, having a long history of variability in requirements. The following questions explore some aspects of teacher qualification requirements. In this dataset, all cases felt industry qualifications and an extended period of experience was critical. Certificate IV and trade qualifications were a minimum expectation for institutions and industry. TAFE indicated a bachelor’s degree was as important. Maintenance cycles were expected as a two-year minimum, and industry indicated a need to make upgrades to qualifications more rigorous. Each aspect of these findings is more explicitly analysed in the following sections.

5.3.7.1  **Experience required to teach a VET course**

The perspectives held by stakeholders on the requirements for industry experience and qualifications to teach a VET course are detailed in Table 5.21. The greatest number of participants (61.4%) felt an industry qualification plus experience of 3-6 years was expected of teachers as a minimum standard to teach VET courses. Industry experience of more than 5 years (18.1%) and less than 5 years (10.8%) represented the next highest percentage of participant’s views.
Table 5.21
Qualifications expected by stakeholder groups to teach VET courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>TAFE/RTO</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Industry qual. plus exp. of 3-6 years</td>
<td>61.4%</td>
<td>62.2%</td>
<td>59.7%</td>
<td>61.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry experience ONLY &gt; 5 years</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>26.9%</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry experience ONLY &lt; 5 years</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry experience through work placement in training and qualification</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3.7.2 Stakeholder perspectives on academic teaching qualifications

In order to teach VET, a teacher or trainer must hold a minimum of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAE or equivalent). There is a complexity in that many teachers hold a Bachelor of Education (or equivalent), where package requirements necessitate their completion and attainment of the Certificate IV. Cases were given an opportunity to respond to this issue. Table 5.22 indicates more institution participants ($n = 38$) expect teachers to have bachelor level qualifications than other cases. A greater proportion of institution participants ($n = 72$) believe teachers should hold a Certificate IV. They also believe ($n = 68$) teachers should have a relevant trade or industry qualification. Similar patterns emerge in other cases, except industry who placed greater weight on trade of industry qualifications than other cases, proportionally to other options.
Table 5.22

Crosstabulation of responses for expectations of qualification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>TAFE/RTO</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor of Teaching / Education (or equivalent)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAE or TAA)</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant trade certificate or industry qualification</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hence, participants felt that teachers and trainers in VET should first hold a Certificate IV TAE or TAA and then, a relevant trade qualification. This could indicate agreement with the current situation in VET requirements.

5.3.7.3 *Maintaining industry currency*

Often, teachers and trainers are required to maintain their qualifications with industry related activities, which include visiting work placements, reading, and other professional learning. To capture these expectations, participants were asked how often a teacher or trainer should be required to participate in professional development (PD) activities, given a list of options.

Participants were offered 5 options as responses, which were

- Never;
- Every year or less;
- Every 2 years;
- Every 3 years; and
- More than 3 Years.
The variables were analysed as percentages of responses for each category. ANOVA cannot be used for analysis in this context, as the scale is not of the Likert type. An alternative for ANOVA is the Pearson Chi-square test, which is a measure of observed differences between groups. A strength test is used, such as Cramer’s V. When using small sample sizes the use of Chi-square is problematic as it often leaves cell counts at under 5 (M. L. McHugh, 2013). A minimum condition for these tests is that cell counts are above 5 for more than 20% of cells. An alternative is Fisher’s Exact Test, which is run to indicate if there is a significant difference amongst groups and responses for continuous variables. Hence, Fisher’s Exact Test was appropriate for the variables in this question. This test was run independently for each question variance in this set, as each had its own set of responses, as noted previously. The question was ‘In your opinion, how often should a teacher or trainer access [variance] as Professional Development (PD)?’, with a variance inserted appropriately. The variances included

- Workplace visitations (Table 5.23);
- Industry network meetings (Table 5.24);
- Industry related reading (Table 5.25);
- Industry-based work (Table 5.26);
- Industry trade shows (Table 5.27);
- Further VET education or training (Table 5.28); and
- Industry learning experiences (Table 5.29).

Each variance was provided in a matrix with the response options. Participants were asked to provide their opinion on how often teachers or trainers should engage in these experiences.
The tables are analysed individually. This appears at the bottom of each table.

Overall patterns in the tables include a consistent expectation from all sectors for yearly access to all variances of PD. There is also a pattern in the second highest ranking results across all tables as 2 yearly. Across all tables, the lowest ranking results were either 3 yearly or never. In some cases, more than 3 yearly ranked higher than 3 yearly.

For teachers accessing workplace visitations (Table 5.23), all cases asserted that yearly was the optimal choice followed by >3 yearly and yearly.

Table 5.23

*Percentage of participants in each case for accessing workplace visitations as professional development*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In your opinion, how often should a teacher or trainer access workplace visitations for PD:</th>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>TAFE/RTO</th>
<th>Industry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&gt;3 Yearly</td>
<td>11.80%</td>
<td>11.40%</td>
<td>19.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Yearly</td>
<td>8.20%</td>
<td>6.80%</td>
<td>9.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Yearly</td>
<td>16.50%</td>
<td>29.50%</td>
<td>25.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yearly</td>
<td>58.80%</td>
<td>47.70%</td>
<td>44.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>4.70%</td>
<td>4.50%</td>
<td>1.60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When indicating a need to access industry network meetings (Table 5.24), again all cases asserted yearly as the optimum choice, then 2 yearly and >3 yearly.

Institutions provided the strongest result amongst cases and options (yearly); however, industry were the highest for 2 yearly. The lowest ranking options for cases was never.
Table 5.24

Percentage of participants in each case for accessing industry network meetings as professional development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In your opinion, how often should a teacher or trainer access industry network meetings for PD:</th>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>TAFE/RTO</th>
<th>Industry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&gt;3 Yearly</td>
<td>12.40%</td>
<td>12.00%</td>
<td>7.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Yearly</td>
<td>6.70%</td>
<td>4.00%</td>
<td>4.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Yearly</td>
<td>21.90%</td>
<td>26.00%</td>
<td>32.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yearly</td>
<td>55.20%</td>
<td>54.00%</td>
<td>54.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>3.80%</td>
<td>4.00%</td>
<td>1.40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were two cells in Table 5.25 that recorded no results, denoted with a dash. The highest ranked case was industry for yearly when asked regarding industry related reading for PD. Institutions and TAFE/RTO also responded most highly for this option across all options. All industry participants responded without indicating never as an option. 4.8% of institution participants did indicate never as an option for industry reading as PD.

Table 5.25

Percentage of participants in each case for accessing industry related reading as professional development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In your opinion, how often should a teacher or trainer access industry related reading for PD:</th>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>TAFE/RTO</th>
<th>Industry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&gt;3 Yearly</td>
<td>18.10%</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
<td>14.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Yearly</td>
<td>4.80%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Yearly</td>
<td>11.40%</td>
<td>18.00%</td>
<td>14.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yearly</td>
<td>61.00%</td>
<td>60.00%</td>
<td>62.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>4.80%</td>
<td>2.00%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For accessing industry-based work (Table 5.26), whether as a second job or as part of training, industry participants indicated the highest result for the yearly option. Institutions and TAFE/RTO participants also responded the most frequently to this option. Institutions responded the most frequently to never. Overall, the highest-
ranking choice was yearly, whilst 2 yearly and 3 yearly were indicated second and third respectively.

Table 5.26
Percentage of participants in each case for accessing industry-based work as professional development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In your opinion, how often should a teacher or trainer access industry-based work for PD:</th>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>TAFE/RTO</th>
<th>Industry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&gt;3 Yearly</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Yearly</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Yearly</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yearly</td>
<td>51.5%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>52.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Accessing industry trade shows (Table 5.27) was indicated most frequently as an option for PD by industry as a yearly option. For institutions, never ranked second most highly, which is different from industry though not statistically significant when using Fisher’s exact test ($p = 0.14$). Industry ranked never equal lowest with 3 yearly. Stakeholders indicated the most common option as yearly, whilst 2 yearly ranked second and never, third.

Table 5.27
Percentage of participants in each case for accessing Industry trade shows as professional development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In your opinion, how often should a teacher or trainer access Industry trade shows for PD:</th>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>TAFE/RTO</th>
<th>Industry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&gt;3 Yearly</td>
<td>7.10%</td>
<td>4.20%</td>
<td>7.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Yearly</td>
<td>7.10%</td>
<td>6.30%</td>
<td>5.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Yearly</td>
<td>12.20%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>17.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yearly</td>
<td>54.10%</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>64.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>19.40%</td>
<td>14.60%</td>
<td>5.40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Industry, amongst all cases, reported yearly as the highest option for participation in further VET education and training for professional development (Table 5.28). Institutions and TAFE/RTO also ranked it highest amongst the options. TAFE/RTO held the highest score for 2 yearly and never, too. They also held the
lowest score amongst cases. Overall, cases indicated yearly as the most optimal choice, whilst 2 yearly was ranked second.

Table 5.28
Percentage of participants in each case for accessing further VET education or training as professional development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In your opinion, how often should a teacher or trainer access Further VET education or training for PD:</th>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>TAFE/RTO</th>
<th>Industry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&gt;3 Yearly</td>
<td>15.30%</td>
<td>14.30%</td>
<td>10.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Yearly</td>
<td>8.20%</td>
<td>2.00%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Yearly</td>
<td>20.40%</td>
<td>30.60%</td>
<td>23.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yearly</td>
<td>46.90%</td>
<td>36.70%</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>9.20%</td>
<td>16.30%</td>
<td>3.60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Institutions and TAFE/RTO ranked yearly as the highest option for accessing industry learning experiences (Table 5.29). Industry ranked yearly the highest and 3 yearly the second highest, though they were the lowest group amongst cases. Institutions ranked the highest. Overall, cases indicated yearly as the most common choice, 2 yearly ranked second for all except industry, who ranked 3 yearly second.
Table 5.29

Percentage of participants in each case for accessing Industry learning experiences as professional development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In your opinion, how often should a teacher or trainer access industry learning experiences (i.e. workshops) for PD:</th>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>TAFE/RTO</th>
<th>Industry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&gt;3 Yearly</td>
<td>6.90%</td>
<td>6.10%</td>
<td>6.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Yearly</td>
<td>4.90%</td>
<td>6.10%</td>
<td>29.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Yearly</td>
<td>21.60%</td>
<td>26.50%</td>
<td>8.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yearly</td>
<td>59.80%</td>
<td>57.10%</td>
<td>54.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>6.90%</td>
<td>4.10%</td>
<td>1.40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, for variances where industry could provide the most influence, industry ranked the highest for yearly occurrence amongst all the cases. The two exceptions were network meetings, although for these results there was a small percentage variance between case responses. The second was industry learning experiences, such as workshops. Institutions ranked *yearly* the highest in cases where they could access industry for tactile learning experiences. They ranked accessing trade shows *never* the highest of all cases, and as the second highest option. TAFE/RTOs indicated a high percentage response for options *more than three yearly* and *never* for further VET education.

5.3.7.4 *Rigour expected of Certificate IV upgrades*

Rigour of upgrades to the Certificate IV is a contested issue. Participants were asked to consider the expectations of upgrades to the qualification. Results of this investigation are presented in Table 5.30. It was revealed that institutions and TAFE/RTOs held a neutral position. Industry mean scores indicate agreement.
ANOVA results show a difference in the mean score amongst cases, where industry reported the highest and TAFE/RTO the lowest. A statistically significant result was found between TAFE/RTOs and Industry ($p = 0.034$). Industry and institutions also differed at a statistically significant level ($p = 0.031$). Industry agrees the upgrade requirements should be more rigorous. Both Institutions and TAFE/RTOs felt neutrally about the rigour of Certificate IV upgrades.

Table 5.30

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>TAFE/RTO</th>
<th>Industry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$M \ (SD)$</td>
<td>$M \ (SD)$</td>
<td>$M \ (SD)$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In your opinion, Certificate IV</td>
<td>2.96 (1.31)</td>
<td>2.88 (1.18)</td>
<td>3.5 (1.08)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>upgrade should be more rigorous</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>than it is currently?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, TAFE/RTOs reported a mean score that was lower than other cases. This was found to be statistically significant between the TAFE/RTO and industry cases.

5.3.7.5 Barriers to retraining or maintenance

Barriers to maintenance of qualifications are indicated in Figure 5.4 which focusses on percentage of participants in each case. For institutions, and TAFE/RTOs, time to attend training is the greatest issue. For industry, they see relevant industry experience as the greatest barrier. Institutions and TAFE/RTOs see this as the second largest barrier. A third barrier for institutions is restrictions on gaining release, whilst this was equal second for TAFE/RTOs and lowest ranking barrier for industry. Opportunity to improve was the lowest ranking barrier for institutions and TAFE/RTO, whilst is was the third largest for industry.
The percentage ranks for each case indicate the perception of industry that time to attend training is a lesser barrier than opportunity to improve practice. Restrictions to study release allocations was perceived even lower than time to attend training. Study release ranked as the highest barrier for institutions, followed by worthwhile industry experience. For TAFE/RTOs, a similar pattern emerged except where time to attend ranked second and worthwhile experiences and opportunity to improve practice equal third and last.

5.3.7.6 **Summary**

This section focussed on the experience and qualifications required to teach, maintenance of these requirements and the rigour of certification and upgrades to these qualifications. There were also questions on the barriers to retraining. Participants felt strongly for teachers and trainers obtaining industry qualifications and experience, along with the Certificate IV TAE or TAA. There was a definite
perspective for maintenance yearly. The pattern amongst tables here was that for situations where industry would be required to provide the training, they were less agreeable than situations where the onus was on other cases to participate in experiences, such as trade shows and industry relevant reading. There were mixed responses to barriers, but this is expected due to the various perspectives across cases.

5.3.8 Employability Skills

Whether referred to as generic or employability skills, key competencies or core skills for work, the indicators that make up these frameworks have taken on various forms since their inception. They are noted as critical to the success of young people in training and work, though there have been issues with their implementation in Australian VET (see Chapter section 3.3.3 for a complete discussion). The following section reveals the relevance of these skills, particularly for institutions and TAFE/RTOs. There are a number of differences of opinion between cases in the application of these skills in teaching and learning, student reporting, performance management and productivity. TAFE/RTOs reported the most statistically significant differences in opinion.

The terms generic skills and employability skills are used interchangeably in this section as they are synonymous.

5.3.8.1 Relevance of generic skills

Data analysis, presented in Table 5.31, illustrates a mean range of agreement to strong agreement across all cases for all propositions. TAFE/RTOs report highest mean values for all propositions. Industry reported the lowest, except in the case of asking about relevance to employers, where industry reported the lowest mean score.
Statistically significant results amongst cases were not reported using one-way ANOVA.

Table 5.31

Stakeholder perspectives on relevance of generic skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In your opinion, are Employability Skills relevant to:</th>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>TAFE/RTO</th>
<th>Industry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learners</td>
<td>M (SD)</td>
<td>M (SD)</td>
<td>M (SD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.31 (0.93)</td>
<td>4.46 (0.81)</td>
<td>4.25 (0.91)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching, learning and training</td>
<td>4.14 (4.14)</td>
<td>4.36 (0.78)</td>
<td>4.09 (0.84)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work placement</td>
<td>4.13 (4.13)</td>
<td>4.39 (0.75)</td>
<td>4.07 (0.79)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employers</td>
<td>4.12 (4.12)</td>
<td>4.39 (0.78)</td>
<td>4.32 (0.81)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A continuing theme of TAFE/RTO high mean scores is revealed, as is the more common lower scores of the industry case. Notably, industry had a higher mean score for relevance of employability skills to their sector than institutions, which was the only exception noted of lower industry mean values.

5.3.8.2 Application of generic skills

As discussed in Chapter section 3.3.3, generic skills frameworks have a wide array of applications. TAFE/RTOs continued to higher mean scores than other cases to the benefits of employability skills. There were a number of statistically significant differences between stakeholder groups in this section, particularly on the application and use of the framework in teaching, performance management and use as an indicator of productivity.

Results in Table 5.32 indicate similar patterns overall to other results in that TAFE and industry bookend mean scores in most areas. The two exceptions are using
employability skills as supplemental assessment of competency and use in work placement reporting.

One-way ANOVA analysis reveals statistically significant differences amongst cases for teaching and learning experiences \((F = 3.85, df = 2, p = 0.023)\). Post-hoc analysis revealed TAFE/RTOs and industry differed \((p = 0.026)\). In the use of employability skills in assessment experiences, institutions and industry reported a neutral stance, which differed with agreement from the TAFE/RTO case. Analysis showed disparity amongst cases \((F = 4.98, df = 2, p = 0.008)\), later identified between TAFE/RTOs and institutions \((p = 0.031)\) and TAFE/RTOs and industry \((p = 0.015)\).

ANOVA results indicated differences amongst cases for measuring and reporting capabilities to employers \((F = 3.96, df = 2, p = 0.021)\). Institutions and TAFE/RTOs differed in this scenario \((p = 0.037)\). Industry reported the lowest mean score for use of employability skills in measuring productivity, which was also the only neutral response. A difference was found amongst cases \((F = 5.77, df = 2, p = 0.004)\), where a statistically significant result indicated between industry and TAFE/RTOs \((p = 0.004)\). In reporting the use of employability skills for writing references for students, ANOVA results indicated statistically significant differences \((F = 4.75, df = 2, p = 0.010)\), whilst post-hoc identified industry and TAFE/RTOs differed \((p = 0.010)\). For measuring competency, ANOVA results exposed statistically significant differences amongst cases, too \((F = 9.25, df = 2, p < 0.001)\). In this situation, post-hoc analysis showed institutions differed to TAFE/RTO \((p = 0.039)\) and industry differed to TAFE/RTOs \((p < 0.001)\).

For work placement reporting, all cases reported in agreement with no statistical significance. All cases felt neutrally about using employability skills to
report to students. Industry reported a neutral stance for all questions except the use of employability skills in supplemental assessment. Five out of eight responses from institutions reported a mean score of neutral, where the rest were agreement. A similar pattern exists for industry, who report neutrally for six from eight items. TAFE/RTOs reported consistent mean scores in agreement, without exception.

Table 5.32

Stakeholder opinion on the application of employability skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In your opinion, can generic skills be applicable to:</th>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>TAFE/RTO</th>
<th>Industry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M (SD)</td>
<td>M (SD)</td>
<td>M (SD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching and learning experiences</td>
<td>3.52 (1.02)</td>
<td>3.88 (0.91)</td>
<td>3.35 (0.99)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment experiences (either theoretical and/or practical)</td>
<td>3.39 (0.98)</td>
<td>3.84 (0.85)</td>
<td>3.29 (0.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing to employers a measure of student capability</td>
<td>3.36 (1.03)</td>
<td>3.82 (0.94)</td>
<td>3.35 (1.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measuring worker productivity</td>
<td>3.22 (1.03)</td>
<td>3.56 (1.01)</td>
<td>2.87 (1.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing references for workers leaving formal schooling to further work and training</td>
<td>3.38 (0.92)</td>
<td>3.65 (0.96)</td>
<td>3.07 (0.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplemental assessment of learner competency</td>
<td>3.35 (0.94)</td>
<td>3.78 (0.87)</td>
<td>3.56 (1.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing learners with a clear guide about their capability</td>
<td>3.42 (1.02)</td>
<td>3.66 (1.02)</td>
<td>3.22 (1.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work placement reporting</td>
<td>3.42 (1.08)</td>
<td>3.78 (1)</td>
<td>3.45 (0.86)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A continuing trend for TAFE/RTOs with higher mean scores is illustrated in this section. Industry held the lowest mean scores with only two exceptions, holding a neutral stance for all but two questions. There were a number of statistically significant differences amongst cases, with all held between TAFE/RTOs and other cases. There were no instances of industry and institutions with differing mean results that were statistically significant.
5.3.8.3 Summary

Analysing generic skills focused on the relevance and application of the skills framework in work and training. TAFE/RTOs held the highest opinion across all questions for this section. Industry stated agreement for relevance with a more neutral stance for application. Institutions followed a similar pattern, however TAFE/RTOs agreed in all items.

5.4 Chapter summary

The section below provides a slightly more detailed summary than provided in each section of analysis. Discussion takes place in Chapter 7. The specific points for investigation for Phase 2 are detailed in Chapter 3. There are additional macro areas of investigation included.

5.4.1 Core VET and VET in Schools outcomes

Throughout this section, cases reported no mean scores in the disagree or strongly disagree categories. There were also very few neutral mean scores. There were many areas of statistical significance between cases, most of which exist between the TAFE/RTO case and industry case.

 Particularly of interest is the emerging pattern of the TAFE/RTO case, reporting higher mean scores in most aspects of VET than other participant cases. Similarly, mean scores of the industry case were consistently lower.
5.4.2 Work placement

On the topic of work placement, there was greater similarity in responses amongst cases for access, quality, employer contribution and value. Participants reported agreement or strong agreement that learner skills, knowledge and employability are generally enhanced, but there was one instance of statistically significant difference. There was a positive response to combining formal training with wholly on-campus workplace learning. Other options represented lower mean scores across all cases. Industry engagement was indicated as the greatest barrier to implementation of work placement, with school timetabling and flexibility second and third respectively.

A major shift in this section is the lower mean scores of TAFE/RTOs in some sections. Industry had higher mean scores in many areas, particularly those where industry contribution was discussed.

5.4.3 School based apprenticeships

Results for SBAT arrangements were illustrated by consistent agree or strongly agree mean scores, though there are some discrepancies amongst cases. This included enhancement of knowledge, employability, competency and time. All discrepancies were positioned between TAFE/RTO and industry cases. A standout result was the low mean score of industry on adequacy of time in training for SBAT students. Industry and institutions strongly supported more work placement
5.4.4 Teacher qualifications

In the context of teacher qualifications, there was a more positive response for industry experience as a necessity for teachers. Respondents support current qualification requirements of a TAA/TAE and trade qualifications, there was some support for a Bachelor of Education. There is resounding support for participation in industry-relevant professional development, with the greatest support for trade shows. Respondents hold the perspective that teacher training should be more rigorous than it is currently, although time is the greatest barrier to further training and training upgrade.

5.4.5 Employability Skills

Mean responses on the relevance of Employability skills indicated a negative perception of the framework. Mean scores for the application of employability skills showed a number of discrepancies amongst the cases. There are numerous instances between cases, all held between TAFE/RTOs and other cases. TAFE/RTOs reported higher and industry lower mean scores for the vast majority of questions in this section.

5.4.6 Additional results

A majority of higher mean scores reported were those of the TAFE/RTO case. In many cases, these were shown to statistically significant in comparison to other stakeholder groups. Industry reported lower mean scores than other cases across much of the data, too. This could be reflective of considerable issues in the sector during the time of the study and will be examined in detail.
There were few indications of disagreement across the study. No mean values for strong disagreement were found for any question, signifying a healthy or positive disposition.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has analysed the viewpoint of stakeholders including institutions, industry and TAFE/RTOs. The aspects of VET considered were the core objectives, work placement, school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, teacher qualifications and generic skills. Analysis has illustrated themes, each with a number of characteristics, previously discussed. This phase of analysis, additional results were found, which included a more positive view by TAFE/RTO stakeholders and lower mean scores by Industry. The purpose of these results now is to define points of investigation into Phase 2, a qualitative inquiry.
6 Phase 2: Qualitative interview and analysis

This chapter combines quantitative and qualitative studies. Based on quantitative results from Phase 1, interview questions are devised, and analysis conducted. Phase 2 is used to further illustrate quantitative results, like putting the meat on the bones. Hence, the purpose of this chapter is to analyse the interview data collected, extending on, and adding to, themes from Phase 1 for a deeper understanding and to extrapolate findings. Findings are constructed through thematic synthesis, deployed in analysis of interview data. In Chapter 4, the instrument used in Phase 2 was defined and justification provided for the approach taken in developing questions.

Data analysis in this chapter seeks to achieve two objectives. The first objective is to thematically synthesise interview data, a process defined by Cruzes, Dybå, Runeson and Höst (2015) and detailed in Chapter 4. This seeks to deliver clarity of data by synthesising themes and identifying a higher-order model of themes that emerge from data. In the context of this study, Phase 1 statistical analysis quantified established themes from literature review. Now, in Phase 2, these are used to focus reading and highlighting of text. Emergent themes may also become apparent, which are appropriately coded. In presenting results for Phase 2, themes are detailed and substantiated. This chapter concludes by presenting a summary of these themes.

The second objective is to identify information, data, which provides insights about power relations, governmentality and capital as outlined in the discussion of theoretical frameworks. These are initially formed under thematic synthesis according
to the coding framework provided in Section 6.2 and 6.3, in conjunction with the statements made by interviewees according to the empirical domains of investigation.

The following sections outline the themes and focus areas that emerged from data in Phase 1.

6.1 **Quantitative themes**

The themes identified in Chapter 5 have been established within the domains of investigation identified through literature review. These were the core objectives of VET, Work Placement outcomes, applicability of School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships to students and industry sectors, teacher qualifications and generic skills (also known as employability, soft or core skills for work). These themes were the subject of statistical analysis in Chapter 5, that is, Phase 1. The following outlines these themes as they were before qualitative analysis and further synthesis. Some new themes emerged from interviews that are highlighted in discussion in this chapter. The quantitative themes are

- 6.1.1 Core Objectives of VET;
- 6.1.2 Work Placement;
- 6.1.3 School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships;
  - Note, this also includes non-school based apprenticeships as it became evident in interviews the necessity of including this information.
- 6.1.4 Teaching qualifications;
- Employability Skills; and
- additional themes.
6.1.1 Theme 1: Core objectives of VET

The themes generated within this domain from Phase 1 include

- training outcomes, such as employability and productivity, as there were statistically significant differences between cases;
- the quality of VET training; all three cases agreed that VET presents quality training outcomes;
- qualifications are at the expense of quality training, due to the neutral response by all stakeholders;
- pathways between VET and further training/education/work identified agreement amongst cases as to the success, but there were statistically significant differences between cases. This was especially the case for university pathways; and
- operation and outcomes of VET in Schools, which identified a number of statistically significant differences between cases for all questions asked.

6.1.2 Theme 2: Work Placement

Work placement is an important facet of training, shown to improve skills.

Themes identified by Phase 1 analysis include

- access and quality of placements particularly for industry given they reported the lowest mean scores for all questions except investments of time and building competency;
- development of skills, knowledge and competency, which all cases agreed work placement achieved;
- time requirements, for which industry reported the highest mean score; and
• alternative options for work placement, which indicated a more hybrid version of workplace and simulated work would be appropriate.

Particularly of note was the more neutral response by stakeholders on the nature of success for work placement in relation to industry participation, except by industry. There was a shift in a macro trend identified, in that for many questions in other domains TAFE/RTOs reported higher mean responses; in this domain industry reported higher mean scores than other cases.

6.1.3 Theme 3: School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships

SBAT arrangements are designed to increase flexibility for students completing senior school certificates. Phase 2 data analysis will focus on

• benefits of SBAT arrangements, given the statistical significance reported between TAFE/RTOs and industry on a number of areas;
• time requirements for completion, especially as industry reported the lowest mean score for adequacy of time; and
• additional training in relation to outcomes, such as work placement.

There was an overall agreement for the benefits of work placement, though there was less support for on-the job training, indicated primarily by industry.

6.1.4 Theme 4: Teacher Qualifications

Teacher requirements for training, qualifications and industry experience, including maintenance, is a topic of critical importance. Literature review revealed the importance of qualifications and desire for industry experience, which was supported in Phase 1. Phase 2 data analysis will focus on
• minimum teacher qualification and experience requirements, particularly as industry experience rated the highest for non-academic expectations, whilst for academic it ranked a close second behind a Certificate IV. Bachelor qualifications were not as well supported by cases;

• Certificate IV and upgrade rigour, as TAFE/RTO and institutions indicated neutrally about the need for greater rigour in the upgrade requirements, which for TAFE/RTOs held statistically significant difference compared with industry which indicated agreement; and

• maintenance and professional development expectations, in which there were different expectations based on the level of investment required by stakeholders, particularly industry.

6.1.5 Theme 5: Employability Skills

Themes that developed as a result of analysis for employability skills include the following:

• cases agreed the Employability skills frameworks were relevant to them and students in all situations;

• there was limited support for its use in almost all suggested contexts, such as
  o measuring aptitude;
  o utilisation of the framework in work references or assessment;

• industry reported neutral responses in all but two questions regarding the application of the framework, both of which related to assessment and reporting; and

• institutions reported neutrally for use of employability skills in assessment, measuring and reporting productivity and capability to students and
employers, which was a similar pattern to industry but different to TAFE/RTOs.

6.1.6 Theme 6: Additional findings

In Phase 1, there were additional observations made through data analysis. These included

- a particularly positive view of VET held by the TAFE/RTO case;
- a substantially more negative view of almost all aspects of VET made by industry;
- in qualitative remarks, discussion of the impact of open-market funding and contestability arrangements – this was not specifically targeted through interview, though it did feature in discourse; and
- high expectations of industry for improved outcomes in VET, particularly:
  - this is noted through a number of questions where industry feedback was to improve quality and productivity, higher expectations of teachers and trainers for qualifications and importance of industry experience; and
  - interestingly, where greater investment was required by industry, they reported lower mean scores than where less investment was required.

The points of analysis from each theme above are used to define codes in the context of analysis, which are detailed in Table 6.1.
6.2 Empirical analysis: coding and use of memos

To conduct coding and analysis of interviews, NVivo software was employed. Table 6.1 provides a description of the codes used in analysing the empirical aspects of the study, which aligns themes developed from Phase 1 with the results of Phase 2. This is in keeping with the methodology presented in Chapter 4. This analysis clarifies and contextualises participant attitudes toward VET as a system.

Table 6.1
Points of investigation correlated with potential aspects for discussion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Empirical focus</th>
<th>Within their response, an interviewee might:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 6.5.1 Core objectives of VET | • Refer to the success or failure of VET holistically  
• Discuss specific aspects of the VET system and relevant outcomes  
• Explore training quality in VET |
| 6.5.2 Work Placement | • Discuss work placement requirements and how this relates to outcomes of VET  
• Explore the outcomes of work placement as they relate to the outcomes for employers, students or institutions  
• Discuss the implications for educators or the education sector |
| 6.5.3 School-based Apprenticeship or Traineeship | • Explore the contribution of SBAT arrangements to students or industry  
• Provide insight into requirements of SBAT learners and how this relates to outcomes  
• Discuss the quality of training as it prepares SBAT or non-SBAT students for work |
| 6.5.4 Teacher Qualifications | • Indicate their position on relevant qualifications required for teaching VET  
• Discuss the requirements of specific teaching qualifications required for teaching VET  
• Explore professional development requirements for VET teachers/trainers |
• Discuss any changes they see relevant for teachers/trainers

6.5.5 Employability Skills
• Explore how the framework is used and how this relates to outcomes in VET
• Indicate their level of understanding of the framework and its implementation
• Provide uses for the framework

6.5.6 Additional findings
• Indicate a more positive or negative view of a particular sector
• Necessity of improved outcomes
• Investment of industry in VET

6.3 Theoretical Framework: Elements for analysis

The following section details the themes highlighted in Marshall’s toolbox (Foucault, 1983a; Marshall 1990). Each is used in conjunction with themes developed in Phase 1 to synthesise more detailed themes regarding power relations in Phase 2. Phase 1 data lends itself to quantifying themes identified in Phase 2, which features throughout discussion of analysis in this chapter.

6.3.1 Elements of the toolbox

The sections that follow recap and summarise the domains of analysis for power relations (Foucault, 1983a; Marshall, 1990). Table 6.2 provides examples of keywords or phrases that could identify each element within interviews. These are not exhaustive but provide the thematic arrangement of ideas that could rise from the data or assist in the establishment of understanding for the current themes, filtered down from Phase 1. They were arranged from the explanation and definitions of the toolbox examined at length in Chapter 2.
6.3.1.1 Systems of Differentiations

By establishing the systems of differentiations, it is possible to examine power between those that enact within the constructs of power on another. Early in this study, stakeholder groups were established as the groups that enact power upon one another and are the object of power relations. They are also subject individually and collectively to governmentality within the contexts of biopolitics and biopower. The differentiations in place are determined by that which makes them separate to enact forms of power, or at least, power ‘to’ or ‘over’ another. For this study, it is determined that stakeholder categorisation (institution, secondary school, or employer) within the field of VET is one of these differentiations. Another may be defined as the legislative situation that differentiates each case. These are examined in more detail in Chapter 7, as much of the differentiations between cases evolved in the context of analysis.

6.3.1.2 Objectives of those who act upon the actions of others

Oftentimes, the objectives of those in power can influence the outcome of a particular action. In this case, there is a particular breadth of influence which can be at an individual, institution, system or policy level. This influence may be exercised as a result of a personally held perspective (consider a principal acting in the context of their interpretation of legislation) or a position higher than that, such as a political influence, that of a union, and so forth. Stakeholders hold significant power in this context, as they ultimately determine implementation of policy. The objectives of those who act are essentially those that give rise to the opportunity for power relations to be exercised, where the actions are the result of those objectives.
6.3.1.3 Means of exercising power relations

As far as power exists, it has to be exercised to be effective. Where a person has the potential to exercise power, a means of exercising it can come as a means of control, threat of discipline and compliance or economic rewards, and so on (Foucault, 1983a; Marshall, 1990). In his text, Foucault (1983a) specifically states ‘arms’, but in an institutional context this could be seen as discipline; not as disciplinary power but as a means of exercising power. In the context of this study, stakeholders may use policy as a way to maximise, skew or direct student outcomes, or use particular programs as a strategy for implying success or failure. In some cases, VET could be identified as a way to enforce a class system, or where programs create economic reward and as a result disadvantage the student (or the inverse may be true). Further, policy itself may be identified as a way to control, subvert or organise a particular system.

6.3.1.4 Forms of institutionalisation

At each level of VET, a series of institutions exist that form the basis under which power is exercised. These structures, these institutions, provide the boundaries for those that work within them and beyond them, to construct power relations. For this study, it is essential to consider how each participant or case group responds as a result of institutionalisation. This also takes into account governmentality and action of the State, which in this context exercises power beyond stakeholder and institutional boundaries but also within them through regulation and inspection. It is also the institutionalised way we speak of VET. What are the normative values, operational foundations and fixtures that make VET function, and how we speak of them?
6.3.1.5 Rationalisation of power

As power is exercised, it is often the result of some form of rationalisation or legitimisation allowing power relations to develop and an exercise of power to take place. As Foucault (1983a) indicates, “the exercise of power is not a naked fact, an institutional right, nor is it a structure which holds out or is smashed” (Foucault, 1983a, pp. 223–224), rather it is adapted to the situation in which power is exercised and legitimised by those that accept how power is exercised. In the context of this study, stakeholders may accept policy or governance the way it is. As a result, there is some rationalisation that legitimises power relations in this context. The acceptance of policy in its existent form legitimises action in the context of rationalisation. This relates back to the fact that the subject is essentially free, and with this freedom comes an acceptance of the fact that power can influence that subject’s experience; the power ‘over’ or power ‘to’ in the context of biopower and the control of the body, discussed at length in Chapter 2. Questionnaire and interview have the potential to expose this rationalisation.

6.3.2 Theoretical framework: Coding and use of memos

Table 6.2 describes codes used within Marshall’s toolbox. For each, there are a number of examples of responses or context of conversation an interviewee might present. These are not definitive, nor do they create a finite boundary, but used as examples to provide a structure for analysis. Child nodes and memos were created during analysis to contextualise particular phrases that might run through other interviews. Appropriate memos were taken of coded text, which were used to prompt thinking and explore the text in various ways. Most often, these were used to go
beyond the data and expand thinking, develop relationships and build context for discussion.

Table 6.2
An explanation of method of analysis for coding interviews for each element of the toolbox

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element of toolbox</th>
<th>Within their response, interviewees might:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Systems of differentiations | • Identify their position within the system  
• Discuss the position of the institution within VET  
• Make inference to the degree of their ability to control or direct aspects of the place in which they work  
• Express the degree of influence they have, or do not have, in a particular context  
• Identify specific limitations in their job, institution, or as a result of governmentality (influence of biopolitics or biopower) |
| Objectives of those who act upon the actions of others | • Identify their own beliefs on a particular VET activity, VET itself or stakeholder group in relation to an outcome or experience  
• State their intentions in the context of policy implementation  
• Discuss the intentions of others and the impact on them  
• Express or discuss an experience of a student as a result of a particular activity or VET policy |
| Means of exercising power relations | • Discuss some requirement they adhere to as a result of activity expectations  
• Express implications for others as a result of activity  
• Infer or allude to various impacts on students where their economic, social or cultural position is threatened or enhanced |
| Forms of institutionalisation | • Express the functional norms of a particular institute  
• Infer relationships between one institution and another, and the effect this has on implementation of VET policy or activity  
• Express influence by the state in a normative way |
| Degrees of rationalisation | • Discuss how elaborate the relationship is between the instrument of means and the certainty of the outcome |
To explore a possibility for relationships between power and governmentality in the context of Australian VET, it was necessary to consider how stakeholders may express their perspective of governance. Coding, therefore, would focus on phrases or concepts as presented in Table 6.3. These are adapted from Foucault’s concepts of governmentality and how people may experience, or refute an experience of, governance (Foucault, 2002).

Table 6.3

Example of phrases interviewees may use when identifying issues related to governmentality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Within their response, interviewees might:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Governmentality</td>
<td>• Express a way in which they are governed that constrains their ability to conduct a job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Discuss governance and its impact on operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Describe a situation where legislation, activity or VET is used in a disciplinary form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the analysis of capital, Table 6.4 defines the examples used in analysing notions and inferences of contributions or issues as they relate to the theoretical framework on Capital presented in Chapter 2. These descriptions helped to align analysis with interview responses.
Table 6.4

Examples of responses that pertain to the context of capital within VET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forms of capital</th>
<th>Within their response, an interviewee might:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Economic (human) | • Refer to the contribution of education on a person’s outcomes, training or employability  
|                  | • Discuss the economic benefits of training  
|                  | • Discuss the generation of human capital and the capacity to work  
|                  | • Infer the contribution education makes to a person as a holistic notion  
|                  | • Imply or state the economic costs of education  |
| Social          | • Indicate the social benefits of training, such as employer contact or contribution, access to apprenticeships, and so forth  
|                  | • Indicate the benefits of training under qualified industry professionals  |
| Cultural        | • Discuss the contribution of qualifications to the greater success of culture or impact on culture  
|                  | • Indicate the benefits of VET, qualifications or education in the context of the greater cultural exchange  |
| Symbolic        | • The notion of value a teacher or trainer possesses  |

6.4 Interview participation and representation

Participation in interview was lower than expected. As many as 56 indicated a willingness to participate, whilst only 20 returned contact when invited. Following this, 12 were willing to participate in a phone interview, whilst one provided email responses to questions, though this was limited due to the inability to pursue depth in probing questions. As established in Chapter 4, a suitable number for interview is between 10 and 12 (Sim et al., 2018), which should be balanced and represent a variety of participants from cases (Stake, 2005). As a result, participants represented all stakeholder groups. Table 6.5 provides the breakdown of stakeholders according to
the cases. The TAFE/RTO case was not treated separately, though they are noted separately for clarity in the table.

Table 6.5

Case and total participant count for interview in Phase 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Representative case</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutions</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAFE</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTO</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (n)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participant interviews were coded with a randomised label and provided a pseudonym. Throughout this study, the pseudonym is used to reference each interviewee. Table 6.6 lists the interviewee by pseudonym and identifies sector of employment. It also defines the Australian State from which they represent, to show the cross section of case data collected.

In selecting interview participants, a greater weighting occurred toward TAFE/RTOs and Industry, however as their results represented the most polarised in Phase 1, this seemed appropriate. Yin (2014) recommends utilising views that challenge the case data to ensure quality data and discussion.
Table 6.6

Pseudonyms used for interview participants

| Participant | Sector                          | State            | Gender |  |
|-------------|---------------------------------|------------------|--------|
| Peter       | Industry                        | QLD              | M      |  |
| Sue         | Industry                        | NSW (Rural)      | F      |  |
| Ian         | Industry                        | VIC              | M      |  |
| Gill        | Industry                        | VIC              | F      |  |
| Tess        | Industry employer & RTO         | NSW              | F      |  |
| Constance   | Institution                     | NSW              | F      |  |
| Tony        | Institution                     | VIC              | M      |  |
| Sally       | RTO                             | QLD              | F      |  |
| Finn        | RTO                             | NSW              | M      |  |
| Kyra        | RTO                             | NSW              | F      |  |
| Liam        | RTO                             | QLD              | M      |  |
| Mike        | TAFE                            | NSW              | M      |  |
| Jane        | TAFE                            | VIC              | F      |  |

6.5 Analysis results

The following section details the results of interview analysis for the themes of core VET objectives, work placement, school-based apprenticeships, teacher qualifications and employability skills and Phase 1 additional themes. Further issues that arose during interview are also presented.

6.5.1 Theme 1: Core objectives of VET

The success of VET can be measured by the quality of training, capacity to provide quality training, appropriate nature of courses for students and impact of legislation. Analysing interview data on the core objectives of VET identified a number of key messages, which included

- perceptions of achieved training outcomes of VET, and the influence of an academic versus non-academic narrative;
• a suggestion that private RTOs are influencing perceived value of the sector in terms of quality training;
• TAFE representatives who inferred or explicitly stated the impact of legislative change on the sector;
• limitations to pathways due to unprofitable entry-level courses for those without necessary perquisites for higher level study and university limitations; and
• discourse on the impact of negative VET narrative for VET in Schools.

These key messages provided insight into the theme of VET system in relation to the capacity of VET to achieve its core objectives. It also highlighted issues that may have infringed on the capacity of VET practitioners and institutions to achieve them. Further, there are aspects of power relations and capital formation drawn out of the data.

6.5.1.1 The efficacy of VET

When asked about the success of VET in achieving training outcomes, participants provided a range of perspectives. Sally (RTO, Queensland) stated, “I think vocational education is good in providing a skillset more than the academic capability.” First is the identification of quality skillsets. What emerges though is the notion that skills are achieved, without necessarily ensuring an academic foundation. This idea will be revisited later in this section.

Jane (TAFE, Victoria) said, “I think, in general, that VET does an excellent job of addressing needs,” but clarified by saying, “I don’t think we’re delivering anywhere near the quality we have done in the past.” This statement speaks from the
perspective of TAFE, drawing a connection between Jane’s comment and the efficacy of TAFE to deliver VET. Essentially, over time there has been a degradation of quality of VET in TAFE. Some participants identified variability in success and challenge between institutions in the sector such as Gill (Industry, Victoria), who said, “there are some very good vocational education and training providers in the industry that are trying do the right thing and that are committed to making sure that the students achieved outcomes”, and Mike (TAFE, New South Wales) who indicated, “I think there are pockets of excellence and there are also pockets of poor practice… I think the majority of students are satisfied with the quality of training they get.” Both indicate a patchiness in the efficacy of some providers over others, but the overall perception is a stronger system than a weaker one. There is an observation that VET addresses needs, but quality is potentially lacking.

As indicated, it is worth returning to Sally’s comment, that VET is “…providing a skillset more than the academic capability.” This comment is curious, as it refers to the achievement of VET to provide a skillset as opposed to an academic foundation. This could be explained by Sally’s reference to university influence and a resistance to collaboration that may impact academic rigour, as “universities are reluctant to look at the program and support transition [for students].” This is a reference to pathways predominantly and has implications for the way pathways are exercised for students of VET moving to university. This is discussed at length elsewhere in this chapter (see Section 6.5.1.4). On a macro level, when perceptively high-value institutions such as universities devalue the academic nature or transferability of VET qualifications, students, trainer and institutions may see little relevance in the value of academic rigour in VET. Where this is an objective of universities, it provides an opportunity to exercise power relations in the actions of
those who decide how credentials are authorised, even in light of the guidelines provided in the Australian Quality Training Framework.

Consider Sally’s comment in the context of power relations; a distinction between universities and TAFE or private RTOs is an indicator of the power of institutionalisation in the definition and relationship between the two. It relates to a perspective that universities have defined their academic value and sector status, which supersedes that of TAFE or RTOs. The same can be said for the boundaries between TAFE and secondary schools offering VET. Sally illustrates these boundaries and perceptions for us in her narrative on skills versus academic rigour. She describes a relationship and consequence of a perception of the value of qualifications handed out by these (different) institutions. Essentially, there is a perception of value (by an individual) of a qualification by a certain institution because they are a specific type of institution; to define a position of power. As a result, an ‘academic’ institution has the opportunity to exercise power to control another; Vocational Education providers, recipients of VET qualifications, or potentially industry as examples. Moreover, this describes a potential relationship between power and capital formation, in that within the exercise of power relations an institution controls the action that either issues or denies capital recognition for the individual who has obtained it.

Further to this, qualifications achieved at various levels have distinct connections to wages, job roles and in some cases, social status. There is a potential formation of power between the issuing institution and the holder of the ‘lesser’ qualification, especially when the bearer has limited opportunities to transfer a qualification to one with stronger value. This interaction between stakeholders
identifies a nexus between capital recognition, qualification and resultant certification and the opportunity afforded under legislation that is not recognised. In the context of capital, students are potentially denied their right for validation of their work and hence, human capital, access to appropriate social capital and opportunity to contribute to their economic capital.

6.5.1.2 Quality training

Quality training is the cornerstone of competency-based education. The introduction of the AQTF provided a framework for the assurance of quality, the implementation of which has been overseen by various organisations, but not without controversy. See Chapter 3 for a full discussion on the topic. Results in Phase 1 indicated a neutral response for VET offering qualifications at the expense of quality training. This theme developed in greater detail in Phase 2, confirming neutral indications though providing greater context.

On the matter of quality training, there were mixed reports from participants. Jane (TAFE, VIC) identified the complex nature of the private RTO sector, stating that whilst “there are some wonderful private RTOs that deliver incredible quality in their programs, and I have no hesitation in referring my clients to them.” On the other hand, Tony (Institution, Victoria) describes a lack of quality due to the time or investment in training. “It’s ‘This is the curriculum bang it out. Okay, you're done. Here’s your piece of paper’. And I think that's the problem at the moment, is that that quality is not being assessed in any way, shape or form.” For industry, this perception came through during interview with Gill (Industry, Victoria), who said, “There are a lot of providers out there who are not so committed, who are more about the money side of things.” Tess (Industry and RTO, New South Wales) had a similar opinion,
also indicating RTOs are not necessarily encouraging a positive learning culture, saying “I think because a lot of the cohort is only to get a certificate that gets them a job. It’s important to be encouraging a learning appetite but I don’t see it there in some of the RTOs. In fact, I see it squashed.” Hence, quality is wrapped up in an investment in training outcomes, quality of delivery and training experience.

Exploring these comments, on the macro level there is evidence of variability in quality outcomes, which supports the results in the previous section on training outcomes. The theme here is that whilst there are pockets of quality training, there is a perception that the balance of this sits with TAFE. Some private RTOs are providing quality training, but those that are not blemish the sector. Whilst cases agreed VET provides quality outcomes in Phase 1, Tony’s comment reasons that many VET providers are simply completing qualifications for the sake of completion rather than focusing on quality. The rationale for this is a lack of authority over the provision of VET to a particular standard. A possible implication of this was teased out by Tess, who said, “In my field of work, my teams have a huge responsibility for personal health and safety. We can’t afford to have half-baked people come in and working with us.” Where poor quality exists or there is a critical factor related to quality training, there are potentially significant implications for employers and students. There is a perception TAFE achieves this standard, but in the discourse, it does not seem substantially stronger than that of private RTOs. Further, there is potential relationship developing between quality training and capital formation, in that quality training has the potential to improve the skills of a person, creating a secure value proposition for work.
Jane zeros in on the private sector, identifying that, “industry is starting to recognise [a lack of investment] and not give people who have been trained in some private RTOs jobs, because they're aware that the training isn't as comprehensive as what’s delivered at TAFE.” It is worth remembering though, Jane had also indicated, “I don’t think we’re delivering anyway nearly as good as what we have done in the past,” which may undercut the value of the previous statement.

Tony provided a reflection of his experience with TAFE and an apprentice he employed. Tony stated, “[the apprentice] was finally qualified but I just felt that the training he was getting was inadequate because they were doing units of training but they could choose not to do particular units, and to me, that seems like not the right way to go about it.” Liam felt the system was generally outdated, saying “I was in TAFE for 25 years, I know it’s a very good system however, it’s a bit outdated,” though he does suggest broad success for VET. For the theme of quality training, these interviewees identify substantial issues for the sector. As private RTOs diminish the quality of training, less trust is placed in the VET sector overall. The implication is as substantial for TAFE; there is potential for poor practices to represent the entire sector and not remain localised to private RTOs. Further, being outdated may have an impact on the reputation of the sector to provide, no matter how ‘good’ it is in achieving outcomes. This is a problem for those who rely on the developed capital as a result of quality training, as it may impact their capacity to obtain work or participate in further training. Some indicated a level of acceptance for the situation, as if they are powerless to alter the outcome. For instance, whilst reflecting on the results of quality training from Phase 1, Tess said, “We’re doing good things, but I don’t think private VET providers want to create a future pathway for quality training, learning or development, which is really sad.” Jane also offered her insight,
specifically, “the investment needs to be put back into [the VET sector].” The question that is raised at this point, is how would this look, and who takes ultimate responsibility for the investment?

In summary, the neutral response of stakeholders in Phase 1 for the issuance of qualifications at the expense of quality has also been well illustrated by these comments. Tony highlights a potential relationship between issuance of qualifications and managing the quality of training. Management of quality training and choice of potentially easier units of competency are problematic given the requirements of the AQF and building trust with employers for quality employees. From a perspective of power relations, the systems of differentiation of TAFE and RTOs is becoming apparent, as are the forms of institutionalisation, such as legislation, policy, and certification, all of which are influenced by stakeholders.

6.5.1.3 Impacts of legislative change

The impact of legislative change is an issue that bubbled up from the data throughout its interrogation. It is characterised by comments made by interviewees that discuss a lack of trust in private RTOs and their practices that were a result of increased market share. This was because of a shift in policy that allowed them to receive funding for enrolment of students. It fits into the core objectives of VET, as it affected the very success of VET and external perceptions of success.

Public funding and financial investment in quality training is a theme that has risen from these comments by interviewees. They describe a sector that is more inclined to practise inappropriately and take advantage of policy than it is to ensure sustainability of the sector. Whilst this draws out implications for students and VET
sector relationships between stakeholders, it also creates issues for government. Contestability was a funding for enrolment arrangement brought about to increase student choice and improve the market offering in VET. The policy failure has caused substantial issues for students now seeking return of investment from government who paid fees through public loans. Recovery of the funds now becomes a problem for government. Furthermore, trust placed in government to provide solid educational options for the full range of people has potentially been undermined. The problem of expenditure and loss of trust in government has resulted as a consequence of creating an open and contestable market, which is an emerging political theme; the issue of government and open markets in education. Further, the situation raises a theoretical question; how does governmentality have a greater purpose and benefit in some cases when deregulation fails to provide suitable outcomes?

The nature of this question is wrapped up in the concept that on some level, governance of education is a control of the ‘species-body’. Governance, essentially policy, forces TAFE and those that work within it to provide a suitable service. A consequence of this closed market is a value proposition in that with guaranteed income TAFE has the potential to offer an appropriate training schedule, but less choice for students. When contestability is employed, as examined in Chapter 3, whilst choice does increase for some, entry-level and low value courses are squeezed out which has social and economic implications. Moreover, private RTOs that take advantage of the situation remove industry faith in the education provided. For instance, Jane discussed the issues experienced as a result of contestability arrangements. She said, “there have been many people disadvantaged by the system… because [the RTOs] make substantial profits from signing people up, not from successful completions or adequate training.” There is a notion that policy change has
an impact on low-skilled, low-income students who are now potentially faced with a substantial debt to the government for courses that are beyond their needs or in some cases, capabilities. This raises a question about the intentions of government in this situation; how do they benefit from this arrangement? Upfront funding, long-term economic impacts and education shortfalls, then, are a direct result of policy change. There is a direct relationship between policy and effect on the recipient of training, especially where the training fails to meet the objectives of policy.

In the context of power, legislation brings into play a strong example of power relations between the sectors. The period of time in which the policy changed was complex for TAFE having lost substantial funding (particularly in Victoria; this is discussed in Chapter 4). They could not compete with private RTOs providing expensive incentives to new students. Jane identified fragments of this power relations setting, in that, “the structure Government introduced allowed too many people to come in and rort the system for financial gain. As a result, there’ve been many people disadvantaged by being signed up to courses for which they are not suited.” Hence, policy change enacted by government influenced the success of TAFE, success of students and diminished quality training outcomes. Peter substantiated the issues between private and TAFE training by stating, “A lot of colleges are run privately, and I don’t think that the training is as good as it could be in comparison to when I did my training.” In Phase 1, a theme developed where industry consistently indicated lower mean scores for a number of questions that related to quality training and value for investment. One possible feature of this theme could be the substantiative fact that where RTOs influenced the successful training of students, industry lost faith in students, particularly those in a disadvantaged position.
Considering the idea raised that students are disadvantaged, there are equally substantial issues that relate to the issuance of qualifications at the cost of quality. The notion that quality training relates to the value of a qualification was raised previously; there are underlying complications for capital formation, value propositions by students to employers, and by industry for investment. It is possible to establish a relationship between the operation of government and the empirical implication of policy formation. For instance, Sue (Industry, New South Wales) illustrated a problem encountered with the State Training Authority (STA) in her local area. In her words, “my last two apprentices have had State Training pressure them to come to me, and State Training came to me as well, and said, ‘If you sign them off early, you’ll get two and a half thousand dollars for early completion.’ I said, ‘Yeah, but they’re not up to standard.’ The problem is that’s happening all over Australia.”

This is a challenging allegation which warrants further discussion, as the role of STA is to manage quality assurance of qualifications rather than offer financial incentive for early completion of qualifications. Further, what is the genuine benefit of early completion and how does this affect the STA? These questions may form the basis for investigation beyond this study, but the notion will be considered in response to understanding governmentality in VET in Chapter 7.

In summary, the potential impacts of legislative change are substantial. This theme is characterised by the relationship between quality outcomes and policy change, the impacts of governmentality and the ultimate potential need for control in some scenarios, and the impact policy change had on the perception of VET from the broader community. Moreover, it provided some evidence for the differences between industry and TAFE/RTO mean scores in Phase 1.
6.5.1.4 Pathways

Pathways relates to the continuation of schooling through the various sectors, some of which logically flow from completion of one to another, such as secondary school to university. For some students, VET provides substantial opportunities for upskilling at a very basic level, particularly for students leaving school early to continue training in the VET system. In Phase 1, a distinct theme was the success of pathways to further training and work. Participants reported lower mean values for established pathways to university. What has been identified through discourse on the topic is the impact deregulation had on course offerings and reduction of post-school options for those with less formal schooling or low skills. Also, whilst participants agreed there were valuable pathways from school to VET, there was some concern for the uptake and encouragement from schools for students to leverage this pathway.

One substantial aspect of VET is entry level course offerings. These are provided to ensure students with little formal education could improve their skills and knowledge and gain entry to higher-level courses both in VET and beyond. This forms a pathway from school to VET, for example. The nature of this is discussed in Chapter 3. One implication of contestability reported by participants is the change in these course offerings. Jane (TAFE, Victoria) reasoned that courses were stripped back due to profitability. She described the issue, stating “They’re the courses which are expensive to deliver so they are the ones that have been dropped off and because they’re expensive to deliver, the private providers aren’t interested in taking them up. They’re only interested in the ones which are cheap to deliver that they get a great profit from.” She went on to suggest how this can be tackled, stating, “We need to have restoration of the pathway courses, the certificates in general education which
are filling in gaps for people who leave school at an early age.” These comments reference two issues, (a) a focus on profitability, particularly for private RTOs, reducing offering of courses with a high-cost-low-return value; and (b) for students who leave school early, VET is a less attractive educational option.

On the issue of profitability, there is a relationship to contestability; the implications of which have been established. The theme of impact on the sector due to this policy decision incorporates a vast number of complexities, now adding profitability influencing choices to deliver particular courses, limiting pathway options for students. Further, this starts to develop a theme for capital, particularly economic and human capital. Course delivery options becoming more limited reduces potential for people with low initial capital from formal schooling to improve and broaden their capital. This may have broad implications for long-term economic success, ongoing educational improvement and at a base level, job prospects.

Consider Jane’s comments regarding courses offered that are highly profitable with little long-term job prospects. During interview, she highlighted, “the number one question that I’m asked by prospective students looking at careers pathway is, ‘I want something that will get me a job,’ or, ‘Will this path course lead me to a job?’ And that's not the case in all of the areas.” Deregulation of university enrolments was also discussed. Jane recognised a high number of university enrolments caused difficulties for students seeking certification without appropriate market conditions to support it. Jane stated, “I’m really against universities being able to uncap numbers because when you look at disciplines like law and journalism, they train huge numbers of students and there’s only jobs for about 20 or 30 percent of people in those professions.”
One question that could be asked is what objective is this trying to achieve? First, is it an objective of the government to remove expensive and low-value courses from TAFE? Second, what is the long-term implication of such a decision? Also, what are the implications for an increased rate of certification, and what is the impact on capital? In the context of power, of profitability targets illustrate how objectives influence actions, but it is unknown what this specific objective is; furthering understanding of this point is beyond the scope of this study, although it is potentially valuable. This may help to illustrate how power relations are being brought into being between stakeholders and sectors, and the influence profitability has on training offerings and outcomes.

Support of VET as a pathway from school was identified as an area of concern for Mike, who stated, “it’s perceived by schools not necessarily being a primary choice or a destination after the HSC [in New South Wales] or for those that leave school a little bit earlier, and you know therefore that flows over probably into parents perceptions as well.” Further, he identified “students don’t necessarily see VET as a desirable option and often do VET because it’s generally seen as attached to an apprenticeship or traineeship, for example.” Tess stated, “I think VET has become a means to an end.” Constance, however, saw a more long-term picture for those who do take up VET during school as part of the HSC and transition to further VET training. She said, “I can’t speak highly enough of what VET does for the child, or just it may not be initially now, but it could be in five years’ time; VET has contributed to their future.” This is a powerful observation that considers a more sustainable pathway implication. Consequently, whilst there is concern for the appeal of VET as an option for students, those engaged in VET have the potential for a more sustainable long-term journey.
In a more generalist sense, Finn (RTO, New South Wales) stated, “in general VET doesn’t provide any effective pathways. It is not effective in training people at competence, neither is it effective in giving them career pathways.” The conversation that ensued focused on implicating employers not invested in supporting strong VET pathways. Further, it was Finns’ perspective that employers are placing undue expectations on TAFE and RTOs to deliver extremely high standards for industry, without considering their responsibility. This complex position offers some context for the theme of pathways, but in a fairly isolated context. In the framework of analysing power relations, employers are potentially implicated as enforcing their objective of cost control and expectations on the VET sector, whilst not offering sufficient training, support and career pathways to students.

Additional matters were identified through the course of analysis that illustrate this theme. For instance, Jane raised the issue of courses being offered despite a lack of demand in the job market. Whether this is a consequence of providers enticing people into courses or a misinterpretation of participants seeking courses to fulfil jobs that do not exist needs to be examined. It may also be a consequence of providers offering courses with substantial attraction that participants are willing to pay top dollars for because of the appeal. Jane describes the issue of lack of demand in nursing, stating,

for years we were being told about a skill shortage in nursing which is absolutely true. But it was the skill shortage for people in division one nursing that have got the Bachelor of Nursing. So we were getting lots of people coming in wanting to do the diploma of nursing, being qualified as a division two nurse, thinking that there’s huge demand but
finding that there wasn't huge demand and then being very, very
confused when they say, “We were told that there were lots of job so
that gave me confidence to do it and now I’m struggling to get a job and
I can’t get one.”

Where lack of demand is a reality, capital formation has economic
consequences. There is a potential real difference between return on investment in
capital for the student, servicing a debt with little prospects for income. The specifics
of the policy arrangement create further complexities, such as income thresholds,
which need to be substantiated. Furthermore, the effects impact governments where,
in the instance of FEE-HELP and HECS, repayment thresholds are higher than
potential income levels and as a result, debt for education will not be recovered.

Further to this, Jane described a well-known saturation of fitness instructors
being trained despite the over population of qualified people. Specifically, she noted,

[RTOs are] saying, “You can have a career as a fitness instructor that's
wonderful.” Well, yeah! It is a wonderful career but at the moment
because we've got these private organisations making it look sexy and
all the rest of it, we've got a 2000 per cent excess of personal trainers
than there are places out there.

Whilst the figures are exaggerated, this continues to develop a clearer picture
of the issues plaguing VET. Finn (RTO, New South Wales), talking to the
complexities of work placement, describes a situation where placement is a struggle
because of the requirements for a large number of hours. Work placement
implications are fleshed out later in this chapter; however, the difficulty in this
context resides with a constant battle with university. Their numbers of enrolment are
uncapped, they obtain preference for work placement, and the value proposition for qualification through a university is higher. These factors impact TAFE in their ability to successfully train and ensure valuable skills are being transferred to students. Hence, an over saturation of qualifications in a market without buoyancy to support them has implications for training, employment and returns on capital investment. Further, uncapped enrolments in universities has implications for setting a precedence for higher education in all sectors.

Participants talked little about specific pathways from VET to university. Jane (TAFE, Victoria) did identify university pathways from VET exist, stating, “vocationally based education also has pathways into academic education, either in the VET system as an Advance Diploma or bachelor’s degrees, or similarly in higher education.” If these pathways do exist, there may be a lack of clarity of them, or a lack of understanding as to how they are applied.

To summarise, the theme of pathways between sectors and stages of education is characterised by a number of factors. Pathways are affected by contestability in the sense that courses offered have shifted, which seems to have affected low-skilled and entry level courses the most. Those with low profitability have also been impacted, but this has caused a potential saturation of courses that have low market demand, high appeal and are highly profitable. These issues are continually filling out the context of power relations in that clear boundaries are being drawn between the different systems that exist. Further, there are a range of possible objectives that need clarification, and the actions of those acting on some move obvious objectives have become increasingly apparent. These are particularly noticeable in the actions of private RTOs given legislative change. Legislation is the foremost means of bringing
power into play, but this is also becoming apparent through control and public perception; for instance, perception of value. Implications for the formation of capital have become visible in this theme, particularly in saturation of capital through over education and certification, increased enrolment numbers and an increase in costs associated with training. Many of these characteristics substantiate results in Chapter 5, others provide more detail as to the differences between stakeholders whilst some allow for consideration of new ideas.

6.5.1.5 VET in Schools

Phase 1 results indicate institutions reported lower mean scores than TAFE for the perception of success of VET. There was substantial consistency in this opinion by TAFE; a number of results were different to a statistically significantly degree. Many of these were between TAFE and industry, though some were found between TAFE/RTOs and institutions.

Little was offered in interview by participants. Only three participants offered to comment about VET in Schools, including Liam, Constance and Mike. Constance is affiliated with the institution case, where Mike represents the TAFE sector. Liam represents a private RTO, but has a background in TAFE, too. Other participants either were unable to comment, or provided no illustration of the relationship between VET, VET in Schools and the objectives of VET for students.

In support of VET in Schools, Constance (Institutions, New South Wales) said, “I've just seen them go from strength to strength. Whether it’s TAFE or university, I don't have kids coming from VET in Schools sitting on the couch in the Centrelink queue. It's really powerful.” Her perspective is that VET, particularly in
schools, contributes to strong outcomes for students. This has positive implications for capital formation, particularly human and economic capital, but also for potentially improving cross-sector relationships. As students gain a better understanding of the prospects of a VET qualification and foundation to further study and work, there is a greater opportunity to improve interactions across sectors and between stakeholders.

Constance (Institutions, New South Wales) described her experience working in a school with teachers who were, in her words, “anti-VET”, and identified the impact this perspective had on the student experience. It describes a possible substantiation for the discourse between TAFE, RTOs and schools, captured in survey results and elsewhere in this phase. Constance said, “I'm stuck in a school with two colleagues who are very anti-VET; they’re teaching it, keeping up the qualifications, but very anti-VET.” She continued, “[the teachers I work with are] almost negatively saying ‘there's no point to this anymore, there's no point’, and then that came out in the way they delivered.” Their commentary illustrates two points. First, a particular narrative within schools on VET and the impact this has on the student experience. There is a relationship developing between discourse on the institution of VET and delivery of VET; foremostly a description of the impact on outcomes and second an exemplification of how the objectives of others, whether external or internal, influence actions and as a result, bring power relations into play. This is further evidenced in Constance revealing she had been told regularly, “the true teachers were from Teachers College, and even though there are teachers like me with industry knowledge and training that could teach beyond VET, that's all we should teach.” This illustrates the divide between the sectors and substantiates the force by which power is brought into play within institutions. Even Liam, who speaks from the
perspective of TAFE and RTOs, said, “high school teachers do not have currency of skills. Some of them wouldn’t even know what a workplace was.” Throughout the interview, it was his perspective that particularly high school teachers had little business participating in VET, and that only industry trained teachers should be teaching VET. The potential implication is for the isolation of VET as an institution, fuelling power relations between sectors.

Second, the teachers’ perspective has the potential to impact outcomes for students; there is a prospective implication for those who initiate such a narrative. The effect is broadened in the context of the interview with Constance, in that it also affects her as a teacher in the same system. This relates to the empirical notion of the success of VET and quality teaching and learning experience. One potential reasoning is the perception of TAFE and their position of as a VET provider is possibly influencing the perspective of secondary school teachers; they perceive there is no place for VET in schools as VET is offered in TAFE. In turn, this affects their teaching and dealings with colleagues. The external narrative potentially fuels this action. This complex interaction informs the second issue that has risen from Constance’s commentary. It highlights the power TAFE and the narrative of VET has on the perception of value. This was discussed previously in the context of power relations and qualifications. The evidence of narrative to create a perspective that has implications for power is strong; the anti-VET perspective has developed from somewhere. These are the objectives of others being brought to action by the actions of others. To illustrate, the greater narrative fuels the actions of these teachers. The teachers had become accepting of their position but frustrated with the influence of VET on their educational status quo. As a result, they fed their frustration back into the system and onto the teachers they were working with. The question is, what is that
objective? And, could this impact students? These actions, the narrative and objectives are a building block for bringing power relations into play, in that by constructing a (potentially public) perception that one provider has more power in the sector than another, it could assign more power to that institution to influence policy.

6.5.1.6 Summary

In summary, a number of observations can be made of the themes established in this domain. For quality training in VET, whilst there is some verification of success in the VET industry, there is still an identification of poor practice taking place. Much of this relates to the success of the private RTO sector, though there is some evidence that the quality of TAFE training has declined, too. TAFE and RTO respondents continue to have a more supportive view of VET, with TAFE more strongly representing the TAFE sector over RTOs explicitly. Industry feels there is more work to be done in most areas. They also report quality is lacking across VET. There is some indication industry lacks investment in the success of VET.

There is an obvious need to examine the success of VET in the context of outcomes for learners, as this was beyond the scope of this study. Some subjective comments were made to the idea that students are happy with VET outcomes, though greater investigation is required. Sector contestability and funding has been highlighted and clearly poses complex outcomes for all VET stakeholders. Course profitability is a significant aspect of this complexity. Quality provision and assurance of training and certification was identified as a substantial issue. Some participants identified key characteristics of what quality training should look like, whilst a saturation of certification in various job market sectors is causing issues for employability.
The influence of university to accept VET transitional opportunities could have an influence on outcomes and academic rigour, increasing focus on skill development. Pathways between VET and the workplace were well illustrated, with some issues highlighted for students, particularly in low-skilled or under-educated positions. The implications of these will be examined more closely in Chapter 7.

TAFE participants demonstrated a more positive perspective on the outcomes of VET, whilst industry tended to be more cautious. This is consistent with a theme acknowledged in Phase 1 where TAFE/RTOs reported higher mean scores and more positively in some situations compared to other cases. There is some evidence in validation to the claims of TAFE/RTOs in Phase 1, in that their more positive view could be substantiative. There are possible implications for the place of VET in secondary education and the objectives as they relate to the actions of others. There are further potential implications for the impact on student choice and value of qualifications. Though it is beyond the scope of this study, it may be pertinent to establish what influence various narratives have on the institution of VET.

In relation to the theoretical aspects of the study, interviewees started to illustrate the boundaries of institutionalisation in VET. Predominantly, this is contextualised in the system of differentiations, where stakeholder groups have been established as a requirement for the relationship of power to exist. In practice, through interview each participant contextualises their speech from the perspective of the sector from which they speak. Also, there is a deeper notion of the actions of those acting on the objectives of others, and the implication of these actions on stakeholders and the sector more broadly. Legislation, control and the actions of others feature as a means for bringing power relations into being. This is evidenced through the act of
attitude and the action of power as a result of perspective. An example of institutionalisation is embodied as the core of VET itself; an educational framework that has potentially divided the further and tertiary education sectors in two. Legislation, too, forms an important facet of this institution, but is in its own right a form of institutionalisation, as political policy shapes legislation that has the power to divide or merge the sector. Each of these will be examined further in Chapter 7.

The macro-theme of the core objectives of VET has delivered a number of deep understandings and clarifications for Phase 1. It has also brought some new issues to light, which have been presented. The next section deals with the topic of work placement and the themes within it.

6.5.2 Theme 2: Work placement

Exploration of work placement in Phase 1 identified issues for access and quality of placement, the nexus of skill, knowledge and competency development, time requirements and various options for work placement. As these issues were discussed in interview in Phase 2, the key messages revealed include

- a need for quality placements matched to the needs of students, particularly those with special needs;
- the use of work placement students as cheap labour, and the high costs of providing placements for employers;
- industry reluctance to take students;
- improved access to placements, especially for rural students and those who face economic hardship as a result and strengthening of relationships between industry and VET providers;
• the need for a variety of placement types; and

• employer expectations of students on placement, particularly their skills and capabilities.

These key messages provide detail for the themes in Phase 1 and others that have risen from this data. There are also highlights throughout the data that help to clarify aspects of power relationships, governmentality and capital formation.

6.5.2.1 Nature of work placement

The purpose of work placement is to provide a quality, work-ready experience for students. This incorporates critical features, such as quality of the placement, fit of employer and appropriate activities whilst on placement. Work placement is more common for school-based students, though it is still a requirement of all students that a number of hours of work placement are completed. The specific number are determined by the training package being undertaken, and the certificate level they are pursuing.

For Gill (Industry, New South Wales), she explored a successful work placement experience she managed, saying,

What I found works best was when I was managing a traineeship program with Woolworths to schedule group discussion times across Australia for the various small groups to get together and do their group work, and we also got them to timetable into the schedule, the times that our trainers where there so the students were actually removed from the warehouse for an hour or two of their time to actually participate in their training, and that was the most successful program that I’ve ever had.
Tess (Industry and RTO, New South Wales) felt communication was critical. She said, “So, I think organisation and communication with institutions has stopped it. I think the good RTOs are still forming good communication with the organisations but without it, it’s a shamble.” Sally (Industry, Queensland) concurred, stating, “If we planned it out from the beginning to the end, I feel we would get more industry engagement.”

Finn (RTO, New South Wales) described how critical work placement is for students to be work-ready by the end of the qualification. “If they’re not already working in the industry, it’s almost impossible to manage their expectations of the industry. As a result, they’re not suited for the work and they don’t last six months at the job,” he said. This verifies the importance of placement, which is a current requirement, but implicates the need for more consistent and high-quality placements. It may also validate that work placement provides critical skills, but time requirements are inadequate, indicated in the results of Phase 1.

Tony (Institution, Victoria) found there was a lack of support for students with special needs accessing placement, particularly when it came to employers of best fit for the student. He said, “we discovered employers that we’re not able to give the right kind of support to students with special needs in work placement and couldn’t match the students with the right employers.”

In summary, quality work placement is characterised by an appropriate site, engaged employer, good organisation and good communication. As Kyra noted, “[students] need meaningful, authentic work opportunities where they can apply and test and re-calibrate their learning.” This is especially true for students with special needs, for which there is an indication this is not achieved. The outcomes experienced
by students are that they need to be better informed about the industry they are pursuing and more capable as employees. Further, it is indicated that well managed placements and purposeful organisation improves outcomes, such as the example with Woolworths. For the context of power, the contention between industry and VET providers indicates that to a certain degree, industry holds the balance of power over providers. Industry can more easily without repercussions enforce their preferences, perspectives and expectations of work placement students, with limited investment. VET students will still take up VET as an option for education, and VET practitioners are still required to approach industry on their terms for fulfilling the requirements of the training package. The full implication of this power relationship could provide a rationale for the interactions of stakeholders. Especially given the influence of legislation, political expectations for success in VET and the need for quality workers exiting VET.

Further, this issue provides a perspective for capital, in that where quality programs in work placement fail to fully provide for students, there are deficits in the development of human and economic capital. For students, the value of their qualification and experience lacks; they are not “work ready”, as indicated by a number of interviewees. Ironically, the lower the investment from the perspective of employers, the greater the deficit in the qualified employees they want. This has an economic impact for employers.

6.5.2.2 Cheap labour; high costs

An issue that was revealed was industry using work placement as a pipeline for free labour. For instance, Kyra (RTO, New South Wales) expressed that work placement is, “often seen by industry as an opportunity for free labour, whereas the
student requires it as part of their learning.” Gill offered that some employers were
great with students, whilst others “who are just in it for the money or savings; those
ones are the problem.” This could validate industry expectations for greater frequency
of work placement, indicated in Phase 1.

From the perspective of industry, Peter (Industry, Queensland) identified the
complexities of having young students with limited skills on site. He said,

They go out to site and are treated as cheap labour and all they do is
clean the floor or clean up after the guys on the saw bench. We have
apprentices that do the cabinetmaking trade as well and we start
[students] off working with one of the guys on the bench and learning
how to use the equipment, how to actually physically assemble a
cupboard and also learning how to clean up, but you can’t put them to
work at a big site.

This highlights an issue with sending students with low work-ready skills.
Without the skills, they have a greater potential to do menial tasks that limit the
breadth of their learning. But to that end, not providing quality training to students
and relying on them to do the basic, low skilled work, may not be in line with the
needs of the training packages. This is an example of industry bringing power
relations into play, as they exercise their power over the schools (primarily) and
TAFE/RTOs that send work placement students to them. They are inflicting a certain
perspective on the student in their attempt to illustrate their disapproval of the student
capabilities, which may be more a responsibility of the school than the student;
Constance illustrates this in a later theme.
This is further illustrated in a discussion with Jane (TAFE, Victoria). She spoke about the expectations of industry, specifically, “we’ve somehow transitioned into a new phase. Industry used to train people, but now they say, “No, that costs money so we’re going to be putting all those expectations on the TAFE and we’re going to be giving them unrealistic expectations as well so we can complain that students aren't coming through with appropriate skills and TAFE’s not training them appropriately.” Industry relies on students with quality skills, but it is reported that students are not appropriately competent before they attend work placement. Though on the other hand, industry is not as invested in training young people, because of the economic cost.

On this, participants indicated that industry found it costly to provide placements for students. Finn (RTO, New South Wales) indicated, “the employers don’t want to participate because of cost to them, so they just won’t take people.” Kyra (RTO, New South Wales) indicated, “[industry doesn’t] allow the student time to do their training, they don’t provide the on-the-job support that they need, they don’t support them in achieving the actual desired outcomes and it becomes very difficult.” Legislative requirements, such as a Certificate II qualification, and required base pay rates for those who have completed the qualification, cause issues. For Liam, this was exemplified by an experience in engineering. “TAFE Victoria have been producing students who are qualified at Certificate II and they have to be paid third year wages, and employers are saying, “Go away. They are not work-ready,” he said. This could illustrate two issues. First, that the requirements for Certificate II qualified students to be paid at a higher rate is unreasonably increasing industry costs. Second, it may be that industry would be willing to pay the money if student skills were
appropriately reflective of the money they were going to be paid. This speaks to the value of work placement students, but also to the expectations of industry.

In summary, whilst there is a sense of success for work placement, the student experience is lacking, either because they are taken as cheap labour or the investment into their training is limited. There is a strong implication for capital, particularly human capital and cultural capital. For human capital, this is a valuable opportunity for students to learn quality skills rather than be used as a cheap labourer for a period of time. It is also a worthwhile experience in understanding the industry they are pursuing, and without valuable contact with industry tradespeople and an opportunity to learn, this may be a missed experience.

To the costs of work placement, whilst it may be an increased expense to the employer, from a longer-term perspective, these students could be their future employees. This assertion was made by Tess, who said, “It gives the student the opportunity to put into practise what they’ve studied, and it gives the workplace an opportunity to sample the quality of the perspective, perhaps employee.” With the right training and environment, the student may see it as a strong employment opportunity, and it gives the employer a complete picture of the capabilities of that person. The implication is that for the theme, work placement may be a value proposition for both student, and employer.

A strong theme that has come through thus far is the notion that for industry, students should be work-ready from the outset. This trend will be monitored for consistency in other themes.
6.5.2.3  

**Reluctance to take students**

When asking about the opportunity use work placement as a learning experience, Tess indicated, “I think that there are some workplaces that are very reluctant to take on students in a work placement capacity and I think that’s very sad because I think it’s a two-way street. It gives the student the opportunity to put into practise what they’ve studied, and it gives the workplace an opportunity to sample the quality of the perspective, perhaps employee.” Whilst this quote also features in the discussion on high costs to employers, it provides some insight into the idea that there is a mutual benefit in work placement for students and employers. There is also potential validation for trainers in the skills and knowledge they are providing. However, the constant negative feedback from industry illustrated in the discourse of this study could be damaging the value proposition for schools, TAFE and RTOs, whether intentional or not.

TAFE reported that often industry expectations of them were far greater than warranted. But Constance felt it was on the teachers to be sure students were ready. She said, “The main thing I will say is if the quality of your child going out is really bad, it’s the teacher’s fault for sending them when they’re not work-ready.” The reliance is on the employer to provide a quality work placement and be willing to take them on, especially as they are benefiting from the outcome. For Constance, she sympathises with the employers, stating, “if the employers are saying, ‘No, no, bad experience, don't have time for this, don't have the patience, terrible kid,’ well, that's back on the school, and I know that it's a contentious issue, but this has been one of those arguments we’ve had in the ballroom at our big meetings.” The sectors disagree on the issue, but it illustrates how the expectations of each sector differ, and the
impact that has on the outcome for students, VET RTOs and institutions and industry. The requirement to take students is written into legislature, but reluctance is potentially tied to sector expectations and perspectives. Additionally, declining apprenticeship numbers (as examined in Chapter 2) may be a consequence of the challenges of working with difficult employers and in complex environments. Further, there are implications for power relations, in that the legislation brings power relations into being. It is challenging to extrapolate the objectives that are trying to be achieved, especially due to the relationship between quality work placements and quality employees. By breaking down the institution of work placement and subsequently, VET, there is a possible consequence of long-term shortfall in trained employees to fulfil sector requirements.

The reluctance to take students for work placement creates potential issues of access. To illustrate, Jane (TAFE, Victoria) explained,

The problem is with meeting industry needs in nursing. We can train more people to meet industry demands but there aren’t the placements available in industry to meet the course requirements. It can be really, really hard for our nursing students to get the required placements.

Tess provided a similar experience, however in this case it was tied to student selectiveness for the RTO they train with. She said, “I know that now, for our course, it’s a lot more hours of work placement experience and that the places are getting harder and harder to find. So, people will be quite selective about the RTOs that they're going to use.” As a consequence, RTOs with better connections may attract more students. In the same way, RTOs with better training regimes may attract better students, and hence achieve higher quality outcomes. It is a perpetual cycle that is
self-serving. This may have consequences for new RTOs trying to enter the system, and for the improved quality of the VET system as a whole.

Sally indicated that students need to be more accountable to the experience, “There’s a reluctance from the employers to take the students but then, there also needs to be more accountability from the students to get outside their comfort zones and have to do some of these things themselves. Sometimes, students are putting up excuses that aren’t always reality. So, there’s a bit on both sides.” Sue (Industry, New South Wales) states “[we sometimes get] schoolwork experience students, but very rarely do they turn up.” The lack of commitment from students is a substantial concern. The question is whether they realise the greater potential of a good impression on the workplace, the benefit of creating career networks, and the overall benefits of work placement. This undermines the trust of the employer and may put pressure on the institutions that organise work placements.

Mike (TAFE, New South Wales) stated, “I think what’s worked well in my experience is where there are work placement co-ordinators that work over the whole sector in a particular regional area”. Constance (Institutions, New South Wales) agreed, finding brokers for work placement helped. She said,

Having a broker manage the relationship takes a ridiculous amount of time, but it works. But I can definitely tell you depending on where your school is, it’s a struggle. I had to eventually work with the broker that was based out of [a distant region]. And every time I came across a new café, I would just send them the business card through the email, and let them know we needed them, and how to contact us.
On one hand, the brokers made the relationships better, but it still requires extra work for the trainers to manage that relationship and obtain placements through, or beyond, the brokers. This has potential implications for the institutions, in that their staff are also working externally to manage placement opportunities for students, whilst needing to maintain a high level of standards for teaching. Constance also said, “it's very much about not just being this needy teacher who says, “Oh, well, it's the brokers responsibility, it's got nothing to do with me.” No, it's a complete triangle relationship, school, broker and industry, in the end.” This validates the necessity teachers feel to build this relationship between broker, school and employer.

To summarise, a reluctance to provide work placement opportunities may be as substantially detrimental to the employer as it is to the student. The implications are a reduced capacity, less control over the outcome of students and lower investments into capital formation of young people. To a degree, it may be a case of employers exercising a level of control over providers, though there is no specificity for one provider over another. There are illustrations of power relations in the actions of industry, but it is unclear what the objectives are given that the benefits to employers seems to outweigh the risks. Risks for work placement seem to include costs to the employer and poorly skilled students. It is clear though there is a differentiation between what employers expect and how TAFEs, schools and RTOs believe they should be operating, and how this affects industry. In this theme, there is a relationship between reluctance and capital, particularly in the notion that with greater investment, industry has a greater potential to benefit from the formation of a strong workforce.
6.5.2.4 Improving access

Access to placements was only a minor issue considered in Phase 1, though substantial detail rose from the data in Phase 2. The discourse of interview in this question is mainly focussed on access arrangements, whilst in Phase 1 the context of placement access was primarily between schools and businesses, in terms of the connections. What rose from the data focused more on the student’s ability to travel to the workplace. Some detail was focused on the connections and access in terms of numbers. Whether the additional data was a consequence of a communication issue was not established, though the data collected seems to have some level of value to the overall study. The core messages indicated as a result of this question were

- concerns related to access and connections with industry for RTOs, which was also reported neutrally by TAFE/RTOs and institutions in Phase 1;
- in this context access was also based on location and ability to travel;
- particular requirements for students with special needs; and
- the benefits of a program that existed to bus students from one school to another improving access to courses with low numbers, that has since been removed.

Each of these themes have been detailed by interviewees. Institutionalisation in work placement is a substantial factor in the organisation of it is governed at a high level through group brokers, whilst operationally it is managed locally. Single poor experiences can be enough to inflict change on entire providers and their work placement needs, which has implications for bringing power relations into being, and actions on the objectives of others.
It was indicated that industry relationships and a need for improved communication between sectors was important. For Tess, it is specifically between industry and institutions, in that relationships have not been nurtured. She said, “I think RTOs that are providing quality training are working on improved communication with industry, and they’ve certainly been looked after.” Constance (Institutions, New South Wales) talked about a need to communicate with employers and keep the relationship nurtured. This was discussed in relation to the need for employers to take on more work placement students, but it is equally relevant to providing access. In her words, “you need to walk in there, and you need to establish a relationship with the employer.” In this context, some of the employers who participated in interviews were unable to shed light on work placement relationships, stating they hadn’t been asked to be involved. Sally, working in industry, said it’s often easier to setup the relationship for graduate students than VET students. She said, “We’ve just started training graduates, but it’s easy to manage their work replacement. [Employers] want it and we want it. It’s just easier.” This describes a potential relationship between a need for sound communication and valued interactions within industry can help build greater access to work placements. As previously discussed, this may improve the reluctance for employers to take on placements.

Access, in a literal sense, is also a problem for students and providers. Mike (TAFE, New South Wales) provides an example of his context, identifying the substantial issue for the ratio of students to available workplaces. He states,

we probably have 15 students here doing automotive as part of a VET course, as part of the HSC, we only have one automotive workshop in
town, and so the opportunities for students to get work placement, in this
town, is essentially non-existent. You cannot have one employer

   servicing 15 students for two weeks of work placement every year each.

   For students, they often have to travel to other locations to access placements,
which can be complex and expensive. Mike goes on to say that, “It’s a real challenge
because that requires those students to either find accommodation over there… There
are a number of students here that could really benefit for example from going to
Canberra where there are plenty of opportunities for that work experience, so we need
some sort of support mechanism for those students”. For Constance (Institutions, New
South Wales), the greatest problem is “is transport for the child in a remote area who
would not be old enough for a licence or can’t afford a car. In some cases, there are
no public buses. [Inner Sydney], though, is amazing. You can just put a kid on a bus,
and they can get anywhere.” The disparity between remote locations and access to
placements is a substantial consideration for success of work placement. Inequity for
some students means long days, complex arrangements or economic impacts. For
Jane (TAFE, Victoria), “I think there needs to be very strong arrangements with
industry when it comes to placements that students have got a pathway where they
can be confident that they're going to be getting that placement.”

   Specifically, on the economic impacts to students, Jane spoke about the
financial pressure it puts on young families if parents are retraining or completing
education whilst working. She said, “obviously [work placement] has financial and
social implications where they've got young families of their own to be looking after
and they're having to hold down jobs and things like that to get by.” Hence, where
students are unable to get local placements to complete courses with mandatory work
placement hours, there may need to be a more suitable, and equitable, option for access.

Returning to a previous issue recognised in the need for quality placements, Tony explored an issue for access to placement for students with special needs. He discussed the need for employers to be more empathetic, stating,

What we found was that we needed to have in-depth conversation with the employers and management of the organisation we were placing students for work placement in, so that they understood the requirements of work placement, the skill level and capability of the students and what the outcome of placement would be for both the employer and the students. And in that way, we discovered employers that we’re not able to give the right kind of support to students with special needs in work placement…

The issue of students with special needs is quite real and whilst not a core focus of this study, has broader implications for engaging with employers in work placement. It further implies a need for greater equity amongst students.

In sum, evidence shows a need for valuable experiences that builds student learning. Stakeholders all indicated relationships between industry and providers are critical to the success of work placement. Special needs students need to be accommodated and industry needs specific training in these areas. Access for rural students and better support for those who would face economic hardship as a result of accessing rural placements was raised as a substantial issue.
The power relations context is the illustration of work placement as an institutionalisation of policy. In this way, there is an element of power for (a) access as it relates to the ability for students to utilise the system; and (b) institutions to navigate the complexities of relationship management and organising placements.

The themes discussed in this section also have a potential relationship to capital, in that these students are being trained in a field where there is no local work. For these students, their return on investment is potentially lower than those who work in bigger cities. Further, they are more likely to have to move to a location where they can get work, which can be more costly than staying in their current location. These are issues worthy of deeper consideration.

6.5.2.5 Summary

Throughout the themes, the most common feature of discourse were the relationships between industry expectations and the reality for TAFE, RTOs and institutions. Amongst this, there are indications that industry is reluctant to take on students, given a range of factors such as poor experiences, missed expectations and the breakdown of relationships. Industry also expects greater contact hours and wants students with greater work-ready skills from the outset. This expectation is reliant on teachers to have the skills that can transfer to students in training. It also relies on appropriate timing, something which is not always afforded in the HSC particularly. In an unrelated matter, there is a potential implication for the requirements of VET in Schools as part of the HSC as an impediment on the success of students. This form of VET requires students to complete all competencies, including work placement, by a specific time. This is non-characteristic of VET beyond schools.
The issue of power relations was identified in the relationships between sectors, particularly how the objectives of industry influence power relations. These are exemplified in the uptake of placements, willingness to provide quality placements (especially given the return they stand to receive), and in their use of work placement of students as cheap labour. The legislative expectation for VET students to complete an element of work placement puts pressure on this power relationship, as it becomes a necessity without a real solution. This is explored further in Chapter 7. The means of bringing power relations into play is embodied in this legislation, however. It is the requirement to complete that puts employers in a position to either provide and ensure successful completion, or potentially force students to re-do the qualification; sometimes this may not be the fault of the student, but a personal objective of the employer. This needs greater investigation and understanding to rationalise.

There is a potential relationship between capital and the value and quality of work placement. Work placement is a potential contributor to human capital formation and has the potential to either deplete or enhance an economic situation for students. For depletion, it is a complex reality that for some students, access is a substantial issue in the success of work placement. In the context of enhancing their economic status, students can also find long-term employment and build valuable relationships with work placement providers. For human capital, it is a valuable opportunity for students to gain skills and knowledge.

Across these themes, there is a number of issues raised and clarified. The next section deals with apprenticeship and presentation of the results of interview.
6.5.3 Theme 3: School and non-school based Apprenticeships and Traineeships

At the outset, this section focussed on school-based apprenticeships, though as the interviews evolved, a number of issues were teased out on apprenticeship in general. Some discussion took place for school-based options, though these were somewhat limited given the TAFE/RTO perspective and that industry contacts had experienced little contact with VET in Schools in many cases. This is not a limitation, as it adds value to the data given the broader scope of discussion. There are implications for School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SBAT), as students who start an SBAT arrangement would often go on to complete the apprenticeship post-school. The core results presented include

- employer commitment to the apprentice or trainee where that relationship is not focused on financial gain or savings;
- outcomes associated to growth, especially when there are political pressures to increase SBAT numbers; and
- examples of experiences with students, with mixed results.

These themes characterise school and non-school based apprenticeships and traineeships, providing some insight into the topic and theoretical aspects of this study.

6.5.3.1 Employer commitment

Employer commitment was a substantial feature of discourse with interviewees. For employers, there seemed to be little understanding of what VET in Schools is, or how apprenticeship was managed by schools. There was little discussion from many of the interviewees. Mike (TAFE, New South Wales) indicated
that many employers misunderstood the purpose of VET. He said that in his dealings with employers, most indicated, “VET is generally attached to an apprenticeship or traineeship.” Liam (RTO, Queensland) indicated similarly, in that he didn’t appreciate the needs of VET in Schools students over VET apprenticeship students, saying, “I just want to know where that comes from, work placement, because that is not common to normal apprenticeship training.” For Constance (Institutions, New South Wales), a lack of knowledge of the system impacted numbers. She indicated, “So we didn’t end up having enough opportunities for kids doing school-based apprenticeships simply because of the lack of knowledge.” The language of any institution may influence its success by appropriate communication of intention. By not understanding the needs of all VET students, there is a greater potential to create greater barriers between the sectors. This extends to a lack of knowledge of the availability of the SBAT program. Further, it can affect power relations as the objectives and actions of one can be due to misinformation. This could lead to ill formed systems of differentiation and poor enactment of legislation.

For Gill (Industry, Victoria), she observed that some employers are committed to apprenticeship. She said, “Some employers are committed and want their trainees and apprentices to achieve their outcomes and particular traineeships.” But, she did state that the majority of problems stem from employer commitment, saying, “you have the other employers who are just in it for the money and those are the problems because they don’t allow the trainee time to do their training, they don’t provide the on-the-job support they need, they don’t support them in achieving the actual desired outcomes.” From the outside, there is little potential for a student, TAFE, RTO or school to know which falls into a particular category. As a result, the student experience could be substantially affected. This may have some relationship to
apprenticeship success. This highlights a potential concern for capital investment of industry; where they are committed only to receiving funding, are they actually investing in the development of the student and future employee or tradesperson?

6.5.3.2 Outcomes for growth

Often, there is a political push for increased numbers, based on a number of factors such as low uptake, for instance. Constance (Institutions, New South Wales) reflected on an experience where there had been a push for increased SBAT numbers and the resultant support. She said,

For a while, there was almost this tendency to steer clear of SBAT by industry and schools. In a massive collection of schools, there have been only about nine SBATs for that year, which was actually quite sad. The minister for education is kind of going, ‘Well, what’s going on? How come we’re not getting enough of these school-based apprentices up?’”

So, then the big push again.

For the support she received whilst trying to increase numbers, it was a mixed bag. Constance went on to say,

I think that the communication from the RTO was crap, sorry to say, but the support was incredible from NESA. The SBAT coordinator; I can’t speak highly enough of the support from NESA on the phone, and email, and the incredible knowledge of the woman just to get the programs.

This speaks volumes for the value of strong support by the authorities in power to do so. Their objectives and the actions of the SBAT coordinator made it
successful for Constance and the students. The actions of the RTO would need to be examined to verify understandings.

Constance did hold concerns for the quality of placements, though. She reflected sadly on the predicament for the students, saying,

But for us it was always just KFC, McDonald’s for SBATs in – I don’t know. I actually did not have an experience of school-based apprentices going to [a decent restaurant] or anywhere where there was kind of better-quality catering and food. That’s all they know. The careers advisers sign them up.

There are a number of complex issues highlighted in these comments. First, to the notion of capital, training package requirements for cookery require a diverse range of cooking styles, which may not be achieved; the capital development for students is potentially limited by the experience. Further, there is a potential implication for quality mentoring of students by industry professionals, which is worthwhile to consider. For power relations, this is a potential impact of the actions of industry, not providing quality placements for school-based apprentices. This complex reality impacts the number of students who can complete and SBAT due to opportunities for placement, tied to the potential impact on their growth and development in a human capital sense.

6.5.3.3 Experiences with students

Some of the interviewees reflected on their experiences with students, whether SBAT or VET apprentice or trainee. Sue stated, “I’ve had two of the school-based apprentices. I only know of one in town that has been really successful. She did Year
11 and 12 through the school and she’s an amazing beauty therapist. She has a great
nenomination.” For Sue, this positive involvement with one successful student speaks to
the benefits of the VET in Schools program, available to students earlier than
traditional VET apprenticeships or traineeships.

Peter indicated issues with the Group Apprenticeship Scheme, saying, “We’ve
had some young guys coming to the workshop that have those group apprenticeship
schemes and I’ll send the guy out [on the job]. Most times, the ones we’ve got here
have been trained in the use of a broom and how to clean the floor but have never
used the equipment.” Furthermore, he indicated that, “they haven’t really done
anything as far as the tradesman’s side.” This is a challenging revelation from the
perspective of industry, as it may undermine the benefits of trade training and the
Group Apprenticeship Scheme. Especially when others speak highly of industry-
based apprenticeship training, such as Finn. He said,

People used to their apprenticeship as boiler makers in the big
government workshops, or in industry. By the end of that, 98% of them
were flushed out where all the business picked them up. The good thing
was because they worked at BHP or the government in a workshop, you
only had to break them of their bad habits, and they were quite
competent operators. That concept washed away with the opening up of
the market.

Where historically there was value in industry being used to train apprentices,
this value was transitioned to smaller businesses who benefited from the training and
outcomes. The result had the potential to provide stronger capital to other
tradespeople or provide a stronger return on investment; this notion requires further
clarification. Consequently, it is worth exploring if group training has had a more positive effect than it has created a deficit. This has the potential to assist in understanding some of the potential perspectives offered by industry and their contributions as far as power is concerned.

6.5.3.4 Summary

For SBAT, the most detailed complaint was for employer commitment, which caused a range of issues for students and providers. These included a misunderstanding of VET and the requirements of school-based apprentices. The impacts included language and communication, the shift in objectives and actions based on misinformation and capital improvement and success for students given a lack of capital investment.

Growth is often touted as a strong indicator of success, but where growth is potentially forced, there is potential for outcomes to suffer. For some, they had positive experiences. For others, particularly in using Group Apprenticeships Schemes, there was less success indicated. Particularly on experiences with students, it was indicated that industry had the greatest success historically with training apprentices.

This information has brought mostly new information, with little clarification of the data in Phase 1. However, the new information has provided insight into a number of issues for SBAT and apprenticeship arrangements. The next section deals with teacher qualifications.
6.5.4 Theme 4: Teacher Qualifications

On the topic of teacher qualifications, further investigation focused on requirements for teachers, the application of the Certificate IV and rigour of upgrades. It also focussed on maintenance and professional development expectations of trainers. Interviews revealed a number of core themes, including

- some general support for the Certificate IV TAE / TAA qualification; it was found the rigour of training and assessment in completing the qualification lacked considerably; in some cases, interviewees felt the shortcomings were so significant it was a waste of time;
- industry experience was identified as a critical aspect of training, providing the skills necessary to communicate the fundamentals of industry qualifications; and
- the Certificate IV was also identified as being primarily about compliance, rather than teaching and learning.

6.5.4.1 TAA / TAE Qualification

The minimum qualification for teaching a VET course remains at Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. When asked about the qualification, there were mixed feelings. When interviewing Jane (TAFE, Victoria), she retorted, “am I allowed to swear? The required TAFE qualification Certificate IV in Training and an Assessment is a steaming pile of…” She went on to say, “I just don't know what the hell has got into the people who think that's a good qualification.” Through further discussion, she identified that some of the qualification is necessary knowledge, but it lacks strength in classroom strategy and training delivery skills. Specifically, she stated, “It’s
absolutely bugger all in classroom management strategies.” Along similar lines, Kyra (RTO, New South Wales) stated, “I believe the Certificate 4 TAE is sufficient in ensuring that a facilitator is competent. Where the issue lies is with the learning that occurs during that training, which is quite ironic really.” Her observation is in the physical delivery of the course. Sally (Industry, Queensland) stated that “I believe the TAE is not completely right for training trainers to be trainers.”

The result of this discourse is curious given the results in Section 5.3.7 in Chapter 5. It could be anticipated there would be greater balance in the commentary of stakeholders, though most of the feedback centred on the value and capability of trainers as a result of completing the qualification. Essentially, the qualification itself seems to lack strength and applicability for trainers, whilst in some ways it is missing the mark for appropriateness in classroom management skills. Some suggestions for this are offered by others and will be analysed in the following sections.

This is a complex standpoint for stakeholders. Stakeholders seem to show disdain for the qualification and its application, and yet the certification remains as a requirement that was lowered from a historical requirement for a tertiary bachelor qualification. One interviewee identified issues in the way it is delivered. Furthermore, gaps in the qualification, classroom management strategies for instance, indicate a need for a better or more teaching-orientated solution. The following offers some of these as potential solutions.

Discussing the applicability of the specific qualification, Jane indicated the minimum qualification should be raised. She stated, “I would be very, very encouraging to the minimum qualification to be brought up to a diploma so that [teaching strategies and content for students with special needs] can be brought in.
Why it isn’t degree… I do not know. It reinforces poorer perceptions about VET.”

Jane clarified by observing that a higher level qualification might have the right mix, stating, “I suspect that in a bachelor degree there is a little bit more on how to actually teach, and some tokenistic content for students with disabilities, which is more than our people get with a Certificate IV.” Digging into the idea that more teaching strategy is necessary, Jane indicated, “Trainners have no idea how to manage difficult students and when I try and give them strategies, they’re just not open to learning about what they need to do to adapt them into student’s needs.”

The minimum qualification has been higher historically, though these changes could have potential implications for all teachers and trainers. The decision to maintain the Certificate IV as the required teaching qualification may have impacted on the status of VET broadly in the tertiary education sector. A long-term impact of the Certificate IV may be in the minimal teaching strategies developed through the completion of the course, and the impact this has on student learning. This has a capital development implication, as Tess (Industry and RTO, New South Wales) indicated. The needs exist for the qualification to go beyond theory. Tess said, “It’s not about just teaching them theory. There has to be an ability to transfer that knowledge into practical skills and they have to be able to be applied in different situations.” The poorer perception of trainer certification potentially lowers the value of the qualification students receive; a perception that teaching quality impacts learner capability. Furthermore, where teachers are only taught theoretically how to teach and assess skills and knowledge, they are relying on their industry experience to evaluate capability. This is examined in a subsequent section. For the matter at hand, it affects human capital verification and development in that students are relying on the verification that their teacher has the measured skills and capabilities to teach them.
industry ready skills. For Peter (Industry, Queensland), the lack of skills is a difficulty he observes. Peter said, “teachers used to actually be qualified tradesman, number one, and they had done a unit of teacher training at a teacher’s college which is where they were taught how to impart their knowledge to students. The feedback I get from the apprentices that we’ve had is that the teachers don’t know a lot about teaching.” The requirements for industry experience will be discussed in a following section but this illustrates the issue well. Expectations that teachers have a particular level of skills is potentially critical to the strength of outcomes, particularly for apprentices. This supports the previous notion of capital formation need for students and industry.

A lack of teaching quality and capability also affects students with special needs. Students with special needs have particular requirements. As Jane describes,

But the teachers have got no idea about how to manage teens with disabilities, so they’re always copping abuse and cop outs from teachers not willing to do their legal responsibility to be supporting these students. As a result, for student services and counsellors for disability support, they are having to administer the fallout from vulnerable students who need the extra support. They are being failed by absolutely crap training. Having said that, we've got very many dedicated teachers; very talented teachers who've got the common sense to be able to pick things like that up and can work with us. But we've got many who’ve just got no idea and argue against us when we’re telling them, “This is part of your job and we can help you learn this part of your job.” And they just said, “No, I don't want to know about it.”
Those accessing the VET system are doing so in the hope they can get a job, but without appropriate quality their chances are potentially decreased; increasing teacher quality and capability may impact this outcome. This failing of the Certificate IV to provide the pedagogical training for staff is an indication for improvement. Further, it is necessary to consider, for each RTO, TAFE and school, the impact this has on their student population and how this may influence internal training and skilling requirements of staff. Human capital accumulation is potentially critical for people with special needs. The impact of this is worthy of some consideration and further investigation.

The theoretical implication of these issues is two-fold. First, industry has the potential opportunity to exercise their power in concluding students taught in VET may have inferior skills, simply because of the teacher quality and potential lack of skills, particularly in VET in Schools. This is because, as established previously, VET in Schools lacks the status of VET in other institutions. These are the objectives of industry as a whole, and the actions that occur as a result of this perception. Second, it strengthens the systems of differentiation in that the VET / tertiary sector gap is widened by perceptions of difference between the sectors.

A troubling aspect of the certification process that was revealed centred around maintenance and upgrade. The first issue is specific to upgrade of the individual qualifications for training packages teachers are teaching. In VET, there is a requirement to hold the same certificate level of the course and certification you are teaching. Constance (Institution, New South Wales) described the reality of upgrades for teachers of Certificate II courses. She said, “When we had to upgrade our Certificate II, you have so many teachers across Western Sydney who just cheat and
lie. When they do their upgrades, they're actually literally plagiarising, and they're handing assessments to each other, changing a few things and it's never picked up because the TAFE will just do a bulk upgrade.” For Constance, it’s a matter of honour and morals that teachers are not maintaining what they expect students to do; “I just wonder if in terms of the Cert II, are we doing the right thing by the kids when we are frauds?” This perspective highlights that the process of verification for teachers is not in keeping with the expectations set for students. They exercise a capacity to undermine the system whilst expecting students not to do the same. These actions are an example of the exercise of power, and a system of differentiation between the providers in VET and students. This is reinforced by the policy and procedures that allows teachers to bring this power relation into play in the conduct of training and work. Furthermore, there is an implication in the context of surveillance; a lack thereof provides an opportunity for circumvention of legislation.

Further, Constance indicated a need for teachers to learn strategies and take them away for use in their own classrooms. This is related to the context of quality teaching and improving the quality of training for students. She said, “teachers don't see the value in actually doing the work themselves and seeing how that can build quality into the classroom. They should come away like, ‘Oh, wow, I should use that, I should use that resource, I should actually do that with my kids, because that was kind of fun,’ and it could change the way they learn.” There is a capital value implication for students, in that higher quality teaching may improve outcomes for students. Moreover, it illustrates apathy from some teachers for the quality of teaching and benefit quality teaching can bring to students. Their perspective of VET and the inherent value to others are their actions on the objectives of others that reinforce power relations. This also illustrates the means by which power relations are brought
into play, by teachers not acting on their responsibility to deliver quality training and enforcing their perspective through their power to act.

The upgrade and certification practices are not confined to schools, nor is the exercise of power. Finn (RTO, New South Wales) sees the upgrades to Certificate IV courses specifically as a form of “rent seeking”. In his words, “if the job you’re doing today is exactly the job you were doing 35 years ago, all that has happened is that you have simply have to pay, every three or four years, about $1,000 to change the title of your qualification, which is just a form of rent seeking.” His justification rested on the idea that little changes, it’s just an upgrade requirement. Specifically, “It’s the same people with the same characteristics with the same faults and strengths, it’s just that the name of the piece of paper they hold is altered. We’ve just gone through the process of upgrading everybody to the new silly new [Certificate IV in Training and Assessment].” The most complex revelation is the willingness to circumvent the system because of a disagreement with the process. Finn stated, “now they’re talking about us all having diplomas and then it will be degrees, and we’ll get those, but we will actively subvert that system, because we simply search for an RTO that is not rigorous in the way it issues those trainer qualifications. We give them a $1,000, people will get approved and get a piece of a paper, same person with the same skill set.” First, this is a deliberate use of system flaws to undermine the value of policy and legislative expectations. Doing so strengthens the systems of differentiation and perspectives of industry when they state how poorly VET is organised and underwritten. Their perspective also clearly illustrates their objectives and determination to exercise their power in a system where they can do so. It also identifies the means of bringing power relations into play, given the identification of RTOs that are prepared and complicit in this action to subvert policy requirements.
The problem is amplified for those with tertiary qualifications, who hold the perception of once qualified, always qualified. Constance (Institutions, New South Wales) describes the situation, saying, “many of the teachers college teachers say they are insulted when they’re asked to upgrade and have to move with it because in their mind, it’s like once you’ve learned something, you know it all. And I’m saying that that’s probably a really bad thing.” Their perspective illustrates the institutionalisation of tertiary education, in that it is a one-time qualification, which as potentially undermined the potential benefits of ongoing upgrades to qualifications. However, this has the potential to inform how upgrades are managed in VET, in that professional development that is undertaken could form the basis for upgrade, as is done in tertiary instances.

The matter of compliance is curious, as similarly for issues of the Certificate IV as a certification, there is a certain aspect of resistance given the applicability but compliance for the sake of compliance. This has potential power relations considerations as well as substantiative factors for policy formation. Many see the Certificate IV as a form of ensuring compliance and educating trainers to be compliance officers. Jane, for instance, stated,

Sure, they need to know about how the vocational education centre system works. They need to know about assessment and curriculum development and all of that sort of stuff. That's essential knowledge but where in that Certificate IV it’s how to teach a classroom of people. It's just glossed over. It’s absolutely [expletive] all in classroom management strategies.
Sally identifies similar issues. For her, it takes away from the core business as a trainer.

It’s all about compliance. It’s all about what people like me as an RTO needs to know about rather than, “this is how you present. This is how you maintain motivation from your students. This is how you get your students interested.” So, the current TAE is all about, “well you must be compliant. You must tick this box. You must do this,” not, “this is how you teach. This is how you present. This is how you can get really into the course.” There’s none of that in the TAE, none at all.

On one hand, compliance is a strong feature which has both positive and negative implications, notwithstanding that it provides a baseline objective for all teaching participants of VET. The comment does highlight, however, that Jane and Sally do see it as a factor of compliance rather than as a tool for improving teacher capabilities. In the context of policy formation, the pertinence of such a tool needs to be verified in its objectives, which is as much for compliance as it is for teaching strategy. This has potential implications for the applicability of the Certificate IV as a substantiative teaching qualification. Further, it illustrates the objectives of policy to maintain a particular standard, but as shown, the actions of some RTOs undermine this standard.

In sum, the Certificate IV TAE qualification is fraught with a range of issues, highlighted by stakeholders. Empirically, there is a lack of strength and applicability of essential teaching skills being developed through the qualification, particularly for students with special needs. There is a disdain shown for the qualification with some indication of a need for higher qualifications, though there are potentially other
options. Some operators are openly admitting to undermining upgrade requirements because they disagree with the requirements.

Theoretically, there are capital implications as teachers are not equipped to assign value to their courses by not having the skills to teach with the necessary diversity, or with the industry qualifications. The systems of differentiation are clarified further by separating requirements for each sector and the perceptions held of the differences between qualifications. The means of exercising power relations are brought into play by the qualification that industry holds; teachers are potentially ill-equipped to teach with the qualifications they have, and industry currency is a concern. This is discussed at length in the following section.

6.5.4.2 Industry experience

In Phase 1, industry experience and a relevant industry qualification were indicated as a specific area of necessity by participants for trainers.

On the topic of industry experience, one issue highlighted complexities for funding and time for release. For example, Mike (TAFE, New South Wales) said, “the difficulty though for an RTO is working in the teaching area and the ability to fund someone to go and have continual industry experience.” Gill agreed, saying, “It’s all about funding and time and building your skill and I think a lot of the time, the content of the unit is delivered but not the opportunity to practise the skills that they learn.” With a lack of experience, there is a potential lack of capacity to teach practical skills, which forms a substantial share of VET competency. Teachers need to have the capacity for both the knowledge and skills for the qualification they are delivering; students are expected to be industry trained and work ready.
The complexities of sector funding make this more difficult, though no indication was made about whether this was specific for TAFE, RTOs or institutions. Mike detailed this by saying, “With high levels of funding we could do a lot more work placement with our teachers, but that requires two weeks, and the level of funding in the VET sector at the moment doesn’t really give you the flexibility to be able to do that.” Mike indicated how critical it is to have currency but found there was no structure that enabled it. He said, “you need a structured and managed process to enable all teachers to maintain their currency, preferably through workplace release.” Enabling, and creating a specific process and funded policy for workplace release has the potential to increase capability of VET teachers. It could also influence the perception of industry when it comes to VET teachers and VET outcomes. Mike also said, “fundamentally, qualifications and experience in the VET sector, the need for that continual industry updating is critical.”

For managing the currency of staff, Mike indicated a hybrid approach worked well. “The best solution for us is where we use casual and part-time teachers who are working in industry because they’re maintaining their currency through the other jobs that they have.” From an industry perspective, Sue (Industry, New South Wales) indicated her experience was that teachers had little to no experience. “None of them are working currently in the industry. I think what they should do is employ successful business owners. It would be very easy to ask them to teach,” she said. Liam had a similar view, particularly of VET in Schools teachers, saying, “high school teachers do not have currency of skills. Some of them wouldn’t even know what a workplace was.” Enhancing workplace experience for teachers has the potential capacity to lift the status of VET, particularly for VET in Schools.
Constance (Institutions, New South Wales) illustrated engagement of VET in Schools teachers with industry currency. She said,

How can you say that we're getting quality when there are teachers delivering the course who are not only not industry trained, but not doing their industry currency and then lying about it? I just don’t think you can give kids what they deserve to set them up for a national qualification when you got someone teaching it who’s got no real training and experience.

Previously, there was a suggestion VET in Schools teachers wanted a stronger status to be afforded VET in Schools arrangements. It is complex to assign this amongst a lack of willingness to appropriately engage with upgrade and maintenance procedures. The outcome of Constance’s observation is that with greater integrity assigned to upgrades and qualification maintenance, amid credible industry currency and engagement, the status of VET could be improved. By not assigning themselves to quality industry engagement, teachers are validating perspectives of other stakeholders that they are not providing industry-ready skills. Moreover, they are potentially refining differentiations between sectors and highlighting the ways in which other sectors can exercise their power to influence the system, with little credibility given to the voice of VET in Schools teachers.

To summarise, there are potential gaps in the industry experience and currency of teachers. This is most obvious for teachers of VET in Schools. There are also concerns these teachers are simply evading completing appropriate qualification training, upgrades and maintenance by deceptively completing documentation. There is more validation to be sought about this concern. Some suggestions were offered, in
that teachers could adopt a hybrid approach to industry-based work and teaching. Funding was identified as a consideration for release in other approaches.

Theoretically, there are a number of considerations and implications for capital formation, particularly cultural and human capital. Cultural capital relates to the sharing of knowledge; minimal engagement in industry-based work limits the capacity to share knowledge, particularly current knowledge. In the context of human capital, there are potential limitations to the breadth of capability and competency that can be transmitted and assessed, due to the lack of capability owned by a teacher expressing and assessing the skills. This is a consequence of the industry knowledge they have not obtained, compounded by a potential misrepresentation of this knowledge and skill. The context and effects of this will be discussed further in Chapter 7.

Power relations are substantiated further in this theme, particularly in the context of differentiation. The differences between one sector and another are apparent, most obviously in their approach to learning and management. Some are complicit in their subversion of policy, whilst others are passively resistive in completing requirements. These actions are the actions on the objectives of others, as they are often a result of these objectives. In other instances, they are actions as a consequence of a group, internal objective. They are also the consequence of their knowledge of what can be done, given the attitudes of others. This will be further discussed in Chapter 7.
6.5.4.3 Summary

Throughout this domain, a number of themes were identified. These included the impact of the specific qualification and the effect it has on teachers and various RTOs, including TAFE. There are also implications teased out for maintaining industry currency and qualifications. These had potential consequences for the usability of the TAE as a teaching qualification, as there was agreement that it did not cater for developing classroom strategies. Further, there was an indication that the completion and upgrade of the certification was undermined by complicit actions. Industry currency was seen as critical by participants, which substantiated expressions in Phase 1. There was some concern that teachers were providing unsubstantiated records of their industry currency as a matter of compliance. Similarly, some participants saw completion of the TAE as a matter of compliance rather than a valuable asset to teaching and learning.

Theoretically, there was a consistent illustration of the differentiations between industry, TAFE/RTOs and institutions. Participants formed perspectives of policy and its effect on their sector. The objectives of policy, the issue of compliance, for instance, detailed how these sectors responded through action, which is a basis for greater discussion. The means of bringing power into play was shown through the behaviours of people within particular sectors. For instance, by undermining the value of the Certificate IV in schools, industry is substantiated in their perspective of the lack of knowledge and skills of school teachers to teach VET. The implication is that through this action, teachers validate this perspective and weaken their voice of power within the sector.
The illustrations of these themes have provided broad detail in the domain of teacher qualifications. The next section deals with the context of generic skills.

6.5.5 Theme 5: Employability skills

Employability skills are embedded into modern training packages, though this was not always the case. Previously, there were specific frameworks that provided teachers and trainers with a range of work-ready skills students needed to enter the workforce. In Phase 1, there were a number of results that indicated support for the use of the framework, but less support for the application and use of the framework in measuring and providing student feedback on development of the skills. The core results from interview include

- limited applicability in training and reporting;
- a range of perspectives about the effectiveness of teaching the skills in relation to industry and actually being, industry ready; and
- there could be greater success in refinement of the core skills frameworks.

Understanding how these are used and applied provides insight into the application of this aspect of the curriculum, and whether or not those skills transfer from training to industry.

6.5.5.1 Applicability in training and reporting

Phase 1 of the study indicated industry and institutions felt neutrally about the application of generic skills in assessment. There was agreement for their use by institutions and TAFE/RTOs, in teaching and learning. When asked about the efficacy of the framework and its use in training and reporting, Kyra (RTO, New South Wales)
said, “To be honest, we don’t use it, relying instead on the Training Package requirements, common sense and working towards our goal of students being job-ready to ensure this happens.” In support of this, Tess (Industry and RTO, New South Wales) said, “I don’t think we’re even looking to assess work-ready skills in those courses that I am involved in.” However, for Tony (Institution, Victoria) they are critical in training. “A lot of the courses, the accredited training courses we do here, are trade courses like hairdressing. So, there’s a lot of practical skills developed and demonstrated over and over again in the classroom which is why our classes run for phenomenal hours,” he said. The recognition of the time it takes to develop these skills is a feature of this commentary. Where Kyra and Tess believe they are integrated or not explicit, there is a potential understanding the skills take time to develop. In these instances, it may be time is limited to the extent they are unable to complete the training with the depth of development necessary. Time is a potential issue in the development and use of these skills in training.

Jane discussed the effect of a narrative that TAFE was to blame for not providing students with the right level of skills. She said, “when employers blame TAFE, I think that that's an unfair thing. People learn employability skills of communication and stuff like that on the job. They make mistakes and can learn from them. Industry has to be a little bit more realistic about what's happening here.” The complexity of the narrative is that industry is reliant on the training organisations to do the work. Finn stated agreement, saying, “I don’t see any employer ever coming to us and talking through their needs in detail so that we can meet those complaints. They just wash their hands with the whole thing and expect us to magically create it.” There is a potential need for industry to build their level of investment into training students with the depth of skills, beyond the training package, that enables them to
engage in work. An integrated approach between RTOs and industry may improve the effectiveness further. Jane also felt industry failed to recognise the improvements being made. “I think it's wonderful that it's all built into the curriculum and it's certainly that what is being done is also improving people's employability skills beyond what they already have. I don't think industry recognises that but there is improvement in these areas,” she said. From a capital perspective, this provides an illustration of the strength of cultural capital and its ability to form deeper human capital, beyond strict skills development. This may also enact a balance of power for industry and RTOs; an expectation for both to take responsibility and act accordingly to the needs of the student rather than potentially expecting the other to own the balance of accountability.

6.5.5.2 Effectiveness for industry

For some, industry use and consistency are issues for implementation. Peter (Industry, Queensland) indicated they do report back to the training organisation on generic skills, but the workbook format lacks value. He said, “But they don’t seem to get a great deal of feedback and they don’t seem to ask for a great deal of feedback other than the fact that we just fill out their workbooks and check their workbook,” which illustrates the need for greater levels of communication between industry, trainers and students. Jane (TAFE, Victoria) emphasised that industry needed to take a more proactive approach. She said, “You can't learn a lot of that stuff in the classroom.” For Gill (Industry, Victoria), it needed to be more explicit. “I still don’t think it’s done very well. If your training developers just say, ‘Well, it’s incorporated in the unit.’ It doesn’t achieve anything. Industry needs to see it more explicitly.” With greater explicit use across the sectors, there may be a better uptake and greater
integration into teaching and learning in industry and training. This has implications for student human capital development, as developing this potential connection between capital development in the classroom and at work may have an effect on success. The potential outcome for the employer is a more competent person with greater skills in self-analysis and improvement.

It was indicated that maturity of the student was a consideration. Jane (TAFE, Victoria) said, “employers say it’s necessary that people come out with those skills. You know, we try, it’s embedded in the curriculum, I see it in many ways but unless the people are old enough and able to take it on board, it doesn't happen.” The core factor is maturity, but the main push for teaching the skills comes from employers. Their emphasis may indicate a need for better use and integration of the skills across sectors within VET. Sue (Industry, New South Wales) substantiated this view. “Well, teamwork, you do, do that, but I find a lot of them hide out the back. They don't really apply what they’re learning. I don't know how you can force them to apply what they’re learning, but there’s always that age barrier,” she said. There is a potential limitation and implication for age appropriateness of developing these skills, which may have an effect on the age at which training packages can be delivered. The capital formation effect will need to be evaluated further, as this has to do with the maturity of young people to consider the impact of these skills.

6.5.5.3 Success in refinement

There is a potential need for greater refinement for success of teaching these skills. Sally (Industry, Queensland) discussed this at length. She said,
the real in-depth communication, the confidence skills aren’t there, the self-esteem skills aren’t there, the self-belief is still not enough; people skills are required to have the confidence to go out and get that job. I find it missing over and over because we really work hard with our students to put that into their training at work but there’s only so much you can do within the scope of training, whereas to the deeper level of building that self-esteem and that self-confidence and that belief in that resilience, they have to be able to reflect and say, “Okay. That didn’t work well. Why didn’t that work? I need to do this”. That’s another whole skill set that I don’t feel is in the employability skill set.

Finn indicated it starts with culture, and that after a certain amount of time it comes down to the employer to build those skills. As indicated, this may rely on greater investment from industry, though. Nonetheless, Finn said,

So, we look at culture first. And the very first thing that I think we run into, say for teamwork, is that I can train everybody in teamwork and getting along within their workplace. But if they can’t have the cultural fit for that organisation, it’s not going to work. The point I would make is that the responsibility of the RTO ends at the front door of the employment, of the perspective employers building, because from that point onwards, the employer has to take the trainee and develop them into an employee.

Capturing these points, skills in employability rely on a range of personal skills in confidence, belief and esteem that a person gains throughout training. These are a mixture of explicit and implicit skills, within the scope of training. Further, there
is an indication that employers need to take some level of responsibility and ownership for developing these skills in people. This relates to an employee’s ability to fit into the culture of the workplace, which potentially links to the core skills for work. These critical skills build capital in people to be able to achieve their objectives. The skills have potential links to human, economic and cultural capital outcomes.

6.5.5.4 Summary

The domain of generic skills captured three main themes, which includes the applicability of employability or core skills in training and assessment, effectiveness of the skills in industry and potential avenues for refinement. A range of implications were revealed in each theme by interviewees.

For their use in training and assessment, most participants thought the integrated nature of core skills was sufficient to achieve their objectives. The implication was an increased number of hours required for teaching the skills. Other RTOs may not use the skills because of this extra requirement, though this wasn’t explicitly said. From the employer’s perspective, a consistent theme was a feeling of reliance on the education sector to train students in core skills for work, though RTOs felt this wasn’t their responsibility. This relates back to the industry investment in VET, which has been established as lacklustre. From a capital perspective, there is some indication core skills can develop greater human capital, but there is a reliance on industry and community cultural capital to achieve this objective. This objective has power relations links, as the actions of industry create a consequence for RTOs in that they now have to act on these objectives, which may be unreasonable from a time and investment perspective.
Industry has indicated a more ad-hoc approach to the teaching and assessment of core skills. Teaching and assessment of the skills is not explicit or integrated with industry work placement, for example. Student maturity was a consideration for some, where this has an impact on their ability to learn the skills and have them taught within industry. Students rely on these skills but don’t make the time to learn them; industry prefers a more specific approach that may overcome this issue.

Refinement of the skills was a developing theme that did not feature in Phase 1. There was some indication from stakeholders that student’s self-confidence and self-esteem are critical before even core skills for work. This links to an active critical reflection cycle that allows them to grow in this knowledge. Furthermore, culture and adaptivity were critical to success, as indicated by one participant from an RTO. The effect of these on capital development is unknown, though it forms an interesting perspective that could form the basis for further discussion.

Analysis of interview data provided evidence for the theoretical notions of power knowledge, governmentality and capital. To the notion of power, analysis drew out instances of the five areas of Marshall’s toolbox to provide evidence of the existence and operation of power relations. Throughout the analysis, evidence was elicited that included

- the way in which stakeholder boundaries are formed and stakeholder knowledge of these boundaries;
- the objectives of stakeholders and the actions of stakeholders on the objectives of others beyond the system, such as universities limiting pathways, and industry expectations on the delivery of VET;
how power is brought into being, through the enactment of policy or legislation, such as the Australian Qualifications Framework or Australian Quality Training Framework, enforced through authorities; and

forms of institutionalisation, such as the economics of VET, legislation for the implementation of VET, the nature of ‘academic’, ‘non-academic’ and ‘trades’ education, which form their own institution in the way they form opinion and perspective.

An effective response to the degree of rationalisation takes place in Chapter 7, as it draws together the four aforementioned elements of the framework, whilst the fifth acts as a type of net. This net captures the relationships of power and analyses how effective they are in the context of this study. The establishment of the effects of governmentality, and stakeholder responses, are expressed by stakeholders in a number of contexts. An example is the response to requirements set out by legislation for qualification upgrades, in which one institution indicates a workaround that appeals to their sense of righteousness for their high standards, without being subject to the requirements of policy. Further detail is provided in a subsequent section. The relationships between power and governmentality in VET and are presented in Chapter 7.

The forms of capital, economic, social, human and cultural, are found in the data as a consequence of outcomes, legislature and personal objectives. For instance, the actions of teachers in VET that hold a negative opinion for its place in senior schooling affect the potential formation of human capital in young people, which has potential implications for their long-term economic capital. A number of examples exist for each, which are teased out and synthesized in Chapter 7.
6.5.6 Theme 6: Additional Themes

Throughout Phase 1 and Phase 2, additional themes emerged as the big picture items, which included the inflated views of TAFE and RTOs, industry expectations and issues related to tertiary education providers. They formed a basis for much discussion and complexity amongst stakeholders. This section details the additional themes and provides a limited discussion of how they fit within the bigger picture of VET in Australia. It draws down from the evidence provided through interview in Phase 2.

6.5.6.1 Inflated views of TAFE and RTOs

An emerging trend throughout data analysis was for a generally more positive view of VET by TAFE/RTOs, whilst industry tended to hold a more pessimistic view, particularly of TAFE and the success of VET. Institutions sat somewhere between these two cases in most aspects. This could imply a lack of success of VET from the perspective of industry, whilst TAFE/RTOs suggest VET is successful in its outcomes. One underlying explanation could be in the investment of VET in TAFE and RTOs, and the ongoing complexity as to their future as providers. The inner complexity is the devaluing of qualifications by RTO and VET providers that sit outside the TAFE sector, based on the federal and State VET reforms enacted between 2010 and 2015. Increasing the status of VET is in the interest of both groups, and whilst some participants might respond in a way that tries to identify this issue, it might have the effect of highlighting the desperate plea to keep the sector alive from both perspectives.
There are a number of complex indicators for the TAFE and RTO opinion tied to political and union agendas. The perspective of Industry is harder to substantiate as often their perspectives are tied up in Skills Council reports and recommendations. The focus of this discussion is on the perception of TAFE/RTO, and the potential relationship between results and their investment into the sector. This is based on the political reforms made within the VET sector.

In the context of TAFE, the gradual decline of its position as a system of education started as early as 2009 with various State reforms, which included alterations to the legislation that had protected it as the foremost public provider of VET education beyond secondary schools (Hamdham, 2013). The changes were a result of federal review (Noonan et al., 2010) and later reform, initiated in 2013. The Victorian Government made pre-emptive changes in 2009, implementing the Victorian Training Guarantee, which allowed for private RTOs to contest for training contracts and provide training with government subsidy (given a number of conditions). When the Newman Government released its position paper on VET reform in 2014, it indicated changes to the sector and new VET framework were “based on advice from industry and employers and will create certainty for providers.” (Queensland Department of Education, Training and Employment, 2014, p. 4). The deregulation of the sector was more specifically about opening up to external private providers beyond TAFE. In continuation:

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6 There are a number of examples that indicate union involvement in the publicising of a particular political agenda, including petitions and websites such as https://www.stoptafecuts.com.au, imploring governments and the public to fight for the survival of TAFE.

7 This included universities, though this is beyond the scope of this study as it has much broader implications than private RTOs alone.
For the first time, skills investment will be fully contestable in mid-2014…[which] means opening up training delivery so it can be offered by a range of private and public providers. Making training funding available contestably ensures that the government is providing the public with greater choice and the best possible solution at the best possible price (Queensland Department of Education, Training and Employment, 2014, p. 4).

New South Wales followed suit, and even though the question was raised about the validity of a contestable training system (Shreeve & Palser, 2018), they adopted the approach as part of Smart and Skilled (Department of Industry, Skills and Regional Development, 2016). Governments saw it as an opportunity to distribute the expense of TAFE by creating competitiveness within the industry, allowing private RTOs to capitalise on government funding for enrolments.

The sentiment for contestable training contracts was not unique and carried across similar Victorian, New South Wales and federal reform position papers. Funding arrangements also indicated certifications deemed to be of higher need would attract higher funding, and of course, private providers specifically focused on these. The system designed to decentralise VET and provide an ‘equal playing field’ in terms of access, training provision and certification, failed in spectacular form. Over time, TAFE lost significant funding across the country (Quiggin, 2018), which also caused media backlash (Stone, 2012). Public discussion of the cuts and state of VET were loud, with TAFE at the forefront of the battle (Needham, 2015; Public Service Association, 2015).
The impact of federal reform and state changes forced a number of parliamentary enquiries and reviews in 2015-2016, indicating the severity of unscrupulous practices of private RTOs and the impact on the TAFE system, which later had implications for funding and provision of VET by a number of providers. Such were the severity of losses, the Newman Government tried to offload TAFE which was foiled by their demise and instantiation of the Palaszczuk Government (D’Ath, 2015). The Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (2016) details in their report the massive complications and cost to the credibility of VET in Victoria and the work needed to rebuild TAFE, not to mention the significant financial investment. This situation was repeated by others, with a number of formal reviews detailing the cost and implications (Mackenzie & Coulson, 2015; Minister for Training and Skills, 2016) and naturally, the Herbert Government in Victoria released a statement with revised plans for VET in Victoria (Victorian Department of Education and Training, 2015).

The significant implication of such reform is the influence it had on participants and subsequent results of the survey thus far. Data collection of this study took place in a time where State and Federal funding to TAFE was being reduced, some private RTOs were signing up students with no intention to provide quality training, and in some cases, training at all. Evidence for this is detailed in discussions throughout Phase 2. A perspective of TAFE/RTO was for their diminished credibility as recognised providers of VET. Further, it was indicated in Phase 2 that private RTOs were potentially the main causal factor of devalued and cheapened qualifications, but the effect and implication of TAFE was not limited either (National Centre for Vocational Education Research, n.d.). Where institutions responded positively to the value, quality and employability of graduates, there was less
recognition for transitional capabilities to further education and work. Those with the most to lose demonstrated the greatest level of support for a sector in crisis; one potential driving factor is participants embracing an opportunity to put a more positive spin on the outcomes and benefits of the VET sector, whether private or public.

6.5.6.2 Industry expectations

Despite best intentions of Industry Skills Councils (as it was formerly, currently Skills Service Organisations or SSOs), indicated by results in Phase 1 and some indications in Phase 2, the broad-spectrum outcomes of training packages are potentially failing to meet the needs of industry. SSOs are responsible for the development of training packages as a result of their industry representation and advocacy. Essentially, industry is involved with the development of training packages and the conditions under which they are delivered through the AQTF, by proxy of the SSOs. Productivity is a factor of consideration in the failure to deliver sufficient outcomes. Phase 1 indicates positive impacts of VET on productivity and employment, which has an underlying nexus where one influences the other. Phase 2, however, shows greater work to be done to realise the full potential of students in VET. There were also implications for capital formation. Zoellner (2013) establishes links between VET, productivity and human capital, expressed by Julia Gillard, the then Prime Minister of Australia. In her words,

For individuals, achieving recognised qualifications is one of the best ways to secure a job and earn a decent wage. In a changing economy, skills also build resilience. They provide workers with the flexibility to change jobs,
apply skills in different contexts and go on learning (Gillard, 2012, p. 2 in Zoellner, 2013, p. 134).

The inference of this excerpt is enhanced employability and productivity people gain as a result of VET, and the contribution this makes to the economy. Economically, the beneficiaries are industry and the greater the investment in VET by all stakeholders, the greater the return. In an economic context this is referred to as a return on investment, and discourse for the benefits of human capital development or investment in employment and productivity are not new (Becker, 1962; Garavan, Morley, Gunnigle, & Collins, 2001; Weiss, 1995). Established primary expectations of employers (industry) are competent, work ready employees, with a range of foundational, organisational and communication skills (Productivity Commission, 2011). Evidence in Phase 2 shows a greater need for industry to invest in this process as readily as schools, TAFE and RTOs. What emerged was the deep need for industry engagement in the development and improvement of VET overall. This need was evidenced in discussion with TAFE, RTOs and institutional representatives. Industry seemed to identify the need for improvement, though a willingness to provide valuable experiences remained the onus of other stakeholders.

The Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency (2013b) links productivity explicitly to education and consequently, the development of explicit human capitals. It is their mission to ensure education, particularly VET, meets the economic needs of Australia and consequently, industry. The relationship, though, is reciprocal; with greater human capital and education comes greater productivity and hence, a quality education system and deeper learning that effects human capital development. In the

As opposed to innate human capital, or the skills and knowledge one develops exclusive from formal learning.

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results of Phase 1 and 2, it was established that industry holds the perspective VET is underperforming and with their response to productivity less than encouraging, it can be concluded that the investment in VET is having a lacklustre impact on the productivity of employees. There are pockets of substantial strength, though these are rarely as well reported.

At the time data for this study were collected, it was a well-established fact that private and for-profit VET enterprise had benefited greatly from a change in regulation that allowed them to bid for government funding for the provision of VET; the breadth of this was discussed at length in Chapter 3. Jones (2018) recently wrote of the detriment this has had on productivity and fitness to work, which alongside established context, verifies opinion examined within the data. Jones reiterates the common failures of VET, particularly TAFE funding, deregulation, uncapped university enrolments and reduced confidence in the system to deliver, though provides a greater focus on pedagogy, core skills of literacy, numeracy and digital skills, and a capacity to innovate and respond to the ‘VUCA’ world in which we live.

By setting VET in isolation to other forms of education, namely secondary and higher, pedagogies are underdeveloped and constrained. The nature of this provides little scope to innovate and provide a response way of teaching and learning that meets the needs of students and employers. Furthermore, the contribution of strong skills and the value of the qualifications are undermined by a lack of visibility to policy makers and the public through the media, for the impact these skills have made to sectors that rely on them, such as STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) and invention.

9 Volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous, the acronym or word ‘VUCA’ is often used in the business sector to define the giga and post-work economies synonymous with the 21st Century.
Research by the Productivity Commission (2011) indicated ambiguity for employer needs, though their results indicated a significant breadth of expectation on the VET sector to educate students. Some of these included the base skills for work, but also employability (soft) skills, innate organisational, foundational, literacy and numeracy skills and improved productivity. There were indications for high expectations, low achievements for outcomes and dissatisfaction with the VET sector to deliver in some aspects of this study. There was a concern for providing quality training to young people, responses to labour market needs and most significantly, provision of knowledge and skills to get a job. If this was an employer perspective in the time this study was conducted, with similar results some five years prior (in the context of the Productivity Commission report), little has been addressed. NCVER Statistics indicate growth in the use of VET between 2015 and 2017, however informal training also increased. Nationally, satisfaction with training by TAFE and private providers decreased, as did the used of TAFE as a provider over the same period. Use of private RTO training providers increased, a potential factor of deregulation and limited funding for TAFE institutions, or quality training due to the diversification of the industry into government funded private RTOs and universities.

Consider, however, the indications of TAFE/RTOs and institutions, who held a positive opinion both individually and collectively on the success of VET in this study. Their perspective speaks highly of the outcomes of VET, particularly in the contexts of quality training, productivity and employability. These stood in significant opposition to the perspective of industry on most accounts. The discrepancy here could be accounted for in the intrinsic value placed on VET and education systemically by educational institutions. However, little data and analysis exist on school and teacher perspectives of VET and VET in Schools since 2004; much
focuses on the benefits of VET in Schools or on the qualities of a VET teacher. And
whilst VET in Schools plays a vital role in providing early VET education for
students and provides options for pathways beyond compulsory schooling (Dommers,
Myconos, Swain, Yung, & Clarke, 2017; Osborne & Circelli, 2018), greater
investment in VET is crucial according to stakeholders who responded to the surveys
and interview in this study.

Misconceptions of the value and status of VET, qualification links to work and
educational outcomes, and gender stereotypes are some considerations for students
attempting VET as part of compulsory schooling, (Osborne & Circelli, 2018) with
little emphasis placed on improved employability or productivity as beneficial factors.
Clarke (2013a, 2013b) found feedback from stakeholders identified weak job-
preparation skills by VET in Schools qualifications, whilst perception by students and
parents is the direct entry into a vocation VET provides post-school. Further, policy-
makers identified concerns with low-skilled and low paying jobs as a result of VET in
Schools, limiting opportunities for students to progress in their careers. These issues
compounded creating a stigma and issues surrounding VET that limits its potential,
devaluing qualifications (TNS Opinion & Social, 2011). For example, the notion that
VET provides options for less academically inclined students was unanimously
supported by respondents, most significantly for TAFE/RTOs, and rationalised in
Phase 2. This stigma can influence student subject and pathway selections, though
Clarke (2013a) found this was not necessarily the case in all circumstances.
Alternatively, Clarke (2013b) argues for an integrated, school specific VET program,
aligned with secondary school certificates. Such a program moves away from the
utilitarian approach to VET in Schools and provides a foundation for students for
entry into higher VET qualifications post school. The model, thematically designed
rather than qualification focused, has the potential to strengthen qualifications and achieve employer needs of a foundationally prepared student with strong skills and knowledge. The indications though are that VET as an option for study whilst at school is limited in its current form and in need of major reform to provide suitable outcomes for students.

To summarise, Phase 1 illustrated a generally strong relationship between VET and improved productivity. It is evidenced through Phase 2 data that the perspective of industry stakeholders is that VET lacks development of strong productivity through skills and knowledge policy it is designed to drive. This is potentially a factor of the lack of quality training provided by RTOs unscrupulously milking government funding arrangements of deregulation, constraints of VET pedagogy and issues with quality training, which is substantiated by literature. Differences of opinion between industry and education stakeholder responses can be attributed to the intrinsic value placed on VET by educational institutions and the lack of faith industry has in the VET sector to deliver. However, whilst industry indicates a desire for greater productivity and greater employability, the ways to achieve this remain unclear without their investment.

6.5.6.3 Higher education and Universities as a provider of VET

The pathways to further education beyond VET are supported by a series of established channels. Due to the availability of VET from Stage 5 high school education through to post-school options like TAFE and private RTOs and universities, since the early 1990s students have been able to select from pathways through compulsory schooling and on to VET or university. A common conception, as indicated, is the notion of higher education as either vocational or tertiary, in the
sense that they are separate and distinct pathways (McLaughlin & Mills, 2010). Whist this is true to a degree, there is a certain level of operability and transferability between the sectors that enables students to move between them, though it is often complex and anything but straightforward (Bandias et al., 2011). More recently too, universities started offering VET courses (Commonwealth Parliament, 2018), mainly those without apprenticeship or traineeship requirements, providing access to funding and vocational courses for students who may have otherwise attended TAFE or another private provider. It potentially allows universities to control credit transfer. The inference is a narrowing gap between the sectors, though the notion of distinct pathways is still evident in recent publications (Marks, 2017). It is understood that collaboration is increasing, which should start to improve recognition of qualifications between the sectors, as this is a long-standing arrangement within policy (Barber & Netherton, 2018). That said, participants of this study felt VET qualifications provide the strongest links to further VET or work, whilst all indicated less opportunity for students to attend university. There is often a perception that VET is for less capable or those with a lower socio-economic background (Barber & Netherton, 2018; Marks, 2017; Richards & Dolphin, 2018), and that a university education is not as suitable. Where respondents indicated VET was less likely to equip students for university, this could have been a prevailing consideration.

An article by Lehmann (2009) discussed the lure of university as a vocational education solution, in which working-class Canadians access the sector in the hope that increase certification will provide work on completion. However, low completion rates were cited as a major factor. In fact, Lehmann (2009) examines responses from working-class students with VET qualifications, who withdraw very early from university studies due to a range of issues though the common theme is assimilation.
Recent analysis of university completion rates indicate little has improved, particularly in the context of personal attributes and comfort for VET students transitioning into university studies (Richards & Dolphin, 2018). The running theme is a starkly different form of study, where VET is substantially practical, whilst university focuses on a deeply theoretical knowledge. Students are ill equipped for the demands and as a result, attrition rates are high. For TAFE in Australia, some have a distinctly positive experience and feel highly equipped for a university education, whilst others felt similarly disadvantaged (Barber & Netherton, 2018).

KPMG, the global consultancy firm, delivered a report in 2018 that outlined recommended changes for the VET sector (Parker, Dempster, & Warburton, 2018). It received a scathing review by the media (Jackson, 2018; Karp, 2018), who retorted KPMG were out of touch and lacked understanding of the requirements of TAFE and VET more broadly. However, Professor Stephen Parker AO, lead author and chair of the report committee, indicated it was time to provide an opportunity for deeper integration between the sectors and unleash the potential for innovation within VET to see its full potential. The report refers to the binary nature of the TAFE system and the increasing need for a more flexible ecosystem. In total, ten recommendations were put forward, of which two seem the most sensible and necessary. Given results of the survey for this study and literature reviewed thus far, these include; recommendation 7: tightening and careful testing of RTO standards, teaching excellence and funding applications under deregulation strategies set forth in VET reform across the States; and recommendation 10: abolition of provider categories, to create a more succinct and level provider system. In the first instance, it restores the reputation of the VET sector and removes the providers taking advantage of deregulation, offering low-cost low-quality training, damaging the value and trust of the sector. In the second, it
strengthens the use of the term ‘university’ and protects it for the intrinsic value it represents, whilst strengthening teaching and removing complex funding and research requirements to maintain the name. The maintenance of high standards for these institutions would be critical, though it removes delineation between VET and university, strengthening the VET sector by raising its status.

It’s not the first time the issue of a broadening and emerging tertiary sector has formed the basis of discourse. Simmonds (2010) references the Bradley Review in 2008 and asserts the involvement of universities as a VET provider, which as established has continued to expand. With the review as a foundation, Simmonds (2010) argues for a tertiary sector with primary and cross-sector capacities for issuing qualifications and conducting education, a strong accountability and regulatory framework, and stronger pathways between the sectors. Note, this is some eight years prior to the report by KPMG which, whilst pre-dating the complex issues experienced as a result of deregulation, has a similar context and perspective. If this recommendation is consistent and forms the basis of broader stakeholder opinion, it might be time to consider these options.

Media reports have the potential to significantly shape public opinion, and by their own admission little public discussion has taken place of the concepts put forward by KPMG (Jackson, 2018), though they do little to incite critical discourse. A valuable point was raised, though it seems their statements are a case of positional bias. First, the author states that universities work alongside VET providers and that

10 Green (1998, p. 174) draws a similar parallel for the influence of public media, particularly when it comes to public opinion and media impact on the perspective of a system or program when articles are deliberately misleading or not intended to extend the discourse. Green particularly draws attention to what he calls discursive production, or to over-determine the context for the purpose of staging and impact, rather than quality discussion.
this is the strength of the dualist system, though it is established they have also begun offering VET courses, assumedly to obtain government funding for courses enrolled. Second, the report simply recommends a return to equally funded private and public providers but has not taken into account the strict regulation recommended in the report of all providers. Their deliberate misrepresentation and simplification only minimise potential for educated and valuable discussion of the report recommendations and movement toward a more innovative and just solution. Only 7 days prior, the same paper presented an opinion piece that seemed to support the recommendations due to the extensive consultation and experience of KMPG’s Stephen Parker to propose such changes (Dodd, 2018). Unfortunately, The Guardian (Karp, 2018) provides only a summary and antagonistic headline with little evaluation of the recommendations.

Pathways to further education are critical to the success of the VET sector and the value of the qualifications it provides. Funding cuts to TAFE, fallout of deregulation and limited substantiative outcomes have presented a significant problem within the VET sector. Respondents to the survey for this study indicate limited opportunities for students in university, though feel further VET options are applicable and accessible. That these qualifications lead to sound options for work is evident. However, it remains that the system has substantial flaws and is in need of rectification. Where solutions are presented, it would be valuable to at least partake in discourse as to their benefits and potential; given deregulation was a substantial failure, it is difficult to justify not entertaining sound ideas and recommendations. Community Colleges Australia (2018) also released a statement in response, which

11 It should be noted the author, Catriona Jackson, is also the chief executive of Universities Australia.
holds a more balanced perspective and calls on the community to discuss ideas and objectives in relation to the recommendations.

### 6.5.7 Governmentality and political influence

Throughout analysis, in a number of instances the theme of governmentality was revealed in the discourse. In analysing the many power relations and ways in which policy and legislation were applied, it became evident that beyond these, other instances of governmentality or political issue exist. These are discussed in this section.

Mike (TAFE, New South Wales) indicated a growth in numbers in VET due to a government requirement to obtain an allowance. He said, “significant numbers come here because it’s a requirement under some form of allowance that they might be receiving or need to maintain.” Jane, also from TAFE (Victoria) indicated a similar predicament, specifically, “we've had more and more people with disabilities being forced into education to get them off the pension, for their own wellbeing, which I fully support.” This illustrates additional pressures being placed on TAFE and VET as a result of a specific program governing people in reward for something else. Whether people do transition from the pension to work needs to be more thoroughly investigated. Sally (Industry, Queensland) also recognised this issue, stating “Quite often, they’re put into a course that they didn’t want to do but they’ve gone to Centerlink and they’re only, the only way they’re going to get their money is to do this course.”

The consequences are firstly related to the control of people through education. This may have a positive capital effect where people do transition
successfully to work. It could also have a positive effect on the physical institution, given potential incentives for accepting students with particular needs. However, it was established the Certificate IV does little to cater for students with these needs, which may have a less than acceptable effect. Industry feels the impact too, as it is up to them to provide work-specific training for all students. Of course, the idea of governmentality relates more to the theoretical concept of biopower and governance, and as such this illustration forms the basis of a more theoretical dialogue in Chapter 7.

In the context of political influence, Gill (Industry, Victoria) identified a problem that went unnoticed or without solution for some time. The program was a consequence of government policy, though a lack of control had negative consequences. She said, “For instance, there was a program in Victoria a few years ago where there was no system set up within the Victorian Training Department or within the Victorian Treasury Department to actually audit the funding program at any stage throughout its lifetime, until they finally worked out it was being abused.” Gill continued, saying, “So, they haven’t consulted with the actual training organisations and don’t have a good understanding of how it works and actually don’t identify how the system can be rorted. So, the funding comes out with no checks and balances, and then everybody jumps up and down when it’s abused.” The program has featured elsewhere in this analysis and will form a basis for discussion. The point made here is regarding a lack of control and the effect, particularly in the context of how it links to political objective and public impact.

In an unrelated instance, Jane (TAFE, Victoria) felt that sometimes governments respond to issues that meet their political needs rather than responding
to the problem at hand. “The many cases where the government just twists data, or they get poor quality data and they latch on to it because that's what they want rather than responding to what is actually there and providing a good service to their constituents.” This has implications for the way specific programs are designed, implemented and scrutinised, and is a point of further investigation beyond this study.

In summary, the effect of governmentality or political influence characterised this analysis in a number of ways. These additional instances help to substantiate some aspects that did not fit into other specific themes. First, this is in the way programs affect people and the way they work within a particular situation, the influence this has on the way they do something and the consequential impact. Second, political influence can be shaped by data that are collected, analysed and interpreted to fuel a specific need, which could have unreasonable consequences. The full effect and implication of this will be established and discussed in Chapter 7.

6.6 Consolidation of themes

Tables in this section detail the themes as they were exposed in literature review, examined and rationalised in Phase 1 and deeply interrogated in Phase 2. It consolidates the quantitative and qualitative results. It also offers new themes that rose from data, willingly illustrated by stakeholders in the discourse of the domains of enquiry throughout Phase 2.

The tables are devised by domain (for example, the core objectives of VET), with the themes arranged into the leftmost column. The findings are summarised into the rightmost column in the table.
Table 6.7 provides the findings for the core objectives of VET, as they were identified in Phase 1 and Phase 2.

**Table 6.7**

*Findings from empirical data for the core objectives of VET*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 1: The core objectives of VET</th>
<th>Combined findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The efficacy of VET</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A theme at the core of VET as a system;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• perception of a stronger system than a weaker one overall;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• higher perception of VET by TAFE/RTOs than other stakeholders in the context of valuable learning experiences, enhancing student employability, employability, quality training and assessment, and contextualisation; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• a perception for a less academic system potentially undermines the value of VET as a tertiary qualification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A topic of conversation that rose from the data in Phase 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• quality is related to investment in training outcomes, quality of delivery and training experience,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 1: The core objectives of VET</td>
<td>Combined findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>particularly evident from the perspective of TAFE in private RTOs;</td>
<td>• a perspective that a lack of authority over standards in some cases leads to diminished quality of delivery;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• a perspective that a lack of authority over standards in some cases leads to diminished quality of delivery;</td>
<td>• a lack of quality is hurting trust in the industry sector for highly trained and skilled workers; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• a lack of quality is hurting trust in the industry sector for highly trained and skilled workers; and</td>
<td>• unit choice within packages could limit the value of the qualification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impacts of legislative change</td>
<td>• Legislative change arose from the data in Phase 2. It has a specific relationship to the effects of governmentality;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• contestability arrangements impacted TAFE financially, students were disadvantaged by course offerings, caused increases to student load debt for courses that were beyond their personal, financial and educational means, which were perpetrated across States even when outcomes were known before implementation; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 1: The core objectives of VET</td>
<td>Combined findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• industry indicated lower trust in outcomes in Phase 1, which was substantiated in Phase 2, particularly in the context of private RTOs and TAFE.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathways</td>
<td>• This theme was a focus in Phase 1 and further examined in Phase 2;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• entry level course offerings as a result of contestability limited pathways between senior schooling and VET, particularly where students had not completed the school certificate in their State;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• stakeholders perceived that profitability drove decisions to offer particular courses, particularly those with low cost-to-value ratios in TAFE;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• VET is not as well advertised as a viable post-school option by some institutions;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• stakeholders felt those who engaged with VET held a greater potential for a more sustainable long-term outcome;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• there was cross-case agreement in Phase 1 that VET equipped people for the world of work; and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• there is a lack of clarity for pathways between school, VET and university, particularly for VET to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 1: The core objectives of VET</td>
<td>Combined findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>university, and how this is governed and applied generally. There was agreement amongst cases that university was a valid pathway, though mean scores were higher for work and further VET training in Phase 1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**VET in Schools**

- This was a topic in Phase 1; TAFE/RTOs held the highest mean scores for all questions in this segment, which was curious due to the greater connection for institutions to VET in Schools;
- industry and TAFE/RTOs differed statistically for all questions in Phase 1;
- some institution stakeholders felt VET in Schools was not as strong and perhaps this substantiated the rhetoric of TAFE being a stronger option for VET education; and
- the narrative of people who are ‘anti-VET’ may impact student experiences and undermine the value and outcomes of VET beyond and within schools.

**VET Certification**

- This theme is exclusive to Phase 1;
### Theme 1: The core objectives of VET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Combined findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• industry stakeholders felt neutrally about VET qualifications as a measure of aptitude;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• all cases agreed learners could transfer knowledge and skills to work or further training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.8 provides findings from the data in Phase 1 and Phase 2 as it relates to the topic of work placement.

*Table 6.8*

*A summary of the findings as they relate to work placement from Phase 1 and 2*

### Theme 2: Work placement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Combined findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• In Phase 1, this was directly related to the overall consideration of arrangements, where in Phase 2 a particular focus on quality was evident;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• notably, institutions and TAFE felt neutrally about employer screening processes, places of employment, quality assurance, access arrangements in Phase 1, which became more evident in Phase 2;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The nature and quality of work placements
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 2: Work placement</th>
<th>Combined findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• the quality of placements was of particular concern for stakeholders in Phase 2, characterised by appropriate site, engaged employer, quality organisation and good communication; and • all cases agreed work placement was effective, enhanced skills, knowledge, employability and competency and had adequate time requirements.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheap labour, high cost • This was an emergent theme in Phase 2; • industry reported students were often not ready for work placement and, particularly in this scenario, the placements were costly for their business; and • employers could benefit from the work placement experience by identifying strong future employees as easily as employees could identify appropriate future employers, though this takes mutual investment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reluctance to take students • This was a new theme that emerged in Phase 2; • some employers were seen to be highly reluctant to take students, whether because of a communication or relationship breakdown or a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 2: Work placement</td>
<td>Combined findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>poor experience with a student. This limits capacity of placements and opportunities for students, particularly as graduates are often favoured for placements;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• employers are selective regarding the RTOs they will provide for, which may hurt incoming RTOs;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• student confidence in the workplace is potentially lacking, impacting trust of the employer and the overall experience for the student; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• work placement is more effective when brokered, releasing pressure on schools to manage the relationships.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Improving access and frequency | In Phase 1, it was indicated that employers, TAFE/RTOs and institutions prefer a blended approach to work placement which relies on simulated and industry work placements; |
|                               | • Workplace learning and real experiences are better supported by all stakeholders, as they tended to have better outcomes; |
|                               | • communication and relationships are critical for work placement to be a success for all stakeholders; |
Theme 2: Work placement

Combined findings

- remote locations and placements are a critical issue, where there are limited employers and limited industry in these locations. The economic responsibility is put on the student to manage the costs associated with accessing these placements; and
- there is a lack of knowledge and support for students with special needs, particularly in industry, which has a substantial impact on student outcomes.

Table 6.9 provides the outcomes of investigation into apprenticeship. In Phase 1, this focused on School-based apprenticeship, however in Phase 2 it morphed to include both school and non-school based apprenticeships.

Table 6.9

The results and findings of Phase 1 and 2 as it relates to School and non-school based apprenticeships and traineeships

Theme 3: School and non-school based apprenticeship
Employer commitment

- This theme was evident in the data in Phase 1, though it was completely realised in Phase 2;
- a lack of understanding of the language of VET in Schools, VET and apprenticeship or traineeship may impact outcomes, as evidenced by stakeholders who indicated a lack of investment due to a lack of understanding by industry;
- stakeholders agreed on the benefits of SBAT arrangements, but industry felt more time was necessary for students, which differed statistically to TAFE/RTOs who agreed time was adequate; and
- institutions and industry felt more work placement (unpaid) was the best way to achieve more time in industry, whilst simulated workplace learning was second.

Outcomes for growth

- This theme rose from the data in Phase 2;
- political expectations for growing SBAT numbers put pressure on SBAT trainers (institutions) and industry; and
- capital development was potentially limited by the specific experience, which is compounded by a lack of quality mentors in industry.
Experiences with students

- This was an emergent theme in Phase 2;
- industry, in Phase 2, indicated a particular issue with the training provided through Group Training organisations. These were lacking expected quality, but more evidence is required that is beyond the scope of this study; and
- contestability has caused a shift in the way large industry providers would train apprentices; therefore, smaller industry businesses are required to provide this training which puts substantial pressure on their bottom line.

Table 6.10 details the findings according to stakeholders’ perspectives on teacher qualifications from the results of Phase 1 and Phase 2.

Table 6.10

Summary of findings for stakeholder perspectives on teaching qualifications in VET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 4: Teacher Qualifications</th>
<th>Combined findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TAA / TAE</td>
<td>The TAE / TAA was a question posed in Phase 1, though the real value came through in Phase 2. There was general</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Theme 4: Teacher Qualifications

**Combined findings**

- support for the TAA / TAE as a qualification in Phase 1;

- in Phase 2, it was found the qualification itself lacked strength and applicability for trainers and was less appropriate for classroom management than a bachelor-level qualification;

- stakeholders reported a negative experience with the qualification and its application – there was support for increasing the qualification in some instances to a bachelor qualification;

- there is a reliance on industry skills and knowledge to effectively measure competency, which some teachers lack (because of a lack of industry qualification);

- industry qualifications were indicated as critical to success as a teacher in VET;

- there was a general level of support for yearly professional development for trainers and teachers by all stakeholders,
Theme 4: Teacher Qualifications

Combined findings

though institutions reported they should never have to engage in further VET education or training;

• for professional development where industry could provide the most influence, industry ranked the highest for yearly occurrence, but ranked lower where they would have to provide the experience;

• teacher quality (particularly in VET in Schools) impacted quality and successful outcomes;

• some RTOs are deliberately utilising less scrupulous RTOs to upgrade their qualifications because they disagree with the requirements; some RTOs are allowing teachers to cheat and lie on their plagiarised assessment tasks to obtain their upgrades due to complex requirements;

• industry expects upgrade requirements to be more rigorous; and

• compliance is a substantive issue but has importance in the scope of VET; the
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 4: Teacher Qualifications</th>
<th>Combined findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>implications for the TAE is that its focus on compliance is misplaced given the need for better quality teaching outcomes over non-essential compliance requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry experience</td>
<td>• Phase 1 indicated an industry qualification and relevant experience is expected by stakeholders for qualified teachers;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• evidence in Phase 2 indicates stakeholders perceive a lack of industry experience correlates with a lack of capacity to teach practical skills, which impacts competency;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• there is a call for greater recognition of quality professional development by teachers;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• stakeholders indicated a need for more funding to support teacher release to industry for professional development;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• funded workplace release for professional development may ease the burden for</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Theme 4: Teacher Qualifications

Combined findings

- institutions unable to afford the overhead;
- enhanced workplace experience for teachers may lift the status of VET and, particularly, VET in Schools where the perception of capability of teachers is the lowest.

Findings for employability skills are provided in Table 6.11.

Table 6.11
Summary of findings for the theme of employability skills

Theme 5: Employability skills

Combined findings

- Phase 1 took a more macro-view of generic or employability skills;
- Phase 1 evidence indicated a broad level of applicability for the frameworks for learners, teaching and learning, work placement and
Theme 5: Employability skills

Combined findings

Employers where all cases agreed or strongly agreed;

- drilling down in Phase 1 indicated neutral stance for institutions and industry in assessment, providing employers a measure of capability, measuring productivity and use in writing references; Industry indicated neutrally for feedback to learners and teaching and learning.

- Phase 2 indicated the skills framework was more integrated or implicit, whilst explicit teaching increase hours to a high degree;

- industry is reliant on VET trainers to train students in employability, for which institutions and TAFE disagreed that is was their responsibility; and

- there is a need for greater communication and investment by industry in ensuring students are work-ready.

Effectiveness for industry

- Phase 2 provided the greatest level of detail in this emerging theme;
Theme 5: Combined findings

Employability skills

- more explicit use and integration by industry could increase the effectiveness of skill development in students; and
- maturity, and potentially age, is a factor on how well students learn and use the generic, employability or core skills for work.

Refinement of the core skills may be necessary

- Phase 2 raised a new theme in the context of greater refinement of employability skills; and
- self-confidence, self-belief and self-esteem were seen as critical first steps to developing employability skills, particularly when it comes to adaptability and fitting in with industry culture.

The findings for additional themes identified in Phase 1 and 2 are detailed in Table 6.12.
Table 6.12

Additional themes revealed in the data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 6: Additional Themes</th>
<th>Empirical findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Inflated views of TAFE and RTOs | • It was indicated there may be some rationality for these viewpoints;  
• there was a more positive view of the outcomes of VET by TAFE, though it was indicated by some that TAFE had some areas of improvement to make; and  
• industry indicated greater value remained with TAFE in development of competencies. |
| Industry expectations | • Students are expected to be work-ready and exposed to the relevant skills and tools for their workplace, sometimes to a greater degree than perhaps schools (particularly) enable;  
• TAFE offers a potentially more valuable certification than other options, but evidence is unclear;  
• teachers should be capable of teaching the necessary skills, though this is not evidenced in student skills and capabilities; and  
• there is a complex relationship between schools and industry, where the onus seems to remain with the |
Theme 6: Additional Themes

Empirical findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pathways and tertiary education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>schools to ensure students are appropriately equipped for work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• There is some complexity around application of pathway arrangements in universities; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• although discussed at length in Phase 2, it was worth exploring the impact of current issues related to this theme.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These are the core, empirical findings of survey and interview. Whilst they have remained the focus of the last three chapters, and take some level of primacy in literature review, they form only the foundation of a greater task. The purpose of these is to define the means by which power is exercised amongst stakeholders throughout the implementation of policy. Further, it is to establish the effects of power on capital under these policies, and how governmentality has shaped power relations, and vice versa. The narrative of this study now shifts into these domains in Chapter 7.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter represents an endeavour to generate greater clarity for the data in Phase 1 and to explore new data, the interviews with stakeholder participants. Thematic synthesis through coding took place under the same domains as Phase 1, whilst others rose from data in Phase 2. Each interview was carefully analysed, coded
and highlighted to establish the discourse of truth amongst these old and new themes. What emerged was the clarification of Phase 1 results, the emergence of stakeholder perspectives, new ideas and themes, as outlined for the analysis of Phase 1 data. The new themes materialised from Phase 2 data, which added to the breadth of understanding from Phase 1 and allowed a broader narrative to develop. It was a chance to explore the current situation and gain greater knowledge of what is happening on the ground for teachers, trainers, administration and employers, those individuals divided into cases.

What took place was presenting findings as they relate to the domains of investigation, the specific domains of VET the study sought to interrogate. These are the empirical findings of this study; a way of defining what is known, and how this helps to refine knowledge of the present circumstance. By ascertaining this knowledge, we developed an understanding of three pillars established by this study. These include

- knowledge of the domains of investigation, the focus points of literature review, survey and analysis in Phase 1 and interview and analysis in Phase 2;
- a map of the power relations, as they are interpreted, between case groups of stakeholders in VET and the associated understandings of the interplay of governmentality and biopower; and
- a nexus between power, empirical knowledge and the forms of capital, insomuch as this is formed within the discourse of VET and the power relations that enables or disables it.

What takes place in chapter 7 is a discussion of the map of power relations established by the empirical data. It regains place of primacy in the study, having
made way for empirical investigation that was necessary to uncover power relations, illustrate the effect of power on the forms of capital and allow the consequences of governmentality rise to the surface. This seeks to resolve the research question and suggest an interpretation of power relations in VET to illustrate theory.
7 Discussion: Power relations, capital and Governmentality

Until now, the study has focused on empirical facets of VET. Literature review sought the historical understandings of our present circumstance. It set about identifying the discontinuities and shifts that have led us to where we are and formed the basis for investigation. Phase 1 quantified these, and Phase 2 expanded this with a deep context of stakeholder perspectives through extensive interview. The findings were presented, yet these were just the small details of a much bigger picture. The prime focus of this research was a quest to illustrate power relations, the effects of this on capital and the manifestations of governmentality, whether of government or institutionally. As a consequence, this chapter sets out the findings according to a) the theoretical ambitions of this study; b) the notions of capital; c) relationships of governmentality and power; and d) the research questions. This order is deliberate, as it forms a progressive development of knowledge that starts with the frameworks that underpin the research questions. The discussion of power relations is accomplished according to the five domains of Marshall’s toolbox, namely

1. the systems of differentiations;
2. the types of objectives pursued intentionally by those who act upon the actions of others when power relations are brought into existence;
3. the means of bringing power relations into play;
4. forms of institutionalization; and
5. the degree of rationalization that, depending upon the situation, endows, elaborates, and legitimates processes for the exercise of power.

Under the framework of capital proposed in Chapter 2, a way of understanding how capital is formed and effected under the manifestations of power relations was described. These domains included

- economic capital;
- social capital;
- cultural capital; and
- symbolic capital.

A discussion is offered on the forms of governmentality and the effect this has on policy implementation in terms of the various stakeholders and any relationship to power. Finally, then, a response to the research questions. The foremost research question was

*Under what circumstances are power relations exercised insomuch as they construct stakeholder perspectives within the systems of differentiation in VET that influence the implementation and formation of policy in Australian VET?*

In answering this, there are five, unordered sub-questions. These include

- *What objectives guide the implementation of policy, and how do the actions of others that act on these objectives guide and affect implementation?*
- *What implication do the systems and relations of power have for capital formation within VET policies or programs?*
- *What forms the institutionalisations of policy to enable systems of power, governmentality and capital?*
- *How do stakeholders rationalise power relations in their context?*
In what ways can resultant empirical knowledge, discourses of truth, knowledge and context of power relations be used to inform policy formation?

It should be clear these are devised around the theoretical frameworks, considered in light of how theory can illustrate the circumstance in which this study took place. As this chapter progresses, the answers to these questions will develop. Hence, attention is drawn to this fact in the course of discussion.

7.1 Power relations

The following provides findings in response to Marshall’s toolbox, a synthesis of Foucault’s (1983a) way of analysing power relations. In the discussion, the ways in which stakeholders and sectors are differentiated are provided. From this, the objectives that rose to the surface in discussion are offered. It is reasonable to assume these are not exhaustive, but what is well defined. The means of bringing power into play is generally formed around the policies and laws that enabled power to be exercised, but also provides other mechanisms where possible. The forms of institutionalisation talk about the ways in which policy and the foundations of power relations have been institutionalised over time, such as work and the nature of trade training. Finally, rationalisations are illustrated. These are the reasonings stakeholders provided for their behaviours, a certain recognition of the power relations and their effects. The result is a way of understanding how stakeholders interact, the functions of this and the effects on VET.

7.1.1 Systems of differentiation

Throughout this study, there are delineations of the systems that differentiate one from another. For Foucault (1983a), the systems of differentiation are defined by
people, institutions, cultural differences, and so forth. Delving into these systems, they are primarily defined in this study by the operational differentiation between institutions.

The Australian Qualifications Framework and associated policy has, structurally, informed a system of differentiation between sectors, though over time this has been blurred substantially. To illustrate, the features of vocational education, such as teacher qualification requirements, courses defined by the AQF, the functional places of training and nature of facilities, affiliation with apprenticeship and identification of VET as a less academic option, describe its place within the educational sector. Similarly, an academic qualification, the teacher qualification requirements and expectations, length and rigour of degrees, levels of qualification under the AQF and places of training define universities. Schools, particularly secondary high schools in this context, are defined by certain features such as age, grade offerings (similarly to the AQF) and nature of education. Evidence of these features is shown throughout the data in the way participants discussed their specific position within the sector and the position of others. Blurring between the institutions is evidenced in the capacity for schools, TAFE, RTOs and universities to offer VET courses at any level, similarly to schools and TAFE being able to offer a Year 12 Senior School certificate. The VET context differs, however, in that it displaces responsibility of an educational context across all stakeholders. Displacement of responsibility indicates each institution, schools, RTOs and TAFE in the context of this study, relies on the larger collective to know their contribution to VET and be willing to work in its interest. Evidence in the data indicated some institutions chased financial incentives over quality and less profitable course offerings that had a more substantial benefit to the community. Consequently, it is challenging to say
emphatically that institutional systems form points of differentiation in VET education because of the AQF. But, to some degree the stakeholders of each broader institution still report their alliance with a specific institution. This is accepted, as it informs various stakeholder views and their capacity to speak on behalf of what they know.

Institutionally, there is a delineation between sector stakeholders, institutions, industry and TAFE/RTOs. It could be said post-analysis that RTOs and TAFEs felt they sat separately from each other in the sector, and in a more practical way they do. They are differentiated by their specific institutional boundaries in that they are TAFE, Schools or RTOs. Where industry fits in, given they are a separate sector entirely, is that their offering is in the practical training that supports completion of a VET qualification. Institutions such as universities were not included in this study, though their mention brings their position into play as a factor in power relationships. Hence, a system of differentiation is bounded by the case lines as they were drawn, though TAFE and RTOs could sit separately in this game of power relations, much as universities have a substantial role to play.

This system of differentiation defines the ways in which power relations are operationalised in the context of this study. The boundaries of how an institution acts in the broader context of VET, their specific position to offer VET, the value associated with their offering and the way these acts create lines of delineation between institutions, illustrate this system.
7.1.2 Types of objectives

In establishing power relations, it is necessary to consider the types of objectives pursued by those who act upon the actions of others. This seems convoluted, but essentially it is to identify the objectives of an individual, say a teacher pursuing a particular outcome for a student, and the actions taken as a result of this objective that may be the result of the action of another person. There are a number of examples in analysis.

Universities, TAFE, RTOs, schools and industry RTOs have the capacity to act on the actions of the others, and hence, bring about the potential for power relations to be exercised between sector institutions. These actions are embodied in circumstances such as recognition of qualifications where one can refuse to uphold a qualification if one chooses to do so, or vice versa. This is not an intended function of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), but the objective of universities, for example, was evidenced in the data. This impacts the potential value of VET qualifications in the context of pathways and a decision to embark on a VET qualification. Should the qualification be upheld, the capital potential is maintained and, hence, educational investment made worthwhile. If it is not, the value of the qualification (time spent, human and economic capital) is diminished. Unfortunately, this may not be known until after the qualification is complete. As for the value of courses, where there was no perceived benefit in completing a VET course, real or not, students may elect alternative pathways. It is curious why an institution would choose not to uphold the qualification, given the purported benefits of VET as a preliminary qualification to university studies (Barber et al., 2015). Furthermore, and somewhat problematically, the AQF and Australian Quality Training Framework
(AQTF) are designed to manage these pathways; as a result, these are offered as means for exercising power relations. For instance, there was evidence to show universities use their rights under the AQF to not recognise qualifications for transition into higher education. Fowler (2017) found this type of action costs students money for qualifications they did not need or should not have had to redo. In the context of this study, this was observed in evaluating pathways and transition from schools to VET and into tertiary education.

The actions associated with dividing pathways and VET from mainstream has the potential impact of isolating institutions based on a perception of the value of their particular offering within education. For instance, it was found a perception of academic value for an institution influenced student choice, industry interaction for work placement and the way in which the institution could attract students. More appealing courses and those with a better industry network had a greater chance of enrolling students. Institutions found it challenging to obtain appropriate placements and felt their value, academically and in the context of work-readiness, affected this relationship. The perception of academic value permeated across cases. This creates a platform for certain sectors, industry for example, to hold a particular value and hence, engage differently, which has been substantiated elsewhere (Fowler, 2017).

An objective was expressed in the discourse of teachers and their perception of the value of VET. This objective seemed to be to highlight the often-competing agendas of secondary and tertiary and VET education (though they do exist to complement each other in society as a whole). For some teachers, it was indicated that a strict delineation between the two exists. For example, some expressed their perception of the value of VET in comparison to senior secondary, essentially
mainstream, education. The narrative was perceived to degrade the value and quality of the teaching and training, particularly in direct association with student outcomes. Inherent and known issues with the typical student in VET (R. Ryan, 2002) could be compounded by the greater level of apathy in delivering high-impact and valuable courses. Furthermore, it may influence those considering becoming teachers to not train to deliver VET qualifications for concerns over how this may impact them professionally.

Whilst the objective itself is unclear, the actions of industry in the context of work placement embodied a strong notion of power relations between educational sectors. It was found that institutions would be at the mercy of industry in the capacity to ensure work placement opportunities for students were available. In many instances, it was indicated that industry would be highly selective about the number of placements they could offer and how this relationship was managed. Often, this was different for each institution. Stakeholders felt industry often provided the greater balance of placements to higher-education or were generally unwilling to provide placements. RTOs felt it a competitive aspect to their business, whereby they would need quality placements to entice students, which often impacted enrolments and could impact the way they were perceived by students. The power for industry to restrict or offer work placement also created an opportunity for industry to only be affiliated with certain RTOs or providers; essentially, ones that could provide them with the right type of student. Their perception as to the success of the RTO (whether school, TAFE or private) could drive their objective in not providing placements to other providers deemed less successful. Schools found brokers easier to use as the relationship could be managed though a single entity. Brokers seemed like a positive
way to overcome this imbalance, given a broker could theoretically send a student from any institution.

A related objective was raised in that participants identified industry as using work placement as a way to secure cheap labour. It is a known quantity that work placement students are in vast supply, and for enterprising businesses there is no shortage. This was established in discourse on the sheer number of students who cannot obtain the necessary placement hours to complete qualifications. There is a complexity in the actions of industry businesses who take advantage of this, as they fail to develop the skills in the student as a necessary part of their qualification. Moreover, it restricts the student from becoming competent in the skills they are trying to achieve, an important aspect of work placement and work experience. These actions were indicated as a result of mistrust in the organisations training the students, a lack of appreciation for what students may be capable of, or a misunderstanding of the opportunity work placement provides. Throughout analysis, industry indicated a want for more work-ready students but are poorly invested in their training. It is reasonable to conclude that some sectors of industry are actively and unfairly utilising student skills, time and labour whilst remaining poorly invested in training outcomes. As previously discussed, industry holds the balance of power in this context, where they have a greater level of control over the enactment of work placement outcomes, placements and opportunities, and as such have the capability to decide the level and rate of investment in skills development. For some stakeholders, it was a view that industry needs to become more deeply invested and reasonable in providing work placement, if they are to expect work-ready students entering the workforce. This could shift the objective from obtaining cheap labour to reduce costs to training
stronger, work-ready individuals who could improve the overall economic return. In some ways, the benefits seem to outweigh the risks.

An objective of VET providers, particularly TAFE and institutions, was to ensure the value and quality of VET. This influenced their relationship and discourse of other providers, particularly private RTOs, given TAFE and institutions’ perspective of private RTO motives. The actions of TAFE and institutions was to work on building relationships with industry and to overcome barriers with other institutions by building value in student outcomes. These actions were often met with resistance, given the objectives of industry and private RTOs, for example. What came to light, particularly in Phase 1, was the indication of a higher opinion of VET by predominantly TAFE and RTOs than industry. These indications of higher value substantiate claims in Phase 2 made by TAFE, whilst other stakeholders indicated that perhaps these perspectives were warranted. Their objective may well have been to elevate the status of VET by voicing a perspective through the mechanisms of the study.

In a discussion on the validation of teacher capacity and teacher certification to train others in VET, there were considerable issues between stakeholder perceptions. For instance, the objective of teachers is to train students in VET. However, for some there is a disconnect between the purpose of the Certificate IV TAE qualification required to teach VET and a perspective that a bachelor qualification in (tertiary, secondary or higher) education provides much of the same outcome, though the latter is specifically designed for teaching mainstream education. The difference between the Certificate IV and a bachelor qualification is the former’s specific focus on VET compliance, which is a legislative need. Legislatively, the
The objective is to provide teachers with the necessary tools to understand the nature of compliance in VET; what lacks are the specific teaching capabilities inherent in other forms of teacher education. As a result, RTOs and individuals circumvent the rules and requirements by explicitly seeking ways around completing upgrade or maintenance appropriately.

The breadth of objectives is wide, given the interplay of many stakeholders in this context. Institutions held objectives that focused on the success of students, quality training and expectations of other stakeholders. These objectives guide actions, which cause power to be exercised. Some of these are the power ‘over’, a power of control and management, the technologies of control (Foucault, 2002). Others are the power ‘to’, the technologies of self, in the way that they enable or give people the power to act in a particular way (Foucault, 2000). For these objectives, it is their personal knowledge that drives action and hence, influences the actions of others. For this to occur, there are the means by which power is brought into play.

7.1.3 The means of bringing power relations into play

According to Foucault (1983a), the means of bringing power relations into play is often the consequence of legislative action, control or economic reward, though there are other measures. In the context of this study, these are the policies that affect the way in which stakeholders interact, which include the Australian Qualifications Framework and Australian Quality Training Framework, work placement legislation, certification of teachers, generic skills used in the measure of capability and legislative change. These were the top-level focus of the study which were considered in literature review. The following provides a short analysis of the interactions between stakeholders in relation to these policies.
Under the AQF, requirements for the delivery of VET or higher education courses differ. The AQF defines the ways in which certification is structured, in the way Certificate I skills and knowledge underpin those in Certificate II, and so on. The progressive nature is designed to allow transference horizontally across qualifications at the same level or vertically at different levels (Australian Qualifications Framework Council, 2013). The framework operates across VET and tertiary providers. Throughout analysis the ways in which various operators functioned under the AQF was featured in discussion. The Australian Quality Training Framework details the specific requirements for RTOs according to legislation in the provision of VET in Australia. Evidence of how the AQTF provides a platform for power relations is identified in the way universities recognise AQF credentials, for example. Competence of staff is another control point of the AQTF. Both were evidenced in this study as ways in which power relations were exercised between stakeholders. In the context of Australian VET, authorities are responsible for managing the enactment of these policies, providing surveillance systems for the AQF and AQTF.

The legislation and guides that structure work placement was evidenced in the study as providing a means for power relations to come in to play between stakeholders. In many ways, they were implicated by their actions and expectations for how work placements were experienced. Industry perspectives for work-ready students, the implications of what it means to be a work placement provider, and the ways in which schools had to manage the relationships just to obtain placements are evidence this policy provides a substantial opportunity for stakeholder interaction.

There is evidence to suggest Certificate IV qualifications, regulations for teacher training in VET, and the contention between mainstream, university educated
teachers and VET trainers (also teachers, when in schools) provided a means for bringing power in to play. Drilling down into the experience, it seemed mainly to be founded on a perspective tied to the value of VET as a form of tertiary education. It was explained as an attitude voiced by teachers in a position of power to influence another’s actions; perhaps it is their objective. By voicing their perspective to VET teachers, trainers and students it had the potential consequence of giving rise to others’ voice in the same context. This can also fuel a perspective that teacher-trainers are underqualified to teach by holding a certificate IV TAE, and hence drive a notion that the minimum qualification should be increased. The perspective drives a greater divide between the sectors and could be used as a cause for contention between institutions. Evidence was documented through the issues associated with pathways for students. The rationalisation of this power relationship is related to the ways in which people speak their opinion and the delineation between trainer certification requirements.

Generic skills were limited in their use as an obvious means, however there are still experiences where stakeholders felt the ways in which the frameworks were implemented may impact student outcomes. For instance, where the framework is used in a measure of capability, or as a means of providing feedback to the institution about a student’s work ethic, there is an implication for the way the student will behave as a result.

Legislative change influenced the exercise of power relationships, particularly between students and various providers, in that students would be more likely to choose a private RTO for enrolment where the courses they offered had greater appeal. Offering computer hardware or glossy, attractive courses like personal
training and fitness were identified as an approach TAFEs were unable to match, for example. As legislation changed, specifically relating to obtaining government funded enrolments, it provided private RTOs with a way to generate higher levels of income through increased enrolments and hence, provide incentives for enrolments.

In summary, it is most commonly observed in this study that legislation plays the greatest part in bringing power relations into play. These legislative policies provide a way for stakeholders to interact in the context of control and management of outcomes. To a lesser extent, it is also grounded in legislative change, which featured as a way for certain organisations to manipulate funding, influence student outcomes and impact enrolments for other institutions. It also had a greater impact on the VET sector as a whole.

7.1.4 Forms of Institutionalisation

In defining the forms of institutionalisation, there are a number of systems that were identified to give rise to these. Specifically, these include

- the institution of VET as a sector of education within the broader spectrum of secondary and higher education; essentially, education with VET as a subsystem of that system;
- the institution of State legislation in the operation of VET, given the interactivity of stakeholders, government regulatory authorities and recipients; this incorporates requirements for RTOs; and
- the institution of work in how it relates to VET in the issuance of qualifications for trade recognition, and the ways in which industry and educational stakeholders interact as a result.
The ambit of VET as a sector within education is well established in literature review. VET acts as an institution in the way it is governed by rules and objectives. It provides the historical structure and customs that have been afforded education and its operation (Foucault, 1982). It is institutionalised by the way in which stakeholders refer to its operation; they speak to its history and value, or the way in which they experienced it. Stakeholders identify ways in which VET has shaped certain practices or more tangible institutions, such as VET, RTOs and schools. Further, it is embodied in the way VET sits amongst other educational offerings, as a way to engage a certain subset of students that may not otherwise be afforded an education.

The second point is more to the State operation of VET and its control through regulatory bodies. These hierarchical structures (Foucault, 1982) define the ways in which VET is governed; in a sense it is the surveillance of the State in control of the operation. Literature review provided a number of instances where this organisation, operation and regulation has broken down. Some were seen to trickle into the discourse of this study, such as contestability, operation of teacher certification and the ways in which pathways for students were operated. These give rise to the opportunity for power relations to become part of the fabric of the institution of VET, and embody the outcomes of power ‘to’, and the power ‘over’ (Foucault, 1982). Further, as Foucault (1982) describes, this is the way in which power is governmentalized; an object of the State by which power relations are controlled and centralised by the State and these institutions.

Finally, the institution of work as it relates to the context of VET as a way to achieve a qualification for a trade, such as plumbing, carpentry, cooking or mechanical work. This conceptualisation of institution is described by stakeholders as
the way of ‘doing’ something as it has always been done, or a comparison between what is now, and what was historically. The institution of trade-based work is defined by the labour-intensive education that is required of it, and the ways in which the Mechanics Institutes, TAFEs and modern RTOs have formed it historically. This too operates in a manner of control through issuance of qualifications, licencing and verification mediums that provide legitimisation to work in the industry. The requirements of legislation are as much shaped by this institution as they are by the historical factors that have defined legislation.

These forms of institutionalisation define the ways in which VET functions. Essentially, the control and empowerment mechanisms under which power relations rise and operate. They operate in parallel, as seen throughout data, where stakeholders talk to each throughout interview and in examining action within VET. The final piece of the puzzle in the context of power relations, then, are the rationalisations of power relations.

7.1.5 Rationalisations

To rationalise power is to identify its effectiveness in relationship to its objectives, or the cost. In this way, Foucault (1983a) measures costs as economic or “by the resistance which is encountered” (p. 224). Throughout analysis, stakeholders rationalised their actions or objectives. Particularly, the ways they did this included

- identification of policy changes that brought about poorer training outcomes for an increase in profits;
- potential for increased enrolments provided reasoning for universities to refuse credit-oriented pathways;
• a lack of investment, participation and attention by industry to VET may be a result of poorer training outcomes, poorer relationships with schools and students seemingly not ‘work-ready’; and

• opinions that break down the value of VET rationalised through the narratives of the broader educational community.

The value of VET was exposed as a position of power relations amongst stakeholders, particularly the consideration of quality training and hence, value of qualification. There was some perception amongst stakeholders that a lack of quality training impacted student outcomes. The shift in policy allowed for this to occur, given enrolments became more financially focused than about the value of training. TAFE and institution stakeholders rationalised this through the notion that RTOs were acting based on the opportunity presented by policy. They also identified that the lack of quality training was a direct result of the RTOs lack of investment in training delivery and experience.

Literature review revealed problematic relationships between universities and educational institutions, particularly in VET. Qualifications in VET particularly were not recognised in the process of credit transfer. This came through in the data, indicated by stakeholders as an issue for VET students transferring credit between organisations. Universities are arguably better off with greater enrolment numbers for courses, suggested by participants as a reason for over-credentialing in certain qualifications and limiting access to credited pathways. This may rationalise their behaviour, though the exact nature of this needs to be explored beyond the scope of this study.
Consider the relations of power in work placement. A student and an educational institution seeking work placement, under which they are bound to the employer who is willing, or unwilling, to provide the placement, but does so as a result of legislative requirement. The relationship is divided by their individual objectives; the student to obtain skills and work experience, whilst the employer to obtain some form of labour (as evidence suggested) and potentially provide some form of training and engage in some exchange of cultural capital. Power relationships are evidenced in student management and control in development of skills; they are the least qualified and experienced and are under surveillance and control of the more qualified people in the situation. Further, the parties are subject to the institutional requirements; educational legislation that requires them to engage in work placement and the rules of the organisation and institution for how they will behave, for instance. For the employer, the power relationship is legitimised in the hierarchical relationship, in that they are more qualified and as such, have the power of control, observation, knowledge and ‘time served’. For the student, it is legitimised by the expectations of the institution and the need for experience and a positive work placement report; evidence of this can be seen in the context of measuring generic skills or the assurance a student is ‘work-ready’. Finally, it is legitimised by the institution in their action of managing a positive relationship regardless of what the employer expects as a result. Even though it is a legislative necessity, placements are limited by employer engagement, and as a result the institution is reliant. This enacts and as a result, rationalises, the power relationships for all parties.

In another way, Industry rationalises their position of power in work placement for not providing placements through the poor experiences of past students, relationship breakdowns or their perception of greater benefit for working with
particular institutions. By voicing a perspective of how these relationships are formed, the actions of others and their response, they are rationalising their behaviour in a way that legitimises it and provides some reason for its occurrence. This action fuels the former notion provided, as in a superficial way it informs the deeper notions of relationship between the stakeholders.

As a voice of power within an organisation, a teacher has the capacity to shift and shape another’s actions and perspectives. Where they have an authority to speak their perspective into others that have less authority, or where there is a belief the teacher holds enough knowledge to speak with authority, this shift is activated. This links to the systems of differentiation, where for Foucault (1982) this can also relate to the status of people and their position to have authority to know what they know. In analysis, there are examples of people who use their voice to rationalise a relationship of power. For example, it was suggested an issue of contention between stakeholders was teacher qualifications and their position as a teacher-trainer. It was suggested VET trainers were ‘lesser’ teachers than those with a more academic qualification. Rationalisation of this perspective relates to the value of VET teachers and the lack of status VET holds as an academically rigorous form of education. Further to this example is the ways in which industry explores the context of student work-readiness and capability. If their narrative relates to the value of VET and its inability to achieve positive outcomes, it has the potential to rationalise the narrative of schools not reinforcing VET as a valuable post-school option. This has a potential long-term effect on the number of students selecting VET and capacity of the sector to be financially self-supporting, for example.
These rationalisations provide the reasons, the effectiveness of the relations of power between stakeholders. They are the underlying context provided by stakeholders as to the reasons these relationships exist. In summary, changes in policy is provided as one rationalisation for a struggle of power between stakeholders. In work placement, the behaviour of industry to engage and provide strong outcomes, or students to attend and gain valuable skills is rationalised by perspectives of student capabilities for work, their capacity to engage and a willingness to participate in work placement. Finally, the authority for teachers to influence the perspective of VET is rationalised by the narrative of differentiation between the sectors and how this provides a platform to voice these opinions.

7.1.6 Summary

Power, therefore, is nestled between stakeholders in VET, where the five domains of analysis have provided a way of analysing and detailing these relationships. Throughout analysis, a series of findings have been drawn from data. For the systems of differentiation, the stakeholders and policies under the AQF define the boundaries of VET in our context. These were clearly voiced by participants, with lines of symmetry drawn between participants from the various sectors. Cross-case comparisons could be drawn in empirical data analysis that strengthen case boundaries and show how strong the systems of differentiation are in VET. What is clear is that each stakeholder has a part to play, a substantial role, in the relationships in VET. Furthermore, the boundaries between stakeholders, between systems, carry similar veins of truth and experience.

Stakeholder objectives arose from the data, which formed a series of ways in which each system responded. Some were through actions, and others in word that
drove action, seemingly disconnected. These objectives had consequences, which formed the impact of power relationships on students, teachers, institutions and the public sector. Evidence showed the ways in which people were affected by these actions.

The means of bringing power into play was illustrated through a variety of policies, latitudes afforded some organisations and the interpretations of others. This enabled action to take place, as in many cases these laws and legislation were written in a way that enabled a balance of power to shift in a particular direction. This shift provided a platform from which power could be exercised in ways that empowered or facilitated control.

By analysing the forms of institutionalisation, it was possible to provide an outline of how historical narrative, legislation or action has formed the boundaries in VET. These institutionalisations, the VET and education sector, legislative authority and the institution of work, illustrate the formation of VET and the ways in which power can be exercised within these institutions. It also forms a system within which power relations can exist, because of a historical normalisation.

Rationalisation of power relations happened in the discourse of participants, who provided some reasoning for the existence of a particular action, legislation or experience. In some circumstances, participants simply accepted the situation because it is the status quo. Rationalisation is, to a degree, a measure of the success of the power relationship; a way of identifying how strong stakeholder objectives are and the associated actions, the institutions and means of bringing power into play.

Evidence shows that power is now equally shared amongst stakeholders. In this way, the relationships of power were found to be stronger where there is more
long-term benefit for the stakeholder. Schools, institutions at the helm of educating younger students, offered the greatest voice to the struggles for power, whilst industry built a narrative for the necessity of VET, without accepting their crucial role as responsibly as others. TAFE stakeholders shared their experiences between the many sectors, whilst implicating the actions and objectives as others in their struggle to maintain some semblance of a critical form of education. This study examined a great breadth of the sector and whilst many new questions have been identified, a magnitude of new knowledge has been developed.

7.2 Governmentality

An underlying facet of analysis throughout this study was the notion of governmentality. It was expected that throughout the data, there would be examples of how authority was exercised in the conduct of control and management of people. It was also an intention to discover the capabilities of people to govern themselves, particularly in the context of laws and legislation that provided them with the boundaries of this governance. These illustrations can be used to show how people either accepted these situations given their response to them, or even to understand how laws and legislation could be used in the governance of people. These have potentially become quite superficial, where more work is warranted to extrapolate these further in a way of examining the impact and effects. Some instances were identified and can, therefore, be offered.

For students, governance of self is a complex and necessary capability. In work placement, students are developing skills and knowledge that allow them to conduct themselves in the context of the trade and work they have decided to embark on. They are governed by the forms of work-readiness, expectations of the workplace,
the school and the relationships between the three stakeholders; industry, school and student. Students work within these boundaries because it provides them with the outcomes necessary to achieve, what is perceived as positive outcome associated with their potential for future work. This illustrates the nature of governmentality in the context of relationships of power, the exercise of this power and how each is governed by the rules of engagement between the parties; work, generic skills and formal training.

In the context of the Certificate IV, there is an expectation that teachers, trainers and RTOs work within the context of the legislation of VET to maintain and manage their qualifications. A revelation is that for some RTOs and teachers there is a willingness to work outside these requirements. RTOs provided evidence for a willingness to use other less scrupulous RTOs to generate their certifications because it enabled them to meet requirements without evidence of actually doing so. Teachers in senior high schools were found to deliberately circumvent upgrade expectations because of loopholes in the system that allowed this. Rationalisation was found in their disagreement with the requirements and a perspective that those were unnecessary for ongoing training. This illustrates the form of (hidden) governance controlling the implementation of VET, and a form of critique of stakeholders. This form is Foucault’s (2007) third point of not wanting to be governed, in that people do not accept the laws because they do not accept what is true, just because it is, or that someone in authority has said it is. It is a move beyond the regulations because of a personal perspective that opposes the governed truth.

The governance of teacher trainers is well embodied in Certificate IV qualifications. It is a governance of people by a law that insists teachers of a particular
education are appropriately qualified. This is not unique to VET but persists across all industries. The unique aspects of VET are, where there are blurring of provisions, there exists two certifications necessary to be a teacher. For senior school teachers, they require a bachelor’s degree in education and Certificate IV TAE. It is expected tertiary (university) teachers hold a degree one level above their teaching level. Data analysis in the study highlights a complexity where teachers voiced a negative feeling toward VET teaching qualification requirements, a sentiment discussed in literature review. The issuance of the Certificate IV is designed to equip people with the knowledge of compliance and requirements for teaching VET, though it was described as inadequate for the rigours of teaching and classroom management. For those that do not require the second qualification, the bachelor’s degree or higher, if there is a gap in classroom management and teaching techniques in the Certificate IV qualification then there exists a gap for students in VET. They may not be receiving the same quality of education received by mainstream students. Aforementioned complexities of the critique of teachers for the qualification highlight the way this is dealt with by teachers, trainers and RTOs.

For some people, there is a reliance on public funds as an income. This is usually the consequence of a lack of sufficient income, which may be related to a deficit in education. Alternatively, some people are afforded a supplemental income payment whilst studying full time at a certain level, so they can use that education to seek employment on completion. This form of governmentality is formed under a relationship between people and the State, in which people are afforded government support in return for improving their capital for the purpose of seeking work with a completed level of education. This also has an impact on families, since without the income and eventual work related to improvements in education, there is a limited
capability for people to support their family. VET education is a common mechanism for upskilling in these conditions as it is more accessible for those with a lower educational status. Problematically, contestability laws (the laws that enabled private RTOs to secure funding for enrolment) created a deficit in entry level courses or those that were expensive to run but may have provided a critical service for people who needed an entry level education. RTOs and TAFEs found the courses to be unprofitable and were more inclined to enrol people in more valuable (economically for the RTO) courses for which people were more willing to accrue a higher debt. Hence, in one way, a form of organisation and control that provided greater choice, created a greater set of problems for low skilled, less educated individuals.

An interesting finding was around the notion of deregulation and shifts in policy to open markets. It was observed that many stakeholders were adversely affected by the provision of contestable funding for enrolment of students into VET courses. RTO enrolments increase and incomes substantially improved, which was a positive outcome. Students, however, were negatively affected by deregulation, as found in literature review and in aspects of Phase 2. Issues such as increased student debt were brought to light, causing a long-term complex problem for return of their investment and clearance of debts for which they never realised the benefits. Here, a shift in governance had a negative effect. Hence, when considering this in light of the concepts of governance, there is potential for control and management to manifest as a positive mechanism. There is, however, evidence to show where bureaucracy causes as many issues as it sets out to solve; literature review details these examples. As a result, and well beyond the scope of this study, it may be worth considering the positive effects of governmentality, and the ways in which it can be used to manage potential problems in alternative policy.
7.2.1 Summary

These forms of governmentality, and in some cases, critique, capture the ways in which policy affects the operation of VET. It also showcases the illustrations of relationships between stakeholders, particularly in the forms of policy within which they act. Their actions are broad and diverse, yet mainly self-interested. Stakeholder actions are the result of their objectives, as highlighted in discussions on the forms of power and the relations of power, found in the course of this study. By exploring and illustrating these forms of governmentality and the resulting affects, there is potential to respond to them and make change for the future, especially in the context of policy and stakeholder relationships. This is because policy is a guiding force behind the power relations of stakeholders, as well established.

7.3 Capital

The formation of capital is an expected outcome of VET, as is its purpose and intent, outlined in literature review. What was less apparent were the influences of power relations when it came to the difference between potential or intended and actual outcome. These were identified in data in Phase 2, given the inference of participants when describing outcomes for students. Specific analysis was limited to the identification of where the formation of capital may have been revealed. These are discussed in the following sections on economic, social, cultural and human capital.

7.3.1 Economic capital

The formation of economic capital occurs as a consequence, in some ways, of education. It is a way in which the value of education is realised in the context of a return on investment (Bourdieu, 1986). However, in a scenario where a university
denies credit recognition for a student who has completed a qualification with comparable outcomes, there is a deficit in that student’s ability to utilise these credits at a higher level of education. As is well known, a higher level of education is usually synonymous with a higher income. As such, the effect of this is to reduce the earning power of an individual with greater levels of debt. Furthermore, this action of denial inflicts a longer time period between when the capital is produced and return on that investment. Hence, the objective or an underlying power relation between sectors affects the earning potential, economic capital, of a person.

The context of training quality and the value associated with VET qualifications contains a possibly problematic relationship for the development of capital. As identified in analysis, some industry stakeholders hold a low value perspective of VET, given scenarios of work placement or the quality of training conducted by certain organisations. Some felt even TAFE was outdated and not necessarily meeting needs of industry. As a result, students who do obtain a VET qualification in the hope of seeking work have a lower potential to demonstrate the value of this qualification. As a result, the return on investment is less than an equivalent university qualification. This is also affected by the context of universities denying credit for these qualifications, in that even if a person was to achieve a VET qualification there may be no long-term or educational benefit.

An over saturation of qualifications in a narrow market may impact VET, though it was also noted universities are culpable in over-extending the number of qualifications applicable in markets with minimal jobs. It was noted that many students in VET found it challenging to obtain work placements, particularly in rural or remote areas where job prospects are even less. Marketing for qualification
shortages, for instance nursing, which was identified in data, has the effect of increasing student enrolments. RTOs, TAFEs and universities complied from the perspective of stakeholders, which made access to work placement challenging. This has an effect on economic capital, as again the return on investment is displaced for students who complete qualifications in industries where there are low job prospects. Furthermore, there are implications for students seeking further training in a similar or different field that extends the time in training investments into human capital and a longer wait for return.

VET in Schools provides a critical service to students, and in the context of human and economic capital was found to provide positive outcomes. The implication is that for young people seeking work earlier and wanting to enter into competitive industries, they can embark on skills formation and mastery earlier than students who start VET after leaving secondary school. This results in a more efficient return on the investment into education. A notion of the strength of VET in Schools was indicated in the analysis of Phase 2, particularly for long-term student outcomes. There is, however, a notion that quality capital development in young people was somewhat reliant on maturity and capability, in which the skills of self-confidence, self-esteem and communication were important before necessarily developing core skills, such as teamwork, technological capabilities, collaboration or critical thinking.

The complex notion of using students as cheap labour instead of developing their skills in the qualifications they are training for, indicated a complex outcome in the context of economic capital. For many, this could be the first indication of the job sector they are hoping to enter and furthermore, a first glimpse into the relationships of employees and employers. The utilisation of their capabilities in ways that are not
aligned with the skills being trained in their course undermines the potential value of their training and work placement. This is related to industry investment and has the potential to impact the broader notion of their capital formation. The investment of industry in the development of student capability was a common area of discussion amongst stakeholders, whether from the perspective of work placement or the impact of student training experiences. In a number of contexts, it was identified that through greater investment in training, industry had the highest level of benefit. These included obtaining quality employees, contributing capital to community and the broader industry, the development of a stronger VET system and assistance in the development of skills and knowledge in qualifications.

Teaching qualifications and the strength of teacher experience raised an interesting notion of effects on capital formation. For students, there is a reliance on teachers to have and be capable of transmitting a certain level of value in training. Where a teacher possesses the necessary industry experience and training, it is transferred in the training students receive. There is evidence to suggest insufficient teacher experience (or even perceived experience and capability) impacts quality training and lowers the value of the qualifications received. Students are less able to develop the necessary human capital as a result of poor-quality training and hence, rely on teachers with high level skills. This impacts employment outcomes and future training prospects. Furthermore, students with special needs, whether these are greater or lesser than the average, are more acutely disadvantaged.

To summarise, there were a number of issues identified by stakeholders in the context of capital formation. Training quality and a saturation of qualifications in narrow markets has an implication for the value of qualifications. The strength of
VET in Schools was identified as an area of value, though the maturity of students could impact outcomes. Industry investment into more valuable work placement is critical, given students often experience less than valuable work placements. Finally, there is evidence to suggest teacher qualifications and experience make a substantial contribution to positive outcomes for students.

7.3.2 Social capital

Teaching, industry qualifications (trades, for example), TAFE and RTOs form institutions, in the mind of Foucault. In the context of capital, they form a place of membership, a way of belonging to a bigger group that arranges a network of people with similar circumstances. These may be a qualification, or a specific trade, or perhaps a position within an organisation or the organisation itself.

Throughout analysis, stakeholders identified their positions and affiliations within their sector, job, qualifications, institutional affiliations, and so forth. These formed the systems of differentiation in some ways, yet in others it would have saturated the context of analysis to separate them all. Under the lens of capital, these allowed participants to associate their thought with others, or allowed them to inspect and explore the thoughts of others by identifying the social collective under which others associated. TAFE, for instance, provided a sector of context for people who shared ideas and objectives, forming similarities amongst the networks of individuals.

In literature review, the networks of unions, impact of this voice and context of discussion were used as a platform to inform network participants of the impact of policy, which formed a collective voice. This illustrates the effect of social capital and forming a collective voice (Bourdieu, 1986).
In this study, it was identified that other teachers, for example, formed a collective voice and network of distaste for VET. This affected VET teachers in their work and feeling of acceptance, given that on one hand they ‘belonged’ to this network through affiliation of qualifications that enabled them to teach in secondary schools. On the other, they were isolated because of their affiliation with a network that was seen as a lesser value proposition by teachers and the education sector.

Work placement had implications for the development of social capital. Where industry is invested in the formation of capital, initially human, they can benefit long term from the social capital in which human and economic capital is converted (Bourdieu, 1986). As students develop their skills and knowledge, the value of these increases as mastery generates. Students who return to the workplace from a strong and valuable work placement have a greater propensity to contribute the knowledge and skills they generate. They also create deeper network connections from within industry in which to share this knowledge. Industry indicates a greater need for work-ready students, and in a way expect students to come with the generated human capital necessary to contribute at a much higher level than they are possibly capable of doing. Industry potentially fails to see the necessity of their role in the development, and contribution, of capital to students and future employees completing their training.

The social networks and hence, capital, are critical to strong development of skills and capabilities for students. As they develop greater skills and knowledge, they are able to contribute that knowledge and skill to the ongoing improvement of others in the same way. Industry indicated a desire for more capable workers, and with
greater investment into the development of the networks of highly qualified people, there is a greater potential for improved outcomes in VET more broadly.

7.3.3 Cultural capital

The formation of cultural capital occurs as a consequence of the social assets a person possesses. For the purpose of this study, the focus is on institutionalised cultural capital, which is to say the qualifications and academic credentials someone possesses, and embodied cultural capital. This is the knowledge accumulated over time by a person; a way of thinking.

Literature review provided evidence that historically, perspectives of people in VET have developed over time. For instance, the expression of VET as a non-academic qualification, and by deduction a skills-based education, has informed a current perspective that continues this train of thought. Little has changed in the minds of stakeholders, save for the few that believe VET has some assemblance of academic rigour. There is some evidence to suggest VET is capable of an academic future. This is embodied in the perspectives of improving teacher qualifications and a focus on teaching strategies as opposed to pure compliance. This would rely on the improvements of pathways between VET and university, identified as an area of challenge. Furthermore, improvements in quality training, the recognition of VET as a valuable qualification in the context of tertiary education and improvements to the outcomes of work-readiness may influence this outcome.

Some stakeholders identified that VET training was more focussed on apprenticeship training, low-skilled workers and a less valuable proposition than university qualifications. The shifting of the narrative amongst teachers, industry and
students was identified as a point of critical need, given the power of this narrative to shape the future perspectives of VET.

A critical issue is embodied in the value a qualification accumulates and the market value of these qualifications. For people to exercise the value of VET qualifications, they need to be recognised as containing some inherent value, and whilst industry takes a passive approach to workplace training, there is a negative impact on the value of the skills developed. Evidence in Phase 1 of the study quantified this notion, given the strength of desire for quality work placement and the recognised impact on students who undertake work placement.

As a consequence, historical alignment of VET as a skills-based educational sector has shaped the current narrative and response from areas of industry, education and policy. Evidence collected suggests this has persisted. By shifting the ways in which VET is identified, changes to policy that can shape the value of VET, and by strengthening industry investment into quality workplace training, there is a greater potential to improve the value of VET from the perspective of cultural capital.

7.3.4 Symbolic capital

It was much harder to identify the expressions of symbolic capital in this study. Although capital was a foundation of the study, it formed an underpinning rather than a deliberate objective. As such, to extract the specific notion of symbolic capital proved complex.

In an obscure way, the symbolic capital of industry recognised trade qualified individuals is eroded in the educational sector. It was found that teachers indicated a distaste for VET, and as a consequence disparaged the teachers who were, in their
mind, not capable teachers in the context of a secondary education. In the context of Phase 1, it was indicated that teachers and trainers in VET are more highly regarded if they do have a trade qualification, and as such recognised in the symbolic capital to be a teacher of young people. This is not so in secondary education, where the value proposition of these trade qualified trainers is not afforded the same kudos.

This minor and isolated example is the extent to which symbolic capital is recognised in the data. A more specific formulation of research in this area may do well to uncover the specific nature of symbolic capital, particularly for the way in which those who represent, and form VET may enhance its value in the public eye.

7.3.5 Summary

There is a great deal of emphasis on the notion of economic capital development amongst students of VET, and the impact of the relationships between stakeholders. The use of social networks, including institutional networks, influence the development and use of these skills. Many of the complexities in deployment of VET to satisfy the needs of capital formation are identified as tied to the ways in which stakeholders interact. This falls under the notion of power relations, as some of the effects of poor capital formation are the result of a relationship of power, a notion of governmentality or even critique.

Cultural capital, the capacity for young people to learn and engage with those in a position to know, is critical to the success of VET education. Historically, much of the formation of VET has persisted and remains in the narrative. That said, some new formations of language have developed and as such, a continued shift to a new
narrative for VET could assist to increase the status of VET as an academically rigorous experience for institutions, industry, students and teachers.

The more complex notion of symbolic capital was only identified in a single, isolated example. This is potentially a limitation of the study and of data collection. There is potentially value in exploring this notion more broadly in future studies.

The formation of capital in VET is a critical aspect of the education endeavours and qualifications pursued. Capital formation is the responsibility of all stakeholders, as evidenced in data and literature review. There is a greater understanding of how each party forms the net that captures each domain of capital, given the substantial interplay between forms. Data analysis shows the awareness of stakeholders in their role in capital formation as a foundational part of VET education, given by their ability to identify ways in which stakeholders can contribute and build value in VET qualifications.

7.4 Research Questions

To provide a response to the primary research question a number of sub-questions were generated and as such, a number of observations were made. What is detailed below is a short account of each question as it relates to the study, and the findings as they were discovered through the course of inquiry. It is a summary, of sorts, in that each question has been detailed at length throughout the study. The list that is provided for each question is a way of offering a summative statement. As will be discussed after the questions are detailed, this is not the last word; as it stands, this is a way of understanding these problems in this context, at this time, from one
perspective. Nonetheless, these are the findings according to each question of the study.

The first question reads,

*How is the implementation of policy affected by stakeholder objectives, and how do the actions of others that act on these objectives enhance the effect?*

Observing the foundation of this aspect of power relations, a picture of how VET is affected by sector and individual objectives has been developed. It was found that

- policy is implemented through mechanisms driven by stakeholder objectives. In the context of power relations, these objectives drive actions that stakeholders use to exercise power within the confines of the system of VET, legislation and institutionalisation;
- policy is subject to the perspectives that stakeholders possess, inasmuch as they implement policy in a way that is self-serving and guided by the outcomes that will improve their position, which may be economic, social or embodied in capital; and
- where one objective exists, such as the improvement of enrolments, actions of stakeholders can enhance the effect by the ways in which their objectives interplay with this policy. The open-market objective of government was designed to enhance enrolments, which it did, though the effect was greater on the economic impact for students, reduction of enrolments in TAFE and a competitive marketplace that negatively impacted potentially positive policy.
The interplay between objective and action was apparent through a number of mechanisms, evidenced in the stakeholder perspectives of the effect of these actions. For stakeholders, there is an increased effect when policy is an enabler in the context of action. When objectives were out of their control, stakeholder action seemed less pronounced. For example, for universities which control both objectives and action in pathways, they had greater control over the outcome. For schools, which had little control over enablement of pathways, they had a less pronounced action in enabling pathways. This would give rise to the finding that through stakeholder objective and action, there is an effect on the implementation of policy. For policymakers, it may be pertinent to consider how a particular policy can be affected by the range of actions of stakeholders and the implication this has for the implementation of that policy. In a scenario where stakeholders have a particular influence over the implementation that may benefit them more so than others, the balance of power in their favour may negatively impact others, with enhanced effect. An instance of this is contestability, in which RTOs held the balance of power in enrolling students and capitalising on for-profit training arrangements and incentives for students. By restricting or better balancing such a policy, a power equilibrium is maintained between stakeholders.

The second question for analysis in this study was,

*What implication do power relationships have for capital formation within VET policies or programs?*

The formation of capital was directly implicated by power relationships. Examples of power relations, objectives and stakeholder perspectives were evident. Additionally, there were complex outcomes for the formation of capital. It was found that
• actions that resulted from a power relationship usually are the consequence of an objective of some sort and had an effect on capital formation for students and teachers;

• industry lacks investment in the formation of capital due to economic objectives and prior experiences with students or disagreements with the operation of VET; and

• there is a substantial reliance on schools, TAFE and RTOs to form capital in students, which is either achieved at the detriment of greater time in training or not achieved because of a need to have shorter, more compact courses.

Literature review identified that capital has a particular place within VET, and as explored by Bourdieu and Foucault, there are particular ways in which capital is realised. For human capital, which could also be understood as economic capital under Bourdieu, the greatest effect is for students. The obligation of teachers, trainers, institutions and industry is for the development of capabilities, be it short term human capital or the benefits of long-term economic capital. Policy makers have an obligation to ensure the operational aspects of VET meet this objective, too.

Stakeholder experience in VET is that many of these obligations are not met, but in certain contexts there is measurable success. Investment, from all parties, is the critical key to success. This is realised, in part, through social and cultural capital. The networks and transmission of capital that is able to be transferred enables a deeper realisation of the effects of capital in students.

The exercise of power relations within the realisation of capital has an effect as the objectives and actions of stakeholders blurs the lines between student outcomes and objectives, often focused on economic outcomes. Where objectives take the place
of student outcomes, there is a complex misalignment with the needs, historically, currently and possibly into the future, of VET. It is therefore the obligation of all stakeholders to shift the narrative and objective to ensure focus stays with student outcomes, particularly in the development of capital.

The third question of the study reads,

*How do stakeholders rationalise power relations in their context?*

The important aspect of this question was context. There are relations to the stakeholders and their rationalisation of power, but this was found to be more than just a rationalisation. The study relied on all five domains to analyse power relations. Evidence, therefore, suggested that

- stakeholder rationalisation of power (read ‘outcome’) that was beneficial to them seemed acceptable, whereby stakeholders were less able to rationalise outcomes where they were less self-invested;
- the effect of rationalisation was often to accept what had happened without really knowing what needed to change to rectify a situation;
- rationalisation was often the observation of one stakeholder to another, rather than introspection, hence stakeholders often saw the faults in another’s context rather than their own;
- where objectives were self-focused, there was greater rationalisation of the outcome or means; and
- stakeholder differentiation was clearly defined, and as such the rationalisations of power relations was seen in the data to be aligned with stakeholders from
the same cases; although other cases still identified the same issues, the rationalisations were varied.

Where rationalisations of power relations, or the means and objectives, fell into a trap was in the lack of explicit questioning about whether stakeholders could provide reasons for the outcomes. Perhaps greater interrogation is warranted. What is clear is that through an analysis of power relations, at least some rationalisation was found amongst data.

The fourth question for the study is,

*How does governmentality shape discourse or implementation of policy?*

Governmentality was an interesting concept to analyse in the context of data, as stakeholders were not asked directly about their perspective on government policy or on the way in which they were governed. Nor were they asked to introspect and analyse their own behaviours in the context of the study and consider how their behaviours governed themselves. What came through, however, was how discourse was shaped as a result of discussion on policy and on the way in which people felt governed. In some cases, it also enabled a platform on which people offered a critique, a way of expressing their role in not accepting governance. Particularly, there was evidence to suggest

- governance occurs in conjunction with power relations, in that for stakeholders in VET, there is a relationship between the actions and objectives of people and the governance of others, a reaction to and willingness to be governed:
• governance was expressed as a behaviour, where one would exhibit certain behaviours that expressed the ways in which rules and laws applied to one, such as students attending work placement and participating in work;
• critique could be exercised in explicit ways, such as through verbal or physical action, though it could also be conducted in passive ways, such as through ineffective or inappropriate implementation of policy and circumvention of rules; and
• governmentality if often affected adversely by conflicting policy, in which the original control in place is subverted by another measure, which opens up a means for exploitation of the law or legislation; a prime example is contestability laws.

These points indicate the breadth by which governmentality operates in VET. Each stakeholder was affected in some way by the ways in which they were controlled or were able to control themselves. Given this, there were associated actions by others that affected this control or self-governance. This indicates a potential and emerging relationship between governmentality and power relations, which in the context of VET has a greater platform for research. One such question that did rise from the data was around the positive effects of governmentality. In one case, the laws that controlled contestability and public funds for enrolment, discussed at length, revealed a notion that in fact governmentality could be a positive approach to management. Governmentality controlled the distribution of public funds to TAFE based on their enrolments, effectively limiting the VET market in very specific ways. The negative effect of change could have been circumvented if not for the alteration of the laws in play. Hence, whilst beyond the scope of this study, analysing the positive effects of governmentality could be an interesting approach to further study.
Finally, to the primary research question, which reads,

*Under what circumstances are power relations exercised insomuch as they construct stakeholder perspectives within the systems of differentiation in VET and influence the implementation of policy in Australian VET?*

This question has sought to interrogate a great deal, and through this broad and complex study much of this has been achieved. Reflecting over the four sub-questions presented previously, there is a great deal of knowledge, clarity and confirmation exposed. To the main question of the study, then, the following could be formed from evidence, including

- power is exercised in a range of circumstances and from the perspectives of many stakeholders. These include,
  - in enactments of, and changes in, policy;
  - at negotiation of pathways between institutions;
  - in the discourse between sectors in education;
  - by, and of, industry for the investment into training and in rationalisation;
  - in accessing industry placements for students;
  - in ensuring growth in challenging environments;
  - with teachers and trainers in schools;
  - in professional development and the relationships with RTOs in achieving these requirements; and
  - in the context of negotiating the terms by which teachers are afforded the capability to teach VET given their skills, experience and qualifications.
• within these circumstances, the perspectives of stakeholders are constructed
  by the response to the actions and objectives of others, including
  policymakers, administrators and industry;
• stakeholder perspectives are constructed in the situations of these
  circumstances that may be related or have some external influence;
• stakeholders are defined by the system of differentiation that informs the
  boundaries of their situation, such as
  o an institution;
  o a policy that informs their scope of work; and
  o the AQF.
• the implementation of VET and VET policy is influenced by stakeholder
  opinion, insofar as implementation is shaped by the discourse in power
  relations, critique in governmentality and the self-focused benefits that skewed
  implementation would provide, whether beneficial or detrimental; to one
  stakeholder, it will always seem unjust, unreasonable or irrational.

By answering this research question, much ground has been covered and many
ideas unearthed. Some of this clarifies what is already known, but in keeping with the
core intention of the study, it is not to necessarily step beyond the theoretical notions
of what is known, but to ensure a deeper understanding of a particular “present” time,
in which these observations can be made.

7.5 Implications for further research

This study has provided an insight into many issues, whilst providing a
particular perspective of power relations, governmentality and capital in the context
of VET. There remains, though, some implications for further research.
Consider the inflated views of TAFE and RTOs, or the less strong perspective of industry in Phase 1. This was troubling, because it raised a significant issue, in that if VET was designed to provide for these institutions, why were they fixated on either bringing it down, or falsely inflating its potential? Furthermore, when analysing the data in Phase 2, it became apparent that the data in Phase 1 was a collective perspective, or maybe the Phase 2 data spoke from the perspective of those who wanted to speak. Did they have an agenda? An objective? How did this come to light, and was this a limitation of the study? To explore this concept would mean explicitly delving into the issues that underpin this perspective. It may be a valuable area for future research that could highlight reasonings for this inflated view, potentially in parallel with the notions of power highlighted in this study.

The main question to resolve was the matter of stakeholder perspective, their objective, and potential agenda. Reading back through interviews time and time again, it was realised this was the voice of people who wanted to be heard. This was a platform for them to share their ideas. They spoke as a singularity, not as the collective. This was proven when many responded in surprise to the data in the first Phase, or even in agreement. They might agree or disagree, but as they went on to voice their opinion, it was just that; their perspective. And such was the intention of this study, to share, or even give rise to, their voice. But what did it find or do? Essentially, this singular voice enabled the introspection or relationships, the idea that people are affected by other stakeholders. In this way, for many it was an uncomfortable experience, one that left them feeling like something was wrong, and hence, they had to share it. For others, they wanted to show what was right about the system, what worked and why change had brought about an experience they thought was less productive than those that had come before.
The individual voice, and the limited scope by which it was excavated, is considered a potential limitation of this study. The macro, collective voice was valuable, but it spoke very differently in many areas from the individual voice collected in Phase 2. A deeper, broader and more involved collection of singular voices may enhance the understanding of empirical and theoretical findings extracted in this study.

In hindsight, no stakeholder in Phase 1 was fixated on the failure of VET. This is a collective, positive view, which represents only a small portion of the sector, but still, provides insight into perspective. In Phase 1, data gave rise to the collective voice that spoke to the successes and challenges of VET. These are well defined, now, and would warrant investigation in their own right. These problems have changed, of course, and the response may have too, but it clarifies our knowledge of these issues at the time of the study.

In Phase 2, whilst there was a number of conversations that described the challenges of VET, at no time was a particular respondent completely negative to the existence or importance of VET as an educational paradigm. Its place within the confines of education is sound, but its position is ever changing and potentially, up for grabs. The complexity of this reality is that as education becomes more expensive, will policymakers shift it to an entirely new private market, or maintain a public system that has a greater benefit for all.

7.6 Next steps

Beyond the scope of this study are questions that remain unanswered. Throughout the course of investigation, questions were raised that went either beyond
the data or developed ideas that could not form part of the focus. These limitations are seen as the next steps in the process of enquiry. As such, the following ideas or questions were posed.

To the nature of power relations, it was established that a narrative took place between institutions, particularly in the course of evaluating the other’s success. This could relate to quality training, pathways and the effects of VET in Schools. A question that was raised was for the establishment of the influence various narratives have on the institution of VET. Also, a more detailed nexus between power and capital would enhance the understanding of how these two concepts interact in VET, particularly if this could be longitudinal.

On the concept of governmentality, a concerning realisation was discovered in that RTOs consciously used known weaknesses of the system to subvert operational requirements, such as qualifications. It begs the question, what other aspects of the system are being purposefully evaded? It was found that this behaviour had economic, time and functional drivers. Policy that enables such conduct is worthy of investigation, considering the implications this has for the quality of teaching delivery and value to students.

The empirical topics, core objectives of VET, work placement, apprenticeship, teacher qualifications and employability skills can, and are, investigated on a regular basis. This study set out to use these topics as a platform for an investigation of power relations, capital and governmentality, though it raised some valuable findings for the implementation and perspective of these topics. Beyond the scope of this study, it may enhance understanding of these topics to shift the ‘present’ in which they are investigated and then explore these topics again.
7.7 Conclusion

At the outset of this study, the intention was to examine topics prevalent in VET with the purpose of discovering relations of power, illustrate evidence of capital and discover elements of governmentality in Vocational Education policy in Australia. This emerged as a Foucauldian practice of studying what is visible to extract what is not and develop an understanding of a specific present time. The complex theoretical framework brought together a range of ideas and worked methodically to establish a way of conducting research that would first look back, employing genealogy. Establishing discontinuity of the past placed a lens over why certain events, shifts or changes occurred, and identified stakeholders in the process. This was to show how power moves through everything, altering the landscape and environment such that it shapes how we see and interact with the world and each other. It also identified the valuable domains of investigation this study used to focus on in conducting research into the theoretical concepts of the study.

The theoretical intent was not to enforce or validate a theory of power, or necessarily to quantify or fully describe its quality. We have a roadmap (Marshall, 1990) by which to analyse power. However, that was not the object of analysis, but rather a lens through which data could be interrogated. As Foucault (1983a) wrote,

Do we need a theory of power? Since a theory assumes a prior objectification, it cannot be asserted as a basis for analytical work. But this analytical work cannot proceed without an ongoing conceptualization. And this conceptualization implies critical thought-a constant checking (p. 209).
Instead, this research asserts this conceptualization; “a historical awareness of our present circumstance” (Foucault, 1983a, p. 209) and illustrates this present circumstance defining VET as a series of power relationships that influences VET outcomes and policy implementation.

To achieve such an outcome, stakeholders in VET were selected to share their ideas, opinions and perspectives on the topics of the core objectives of VET, work placement, apprenticeship, teacher qualifications and employability skills. Divided into cases, it was possible to analyse data and evaluate relationships between stakeholders, looking for manifestations of behaviours that characterised the theoretical frameworks. An initial quantitative inquiry informed a follow-up qualitative investigation. The former provided insight into a macro perspective of the domains of enquiry, such that the latter could be informed and shaped.

Such an approach provided an opportunity to explore the empirical data for present knowledge. A shift in focus back to the theoretical frameworks afforded discovery of the interactions of stakeholder in the context of power. It found that stakeholder perspectives inform their actions, and the objectives of others can affect the way we act. Policy, legislation, economics and status bring power into play, and provide a platform from which people enact these actions. Stakeholders rationalise these actions through modalities of time, financial impacts, opportunity and the actions and objectives of others. It follows that there is an established relationship between power and capital with many outcomes of power and stakeholder actions impacted capital formation. Whilst this aspect of the study was limited, touching on some of its dimension represented a valuable contribution to the way in which we understand the effects of power.
Further, it was discovered that stakeholders are willing and free in the manifestations and actions that relate to power. This is observed in the ways they subvert policy and legislation, essentially the frameworks placed to ensure quality and ascribed value in a system designed to support a critical aspect of education. The aforementioned elements have both positive and negative implications, such as confidence in staff to achieve an outcome, although maintaining a weakness in the system to critically oversee quality assurance. Such factors, amongst others, have the potential to be explored more deeply, useful as they are to define the lengths stakeholders are willing to go to protect their economic interests, sector status and position in education. In the context of governmentality, evidence showed there to be implications for the ways in which policy is written and enacted, especially when stakeholders have the knowledge and power to enact policy in a way that evades governance. These findings further clarify the ways in which power affects policy implementation and develops the nexus between power and governmentality.

The Australian TAFE system represents a substantial part of Australian history and present circumstance. It is built on the shoulders of a well formed but complex system that saw a great need for quality tradespeople in the community and social mobility. Governments of the past saw this need, fuelling its growth with an approach that paid homage to the ‘fair go for all’ attitude Australia is famous for throughout the world. Through TAFE, carpenters, chefs, electricians and mechanics held a place of status and respect as master craftsmen, often in pursuit of a dream driven by passion before economic reward.

During the last decades, government policy-making seemed willing to erode the quality, value and status of TAFE and VET as a whole – consciously or not.
Policy is driven by profit, relinquishing responsibility of educational infrastructure in favour of private industry. Evidence shows the damage this has done, and the cost of cleaning up the consequences. Worse yet, schools, working to provide pathways for students who are marginalised, fight to maintain interest in a system that is isolated, underfunded, under-resourced and battling for existence amongst other forms of education. Teachers are subject to the narrative of some who have taken a fundamental view of VET as a place for misfits, as opposed to its historical position of status. Moreover, industry, arguably one of the greatest benefactors of a quality VET system, seem unfathomably disinterested in improving the outcomes of VET by lacklustre investments in schools, TAFE and quality private providers. The grand question therefore is, without a strong form of governance that is willing to invest in the infrastructure of a quality (historically successful) public VET system, is there hope for it to rebuild?

This study was an attempt to shed light on the relationships between stakeholders that impact, affect and influence the implementation of policy designed to maintain the standards of VET. Furthermore, it aimed primarily to illustrate the impact of policy and governance. What emerged was this and much more as a great number of learnings and facets of knowledge emerged and were interrogated in this study. A response to the research questions was established and, in that way, for what it set out to do, it has achieved much. The results of this study have provided an opportunity to explore something more, or perhaps different. Findings were unexpected compared to initial assumptions at the outset of this journey, and although the data has defined much, the study raises many more questions and thought-provoking ideas for investigation. The complex relations of power that were
discovered show how stakeholders interact, and the ways in which power relations influence outcomes in VET.

Will VET recover, given the difficulties it faces with varied opinion, deliberate subversion of the expectations put forward by the AQF and a willingness for some stakeholders to achieve their own objective at any cost? Perhaps a deeper consideration of these issues in the context of Foucault’s work will influence policymakers to consider their impact; perhaps it will not. But what is clear is that power exists between stakeholders in VET, and it shapes the actions of each to create a system that has aspects of success, challenge and great need.
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Appendix A

The following is the interview guide used in Phase 2. The probing questions below the primary question are not necessarily exhaustive but provide a general scope for questions asked for each section of interview in Phase 2 of this study.

VET System

Information statement

The primary intention of VET is to provide people with the knowledge and skills to equip them for the world of work. This may also include enabling learners to pursue various pathways from VET training into further or higher education.

Primary question

- In the first part of the survey, participants indicated issues in quality training, the lack of benefits to all stakeholders and a lack of understanding of how VET contributes to further education. Can you provide your opinion or insight into any of these issues?

Probing questions

- Who do you believe are more successful in VET: young people in VET in Schools or learners in adult education systems?
- Is it your perspective that VET provides knowledge and skills that can be valued by industry?
- Do people who hold VET qualifications require further training once participating in work?
• Are the pathways to further education obvious, defined and accessible?
• In your opinion, what changes would improve both the primary aim and options of pathways in the VET sector?
• Describe the TAFE or private RTO sector – how do you feel they are achieving VET outcomes?
• Do you feel industry supports the implementation of VET learning?

Work Placement

Information statement

Work placement is a critical aspect of VET. Students are required to participate in a certain number of hours to complete their training and it provides critical aspects of on-the-job training necessary for completing a qualification.

Primary question

• The results of the survey were mixed regarding work placement. Many felt it was valuable, others felt it could be improved in the value to stakeholders and industry use of work placement. In your opinion, how does work placement enhance or diminish learning in VET?

Probing questions

• What is the value of work placement to (your stakeholder group)?
• Do you feel work placement arrangements need improvement – if you, please provide detail. Otherwise, why not?

School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships

Information statement
This arrangement is similar to a person undertaking an apprenticeship; however, it is done part time at work, part time at school. The intention is to provide students with an opportunity to complete work-based training and an apprenticeship whilst completing secondary school and their completion certificate. If you are unsure or do not have access to SBAT learners, this question may not be relevant to you.

Primary question

Survey results indicated SBAT participants need greater balance between school and training. How do you feel about current arrangements for School Based Apprentices and Trainees?

Probing questions

- If you were to change current requirements, what would this look like?
- Could workplace training be integrated into VET in Schools training environments, such as business-in-school arrangements? Describe one potential barrier to this process.
- Describe the ideal environment that integrates workplace training and learning?
- How could some of the challenges associated with implementing workplace learning be overcome?
- How affective do you feel apprenticeship-based programs are?
- What barriers to success are there in School-based apprenticeships?

Teacher qualifications

Information statement
Teacher qualifications, particularly for VET in Schools teachers, is a significant issue in literature. Currently, VET teachers in most circumstances require a Bachelor of Education, a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, and the relevant industry qualification. They are not required to have industry experience. Teachers do complete some industry work placement as part of their training. If training packages change, teachers are required to upgrade their qualifications.

**Primary question**

Teacher training, rigour in training and quality industry experience were all highlighted as areas of improvement for teachers. Many teachers felt holding two degrees was unnecessary when teaching VET. What are your expectations or perspectives on the necessity for teachers to be trained to teach VET?

**Probing questions**

- Should there be a differentiation between teachers in High School (VET in Schools), TAFE and other RTOs?
- What level of industry experience should be necessary to teach a VET course?
- If students demonstrate a high level of industry employability what would the impression of their training be?
- What ways could teachers be supported for upgrade requirements? What could this look like?
- Describe how teachers could engage in ongoing industry engagement and how this might benefit them.
- What should the requirements be for upgrading qualifications, and how rigorous should the process be?
**Employability Skills**

**Information statement**

Employability skills are the attributes people develop through training and experience. In Australia, these skills include teamwork, communication, organisation and planning, initiative and enterprise, problem solving, technology, self-management and learning. The intention of the Employability Skills framework is to provide skills that improve readiness and participation in the world of work.

**Primary question**

- Respondents indicated in this section of the survey that the employability skills framework could be better implemented and utilised for communicating soft skills of students. Have you been exposed to the Employability Skills framework and how do you feel it is being implemented in training or the work place?

**Probing questions**

- To what degree could industry be engaged in equipping learners with these skills before starting work?
- What is the expectation that teachers have and are able to teach these skills?
- How can stakeholders be provided information on these skills from formal training reports and feedback?
- Is there a perception of value in these skills for learners? Do learners recognise their level of achievement in these skills?
• How does VET equip learners with these skills to enhance transferability from one job to another?

• Do you feel these should be reported for learners to maximise their benefits?