



## Representing quality private education providers in Australia

[Home](#)
[Members](#)
[Services](#)
[Your ACPET Office](#)
[Students](#)
[Media](#)
[About](#)
[Contact Us](#) | [Member Login](#) | [Legals](#)



[Home](#) » [Media](#) » [National Monday Update](#) » [Edition 366](#)

### Member Login



[Retrieve forgotten password](#)


### In This Edition

#### Edition 366, 17 May 2010

View the latest updates in [your state](#).

#### National

**chiefing** your tribe; creating a culture worth belonging to!

"over the top - skilling northern australia" - interim program now available

policy matters

e-portfolios australia conference 2010

### News

## productivity possibilities

Monday, May 17 2010

Are teachers the only source of future efficiencies in VET, asks John Mitchell.

The following article featuring Alan Manly, Managing Director of Group Colleges Australia (GCA) recently appeared in Campus Review.

ACPET thanks Dr John Mitchell and Campus review for permitting ACPET to publish the article in its entirety.

### ACPET on Twitter



**ACPET**

@ACPET\_national

10m

Michael Gwyther shares views and important impacts of blended learning while maintaining quality outcomes. #ACPET2015  
[pic.twitter.com/CDkSdP2MZy](http://pic.twitter.com/CDkSdP2MZy)

Show Photo



**Matthew**

3h

- call for papers now open

endeavour awards 2010

transition of international marketing  
of education from aei to austrade

in focus 17 may 2010

what's on around the country

international engagement

### In Focus

in focus 17 may 2010

### Featured

member profile - bedford college

acpet 2010 national conference

world skills win for college students

productivity possibilities

### More updates in your state

Western Australia (4)

Queensland (6)

Northern Territory (1)

Victoria (6)

New South Wales (3)

South Australia (7)

Australian Capital Territory (3)

[View NMU Archive](#)

The recently announced review of the VET workforce by the Productivity Commission is a critical research project, and focuses on trainers and assessors. However, productivity also can be improved by improving management and administration systems and by implementing new business models, says Alan Manly, Managing Director of Group Colleges Australia (GCA).



As head of this ten-year old Sydney-based organisation enrolling over 4,000 mostly VET students per annum through its four colleges, Manly is focused on organisational efficiencies, and is not convinced he can extract more value from his teachers.

“Our board of directors observed many years ago that in education wages are about the same across the board. There’s only so much you can do with teachers’ wages. How do you make a teacher teach faster? Very hard. We like to think that we actually make the [productivity] gain in administration.”

GCA’s business model is unusual in that its small head office oversees four colleges: an English college Metro, a high school St James, a VET college Central and a higher education provider UIC. GCA’s efficiencies are gained mostly from keeping lean that head office and related administration.

“We have one head office for several colleges. In the past we could grow and keep our head office costs down. That was our economic gain,” said Manly.

How can educational organisations reduce administrations costs? “You’d better get to computers fast. You’ve got to remove the most expensive part of administration which is labour. So we have things online. As a private education institution we would probably have the most automated model of our private competitors. Basically we make our money out of investing in IT.”

Some of that IT is used in the classroom and some in the provision of other services by GCA. “We have a strong emphasis of the use of

technology. All classrooms have interactive white boards, courses are being taught using Moodle, we use [measurement] matrixes, and we have a constant review of service to all stakeholders - students, staff, agents and regulators.

“So it’s about economies of scale and using technology. Our head office is quite lean. The entire place runs on very, very few human beings.”

Reducing administration costs does not mean a reduction in services, says Manly, who came to education from the computer industry. “In the computer industry I used to be in charge of servicing major computer sites. Consequently I knew about post-sales service. [I learnt that] as a customer the only thing you’ll be irritated about is when you don’t get what you want or what you expected.”

Hence GCA measures “the turn-around time of things such exam results, the length of queues at customer service counters, the waiting time for any request from students. GCA measures turn around time for any regulatory request for information. We have a constant review of all costs, and there are no holy cows.

“We actually monitor the queues with cameras. There are five screens in the Executive area. The Directors have screens in their rooms where they can monitor the queues downstairs.”

### **The supply chain**

Manly is also focused on efficiencies in terms of offering students the opportunity to stay with GCA from English language courses through to VET and higher education. He calls this the supply chain and he sees it as inefficient for GCA to educate an individual up to a certain point and then hand them over to another educational organisation.

“We’ve become more of a one stop shop. Our English language college augments the big Central College, and the Central College then feeds the UIC.”

Not surprisingly, Manly believes that to stay successful GCA cannot only operate in the VET sector. “To be in the private education sector, to be successful you’ve got to be in higher ed.”

One reason he gives is that the recent exposure of dodgy private providers demonstrated that higher education has what he calls “more logical education foundations”. Another reason is that HE organisations are opening up VET colleges, extending their supply chain.

“Take Monash University, which now has Monash College. Well that [initiative] absolutely wipes out someone who cannot provide that supply chain.”

Manly is also conscious that VET is being squeezed by schools who are retaining more students in Years 11 and 12 that might have previously enrolled in VET.

“So we’re seeing high schools encroaching onto VET and we’re seeing the HE people saying we can provide a diploma, so the [VET] guy in the middle is really under a lot of pressure.”

Rather than be squashed in the middle, Manly is creating an efficient supply chain from “feeder colleges to diploma level education” and on to degrees. For Manly, developing this sustainable business structure is more important than increasing teacher efficiencies.



Contact [Alan Manly](#) and see [www.gca.edu.au](http://www.gca.edu.au)



Dr John Mitchell is a VET researcher. See [www.jma.com.au](http://www.jma.com.au)



## Home

Member Login  
Search  
Legal

## Members

About Membership  
Codes of Ethics  
Code of Ethics 2015  
Code of Practice 2015  
Become a Member  
About ASTAS  
ASTAS Management  
Quality and Ethics  
Quality and Ethics  
Committee  
Codes of Ethics &  
Practice  
Quality Support  
Health Check Services  
Quality Manual  
Complaints  
**Members Only**  
Deloitte report  
Governance  
Tuition Protection  
Service  
Membership  
Management  
Member Resources  
Student grievance  
referral protocols  
ASQA Update July  
2014  
Education sector in  
India  
International Education  
Self Assesment Tool  
for Members  
VET FEE-HELP  
2015-16 Skilled  
Occupations List

## Services

Professional  
Development  
About Professional  
Development  
Foundation Skills  
ACPET-NDCO  
Resource  
Health Check  
Services for RTOs  
Goods & Services  
Benchmarking  
Benchmarking Higher  
Education  
ASTAS

## Your ACPET Office

NSW  
VIC  
QLD  
SA  
WA  
ACT  
TAS  
NT  
China

## Students

ACPET Catalogue  
Why an ACPET  
College  
ACPET Scholarships  
Queensland Course  
Guide 2015/16  
NSW Course Guide  
2015/16

## Media

In the Media  
In the Media 2015  
In the Media 2012  
In the Media 2011  
In the Media 2010  
**Media Releases**  
2015  
2014  
2013  
2012  
2011  
2010  
**National Monday  
Update**  
NMU Archive  
**Submissions 2015**  
Submissions 2013  
Submissions 2012  
Submissions 2011  
Submissions 2010

## About

**Organisation**  
Executive Team  
Board  
State Committees  
National Committees  
China Office  
**ACPET Strategic Plan**  
**Activity**  
Benchmarking  
National Conferences  
**2015**  
**2014**  
National Skills  
Summit  
20th Anniversary  
Higher Education  
Journal  
Higher Education  
Symposium  
Foundation Skills PD  
Series for RTOs  
**Affiliations**  
**Publications**