



2012 NATIONAL
VET CONFERENCE
 LEARN, CONNECT, THRIVE



The 2012 National VET Conference was Australia's largest annual vocational education and training (VET) gathering yet, with over 800 VET practitioners - 715 delegates, 48 presenters, 27 staff and 45 exhibitors - coming together over two days at the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre to collaborate and make connections across the VET sector.

This year's event theme was 'Learn, Connect, Thrive' and aimed to positively reinforce the statement that the nation's VET sector is producing some of the most highly skilled, industry current graduates in the country's history.

Australia's VET sector has undergone a series of transitions within the past 12 months, with the implementation of a National VET Regulator, the current review of Standards for the Regulation of VET, the streamlining of Training Packages and the associated development of new standards for Training Packages, as well as the proposed review of Employability Skills. Aligning with these changes, the conference sought to provide information, ideas and a platform to support the concepts of celebration of the VET industry as a whole and a genuine focus on national consistency in learner outcomes across all industry areas.

The event served to recognise the quality training programs that currently exist in the sector and provided unique, elective learning opportunities designed to extend the educational experience for all delegates beyond a compliance driven framework. The opening Plenary Sessions on day one featured David Garner, Regional Manager Compliance of the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA), who spoke about National VET Regulation FAQs, followed by a brief question time and an interactive Twitter question period using his @dg_ account and the conference hashtag #2012nvc.

This was immediately followed by the 'Inspirational Stories' panel session, hosted by Mark Callaghan, CEO of WorldSkills Australia, and three 'Skillaroos'. This session truly embodied the celebration of quality skills training. It described the role of WorldSkills Australian taking 29 of Australia's elite skilled champions from 26 different skills categories to compete in the WorldSkills International Competitions. Mark shared a video of their recent experience in London, followed by a live interview with three of Australia's best skills ambassadors, Jessie Lee Gladwell, Guy Brook and Tyson Knight. Feedback from this presentation was overwhelmingly positive, with attendees acknowledging the dedication of WorldSkills Australia and the Skillaroos, and commenting on the moving experience of hearing about their achievements in the VET sector. A sense of pride was felt by all.

Following the opening sessions, participants were encouraged to explore 45 elective sessions addressing the broader categories of Policy and Compliance, RTO Management and RTO Teaching and Learning. Velg Training's goal was to

ensure all delegates left the conference educated, inspired and empowered, and as such, the sessions were facilitated by presenters from a variety of backgrounds who came together to share their different stories, ideas, experiences and expertise.

The first day ended with a bang - with over 85% of attendees getting their 'glow' on at the Welcome Function. The theme was embraced through celebrating with glow sticks, attendees trying their luck at winning \$10,000 worth of door prizes, dancing the night away and relaxing, mingling and connecting with other delegates, presenters, sponsors and staff. The event photos speak for themselves, and a great time was had by all!

The second day opened with a lively Plenary Session with Motivational Speaker, Dr Karl Kruszelnicki, who gave participants his insights into changes over the coming years for future students across a range of areas, including computer science, engineering, genetics and the environment, resulting in an intriguing, entertaining, witty and engaging presentation.

As passionate advocates of VET, Velg Training worked in conjunction with the Gold Coast Institute of TAFE to afford a number of select students undertaking qualifications in 'events management', better known throughout the event as the Bravo5 team, with the opportunity to participate in the planning, coordination and facilitation of the event. Their assistance with delivering the conference was a valuable contribution to the overall success of the event, particularly in each elective session where they assisted presenters with the proceedings for the day. They also played an integral part of the evolution of the prominent display feature in the exhibition hall, the 'tree of knowledge', which acted as an interactive display for attendees to write their words of encouragement, wisdom and thanks to the Bravo5 team on coloured message bubbles over the two day event.

Due to its popularity last year, Velg Training hosted a Guru Bar over the duration of the conference, where delegates could meet with six highly respected VET Gurus in a 'speed-dating' style format to ask questions on a range of topics, including; RTO management, compliance, audit, assessment, CRICOS, continuous improvement and other areas of specialisation.

This year also marked an exciting progression in Velg Training's involvement on the social media front, with a recently launched Facebook page, active Twitter account (@velgtraining) and the continuously growing National RTO Network LinkedIn Group - all of which were actively used throughout the conference to post event updates, encourage discussion, provide feedback, promote social media competitions for delegates and enable participants to connect with their peers online, using three social media channels.

Velg Training would like to thank all delegates, presenters, sponsors and exhibitors for making this year's event a success and offer their thanks for any/all feedback received which will of course, shape the event for 2013. 'Watch this space' for details about the 2013 National VET Conference and for more information about upcoming events, visit velgtraining.com.

