

<https://federation.edu.au/schools/school-of-education/research/research-groups/rave-researching-adult-and-vocational-education>

Welcome

Professor Annette Foley, RAVE convenor

We have had a productive period since the last RAVE News issue 16 August 2023. This newsletter provides details about the group's current and recent research, events, publications, engagements, and other activities. We do hope you enjoy reading through all of the news and achievements.

More information about RAVE and our activities and achievements are available on our website <https://federation.edu.au/institutes-and-schools/ieac/research/rave-researching-adult-and-vocational-education>. You can also email RAVE about any of the items here or on the website.

We wish you a happy festive season and look forward to sharing RAVE News events and achievements with you in 2024.

Merry Christmas
Annette



RAVE member Erica Smith was conferred with the title Emeritus Professor at a graduation ceremony in October, shortly after her retirement.

Here is an extract from the Vice-Chancellor's speech, focusing on VET-related matters:

"It is with great pleasure that I announce Professor Erica Smith is being awarded the title of Emeritus Professor in recognition of her eminent service and contributions to Federation University Australia. Professor Erica Smith has given long and distinguished service to Federation University through scholarly excellence in the field of vocational education and training and brought academic distinction to the University through the development of this field both nationally and internationally as well as making a significant contribution to the overall development of the University. During her career, Erica has made a significant contribution to research and policy development in the VET sector both domestically and internationally. She served as cochair of the International Network on Innovative Apprenticeship and led several projects for the International Labour Organization, a subsidiary of the United Nations. Erica has also made a significant contribution to VET within Australia, serving on many state, federal and national

committees, including the Commonwealth Government's Ministerial VET reform working group. She has contributed regularly to designing VET reform with significant impact. Erica has published extensively internationally and nationally, and over her career she has received over \$2 million in research funding including four Australian Research Council grants, industry and government grants, and funding for teaching development and scholarship of teaching.

Erica has made a significant contribution to VET teacher education. As convenor of the Australia Council of Deans of Education Vocational Education Group, she worked tirelessly on growing and developing the cohort of VET teacher educators. It is with our sincerest gratitude, that we honour her for her service to Federation University, with the title of Emeritus Professor."

Erica was pleased to see three Associate Degree of VET students receiving their testamurs at the same ceremony.



OctoberVET 2023 – This year's theme was: Learning Landscapes: Learning for Work and Life.

The RAVE (Researching Adult and Vocational Education) research group held a successful OctoberVET event on Wednesday 15th November the Ballarat SMB campus. There were over 23 attendees including past students of our Associate Degree of VET, VET teachers and managers and Government representatives. This was the 16th annual OctoberVET event in Ballarat.

OctoberVET is an initiative of the Australasian VET Research Association, AVETRA.

This year we had two keynote speakers.



Honorary Professor Barry Golding

Barry's keynote presentation was entitled : Learning on Country: Unsettling lessons from Six Peaks.

Barry Golding AM worked at Federation University and its antecedent institutions for many decades before retiring as a Professor of Education eight years ago. Barry says that 'When paid university work ended, the really interesting and important work started'. In recent years he has continued to theorise and publish extensively about Community Men's Sheds internationally and act as an advocate for a number of community causes. He has recently undertaken commissioned research into adult and community education in Ireland for AONTAS and in Australia for ALA.



Emeritus Professor Erica Smith

Erica's keynote was entitled: Dispelling some myths about the VET teacher shortage.

Erica Smith is Emeritus Professor of Education in the Institute of Education, Arts and Community, and was leader of the Researching Adult and Vocational Education group for over a decade. She was the founding leader of Federation University's VET teacher-education program, and until her retirement in mid-2023 convened the Australian Council of Deans of Education Vocational Education Group. Erica is co-chair of the International Network on Innovative Apprenticeship. Other areas of expertise include VET teachers and their qualifications, VET policy, training in workplaces, competency-based training, and the school-to-work transition. Erica makes many invited contributions to Commonwealth and State government policy and practice in her areas of expertise and has advised governments in several other countries. She has managed over 30 national and international research projects and is an invited speaker at events around the world.

Research-based presentations, all around the theme of 'Learning Landscapes: Learning for work and life' were given by Peta Skujins: Senior Policy and Insights Manager. GAN Australia, Dr. Peter Fieger: Federation University, Chris Noonan: Director of Learning Experience and Excellence Federation TAFE and Ella Donovan-Clancy: Federation TAFE

student, Paschal Somers, Federation University and Anthony Pearce, Federation University. Final Sum up Professor Annette Foley, Federation University.

List of presentations:

Peta Skujins – Recommendation concerning quality apprenticeships: An Australian perspective on an international framework.

Dr. Peter Fieger – Tourism and Hospitality VET graduates' employment outcomes during Covid-19.

Chris Noonan & Ella Donovan-Clancy- Empowering learners: Placing students at the heart of TAFE decision making.

Paschal Somers & Anthony Pearce- Sharing ideas discussion.

Community Event

World Mountain Day & Six Peaks Speak Celebration.

Presented by **Honorary Professor Barry Golding**, this was a free public presentation supported by Researching Adult & Vocational Ed (RAVE), held on 11th December at SMB campus Ballarat, introduced by Professor Annette Foley, RAVE convenor.



Coinciding with Mountain Day, Professor Barry Golding's presentation, 'Six Peaks Speak: Unsettling Legacies in Southern Dja Dja Wurrung Country' was an opportunity to share outcomes from his book research and writing project during his 2023 State Library Victoria Fellowship.

Thinking globally and acting locally, it is also an opportunity for participants to discuss how World Mountain Day might be celebrated in future years in the community and on Country.

Barry Golding acknowledged the support of State Library Victoria, Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation, Great Dividing Trail Association and RAVE.

New funded RAVE research projects

Erica Smith and **Paschal Somers** have won a grant (\$23,760) funded by the Victorian Skills Authority and the Australasian VET Research Association. It's

one of the inaugural projects in a new series of 'Partnership Grants between VSA and AVETRA. This desk-based research project aims to:

- Outline the different ways in which industry can be defined and conceptualised across vocational education and training systems.
- Outline the different roles that industry can play in VET systems.
- Outline different models for industry involvement in the development and delivery of teaching and learning.
- Identify potential models that could be contextualised or implemented in the Australian and/or Victorian system.

The activities in the project comprise:

- Review of the academic literature.
- Review of the grey literature: case studies and models.
- Australian case studies and models.
- Skills Councils and other high-level industry involvement: international and Australian data.
- Information about local-level VET curriculum and teaching collaboration.

The role of 'industry' is embedded in all aspects of VET policy, from national initiatives (macro) through to policy affecting local operations (micro). We will argue that a more nuanced and sophisticated understanding of the voice of industry and the ways in which it can best work with VET may result in industry and VET working as equal partners, rather than VET being merely a 'servant' of industry'.

The project, which has a very short timeline, is well under way, with a great deal of literature analysed, and some very interesting models of industry involvement found, particularly in other countries. Erica and Paschal will be presenting the findings to staff of the VSA shortly before the Christmas break.

Details of the project can be found under 'current projects' on the RAVE web site at

<https://federation.edu.au/institutes-and-schools/ieac/research/rave-researching-adult-and-vocational-education/current-research>.

Unfunded Research

VET teachers' motivations for entering and remaining in the VET workforce

The commencement of this project was reported in RAVE News in August 2023. This unfunded research, undertaken by **Erica Smith** and **Annette Foley** from RAVE, and **Daryl South** from Charles Sturt University, received 146 responses to a detailed

survey of VET teachers. The findings are causing great interest across the sector. Some detailed analysis has been carried out, trying to find out what types of VET teachers/trainers have particular entry paths, pay differentials between their prior work and VET teaching, motivations for becoming VET teachers and propensity to stay in the occupation. The teachers were also asked about their views of others' motivations.

The team has been working with the VET Workforce Blueprint team at the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, to ascertain the most useful analysis for us to do. The findings have been requested, via DEWR, by Jobs and Skills Australia for their VET workforce investigation, and by the Victorian Skills Authority VET workforce team. Anyone who would like to have a copy of the overall data can request a copy from Erica Smith at e.smith@federation.edu.au. We presented some findings of the data on motivations to enter the workforce at the AC-DEVEG conference on December 4th 2023 and will present at other conferences during 2024.

Research impact and engagement

'Everyday Careers' project (concluded in 2023):

Two submissions have been made, based on project data, to the current Australian Bureau of Statistics review of ANZSCO (the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations). Last year we provided a submission on the review of skill levels, and were invited to a meeting with officials to discuss further. This year, ANZSCO has been reviewing many of the occupations, and in December 2023 we made a submission to the review relating to retail and hospitality occupations, as a result of our research. The submissions are both on the RAVE recent research project web site at <https://federation.edu.au/research-everyday-careers>

RAVE Members' Achievements

RAVE members' publications and achievements since RAVE News 16 August 2023.

Journal Articles

Ahl, H., Hedegaard, J., & Golding, B. (2023) A theory of conditional social equality: Group homogeneity as a prerequisite for challenging (some) inequalities among older men in adult learning, *Australian Journal of Adult Learning* 63 (2), 119-139.

Golding, B. (2023) Men's Sheds: Australia's gift to the world, *Dyskursy Młodych Andragogów /*

Adult Education Discourses 24/2023 pp.143-159.

Golding, B. (2023) Six Peaks Speak: Unsettling in southern Dja Dja Wurrung Country, *The La Trobe Journal* 108, pp.61-67.

Ollis, T. & Foley, A. (2023). Reimagining adult education in community-contexts: A framework for social justice in Australia. *PRISM: Casting New Light on learning, Theory & Practice*.

Smith, E. (published online 5.9.23). The narrative of a VET workforce shortage in Australia: Reality, myth or opportunity? *Education + Training*. <http://doi.org/10.1108/ET-03-2023-0078>

Non peer reviewed journal articles

Golding, B. (in press, 2023) Australian Men's Shed Association History Project, including 'History of AMSA 2007-2023' & 'AMSA Cameos'.

Smith, E., Smith, A., Callan, V., Robinson, R. Snell, D. (2023). Careers in everyday industries: Findings from research fieldwork in retail and hospitality. *Research Today*, Issue 31, August, pp 16-19. Via <https://avetra.org.au/Research-Today-Archives>

Conference papers

Fieger, P. (2023). Tourism and hospitality VET graduates' employment outcomes during COVID-19. *OctoberVet Conference*, Ballarat, 15th Nov, 2023

Foley, A. & Ollis, T (2023), Skills for work, study and life: Adult learning and flourishing in Adult Community Education in Australia. *Global Citizenship and Lifelong learning Conference*, Universities Association for Lifelong learning (UALL) and SCUTREA Madingley Hall, Cambridge University, 26th-28th June 3.

Golding, B. (2023). Learning on Country: Unsettling lessons from Six Peaks. *OctoberVET Conference*, Ballarat, 15 Nov. (invited keynote).

Smith, E., South, D. & Foley, A. (2023). What makes people want to become VET teachers? Research findings. *Ninth Annual ACDEVEG conference on VET teaching and VET teacher-education*, VET Development Centre, December 4th. Presentations accessed via <https://www.acde.edu.au/networks-and-partnerships/acde-vocational-group/>

Smith, E. (2023). (online). Characteristics of a good vocational teacher: Evidence from Australian research. *International Conference on Vocational Education and Electrical Engineering (ICVEE)*, State University of Surabaya, Indonesia, October

14-15. (Invited keynote speech)

Smith, E (2023). Dispelling some myths about the VET teacher shortage. *Learning Landscapes: Learning for work and life, 16th Annual October-VET Ballarat*, SMB Campus, Ballarat, 15 Nov.

Smith, E. (2023). Rescue and Recovery: The effects of Covid and post-Covid measures on apprenticeships. *Global Citizenship and Lifelong Learning Conference, UALL and SCUTREA*, Madingley Hall, Cambridge University, 26th-28th June.

Other Achievements

International recognition

Erica Smith was invited to speak, online, as a keynote speaker at the International Conference on Vocational Education and Electrical Engineering (ICVEE) in October 2023, in Surabaya, Indonesia. Full details can be seen in the list of conference presentations in this newsletter.

Sector Engagement

Erica's 2023 paper on apprenticeship from the *International Journal of Training and Development* was selected as one of two featured articles (and the only Australian paper) on overcoming the stigma of VET, in the 'NCVER News' special edition for National Skills Week 2023 Edition #563, 23 August. <https://www.ncver.edu.au/news-and-events/ncver-news/ncver-news-563> or direct at <https://mailchi.mp/ncver/563-national-skills-week-special-edition> The paper was 'Apprenticeships: The problem of attractiveness and the hindrance of heterogeneity.'

Erica Smith was interviewed in a special podcast episode on 'Skilling Australia's current and future workforce' for NCVER, August 2023. <https://www.ncver.edu.au/news-and-events/podcasts/vocational-voices-podcast>, Series 8 ep. 2.

Together with Daryl South from Charles Sturt University, Erica Smith met with Brendan O'Connor, Minister for Skills and Training, on November 10th 2023 at his constituency offices. At the meeting, Erica and Daryl presented the position of ACDEVEG (the Australian Council of Deans of Education Vocational Group) on VET teacher/trainer qualifications, together with concrete suggestions for improving the flow of people into VET teaching. Our comments and suggestions were well received, and Minister O'Connor asked if we could work with the government as its work proceeds in this area.

Erica has been reappointed to the National Careers Institute (NCI) Advisory Board for a further two years,

and continues to serve on the VET Workforce Blueprint steering group.

ACDEVEG: The annual conference of the **Australian Council of Deans of Education Vocational Education Group (ACDEVEG)** was held on 4th December at the VET Development Centre in Melbourne's CBD. Federation University RAVE staff were involved in the conference organising team and presented at the conference. It was very popular this year with a series of interesting presentations, discussions, and a panel discussion at the end of the day where **Emeritus Professor Andy Smith**, VET researcher and former Deputy VC Academic and Head of TAFE at Federation University. **Andrew Shea**, Chair of the TAE Training Package Technical Reference Group and Managing Partner, Tesseract Academy and **Associate Prof Margarita Pavlova**, The Education University of Hong Kong, discussed the importance of VET teachers to the VET sector, now and the future. **RAVE member Annette Foley** chaired the panel.

At this year's ACDEVEG conference RAVE members Erica Smith, Andy Smith and their son Owen Smith, a TAFE teacher at V.U., all presented separately on the day. Here they are pictured over the lunch break.



Details of the next ACDEVEG and OctoberVET conferences will be available in the next RAVE News issue in July 2024.