

Client Services Streamline and Review Project

Industry Reference Group (IRG) meeting minutes

Meeting purpose To introduce IRG members to the Client Services streamline and review project and seek feedback on the proposed project plan

Details
Date: 10 May 2012
Time: 10:00 am to 3:00 pm
Place: CS&HISC Boardroom, Lvl 9 46-56 Kippax St, Surry Hills, NSW

Attendees The meeting was chaired by Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council (CS&HISC) Training Packages Process Improvement Specialist Robyn McEwan, who welcomed the participants.

See **Appendix A** for attendees and apologies.

Topics addressed The table below identifies the topics discussed in the meeting and the person who led each discussion

Topic	Discussion Leader
Welcome and introductions	Chair
Background to CS&HISC and Industry Intelligence (E-Scan)	CS&HISC Project Lead
Overview of NSSC Streamlining policy	CS&HISC Project Lead
Overview of Project Plan	CS&HISC Project Lead
Sector and Project Priorities	CS&HISC Project Lead
Project Governance Structure	CS&HISC Project Lead
Training Package Implementation and Quality of Training	CS&HISC Workforce Development Industry Partner

Welcome and introductions

Terms of Reference

The IRG agreed to the group's Terms of Reference.

Chair selection

Robyn McEwan proposed to chair the meeting in the first instance and suggested that the IRG members nominate a chair in the succeeding meeting.

Representation

The IRG discussed current representation and agreed the need to broaden current membership to include The Attorney General's Department and an organisation to represent Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander interests to the IRG.

ACTION 1: CS&HISC to liaise with The Attorney General's Department regarding representation and identify an organisation to represent Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander interests.

Background and Industry Intelligence The Chair provided a background to CS&HISC, the drivers behind the project and a profile of the community services and health industries.

Overview of NSSC Streamlining policy CS&HISC Project Lead gave an overview of the National Skills Standards Council (NSSC) reform of Training Packages, in particular the implementation of the 'streamlined' design model for Training Packages.

Qualifications

- Qualifications reflect the job roles
- "Nested" qualifications are not allowed in new model – this includes move away from entry requirements where possible
- Focus on flexibility by keeping core units to a minimum and wide range of electives – however acknowledging that a qualification needs to describe the job role so if there are tasks that must be completed by all workers, these should be core
- Move towards skill sets to broaden skills and specialise

Credit arrangements

- Part of new design model although details have not been finalized by NSSC. (IRG will be informed when developments are made on this front).

Units of Competency

- Reflect performance standards for specific job tasks
- Will be divided into two sections:
 - performance standards for the workplace
 - assessment requirements
- Range Statement to be removed and replaced with a Range of Conditions. The existing contents are to be reviewed and incorporated into assessment requirements or companion volume/implementation guide.
- Foundation skills (ACSF + employability skills) section which is now are assessable but only in the context of the job role. Will not be assessed separately
- Move away from pre-requisite units as these denote "hidden effort" – these must only be kept if a job task requires formally assessed competence in a task before being able to undertake another task
- There is scope for the Assessment Requirements to be prescriptive and specific depending on industry needs e.g. How often does someone have to perform a skill to demonstrate competency? Where does it have to be done? Can it be done in a simulated environment?
- Move away from unit "levels" as units describe what a person does in their job, not the level it is performed (e.g. lower "level" admin units in a Diploma qualification)

Companion Volumes

- Quality assured "Implementation Guides" for users (industry, RTOs, learners)
 - CS&HISC not funded to develop companion volumes, however will develop what is able to through the scope of this project.
-

Sector and Project Priorities

The CS&HISC Project Lead gave an overview of the Continuous Improvement Process and led discussion surrounding the sector priorities and challenges influencing the project.

Sector Priorities and Challenges:

Employment Services and Careers:

- There is high turnover in employment services and the jobs are becoming more complex as the workers are dealing with people with increasingly complex needs. Staff are generally not well supported and skilled and therefore the client is not getting as good a service as they could
- No salary incentive for workers to complete the Certificate IV
- New standards in the Career Development industry that came into effect in January 2012.

Family Services and Counselling:

- The IRG raised the benefit of Professional Associations registering members and endorsing RTOs to provide specific courses to industry. For example in the counselling sector, completing a qualification is not a gateway to employment as a Practitioner must be accredited by the Australian Counselling Association (ACA) in order to practice
- The ACA representative highlighted an issue where although Government has increased funding for Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualifications in the counselling sector, many employers including Government will not employ them as they want people qualified through the Higher Education (HE) sector. This is problematic because the sector does not necessarily need more people with clinical skills working with clients with non-clinical conditions and people are being trained with no employment outcome. It also means that the sector is losing mature people in the workforce as young people are more likely to undertake degrees. This seems to be largely due to a perception issue and stigma towards people holding VET qualifications which does not just pertain to the counselling profession
- ACA is currently looking to work with family law practices and also move into the space of weight-loss counselling
- Lifeline has moved away from using the term Telephone Counselling to describe their work
- Telephone Counselling is part of the role of a Financial Counsellor
- The representative for Family Relationships Services Australia (FRSA) gave an overview of the recent history of the sector and legislation including:
 - In 1996 the Federal Government funded a number of Children's Contact Services (CCS)
 - The new Act stipulated that people who were separating with children were required to attend family dispute resolution (FDR) and obtain a 60i Certificate before they went to court. After applying the legislation,

there was then no support to ensure that there were enough qualified workers to issue 60i certificates

- The Government later instituted a process of accreditation for FDR practitioners which requires them to undertake a number of units of competency in the current Vocational Graduate Diploma or obtain recognition of prior learning.
- Positions in CCS are not very well paid and it is difficult work. There is a need to benchmark skills however it may be prohibitive for a workforce that is poorly paid and fairly casualised
- There is a trend that people who have been involved in mediation over the years come to work in FDR however there are a number of people that believe that FDR is very different to mediation i.e. mediation is impartial and FDR workers have to be child advocates
- Services also offer relationship education
- The majority of workers are also in the older age bracket which in a way is important because they bring some maturity and experience to the role. This demographic however, will further impact on current workforce shortages in the future. FRSA has developed a workforce strategy to try and look at ways for the sector to meet current and future demand
- In the past, people have usually come into the workforce from the HE sector however this has dissipated as the sector does not pay enough to attract these workers
- Services have a mix of fee paying and non-fee paying clients
- There is a need to attract more workers into the sector to work in the areas of alcohol and other drugs, mental health and domestic violence
- Like other sectors, it is important to focus on prevention and early intervention rather than working at the end of the continuum
- In QLD prior to the change of Government there was a push for family support workers to provide support in people's homes but there are WHS issues associated with this. This might be an issue to be addressed in the qualifications as there are 2 units in the Diploma but these are written from an organisational perspective not an individual perspective
- The group also agreed that there should be a unit added into the qualifications around reflective practice to assist people in stepping back from their personal experience and helping people with their issues. So workers have the ability to look after themselves and work with others to empower them
- The biggest thing for the community sector is looking after yourself and how not to get burnt out however it is not addressed in any of the qualifications.

Celebrancy:

- Recently a registration fee has been introduced and there is a view that it is not equitable as it does not apply to those working in a registry office and those working in a religious context

- The Coalition of Celebrants Associations (CoCA) views that there is also an issue that to be registered as a Celebrant, the worker only has to have completed one unit of competency not the entire Certificate IV which means some Celebrants are not adequately trained to work competently. For example there have been some instances where some Celebrants do not have the performance skills and are too shy to talk to people. To mitigate this, CoCA advocates the addition of 2 units of competency to the core of the Certificate IV. These include: CUSMPF303A – Prepare for Performance; and CUFWRT301A – write content for a range of media
- One RTO has trained approximately 80% of workers
- There is some talk of setting up regional advisory committees to facilitate appointing people based on community need and the demand for weddings as currently the market is flooded with over 10,000 celebrants when there is only enough work for 1,200 to make a fulltime living from the profession (need to facilitate approximately 100 weddings a year)
- Projecting into the future, there is thought that Celebrants could play a role in facilitating other types of rites of passage including “coming of age” ceremonies for 18 year olds to mitigate against the importance that drug and alcohol play currently in that space and connecting to older people (in the context of a growing ageing population) to personalise funerals as people tend to get an Undertaker to conduct the funeral. Currently Celebrants are working in these spaces for their own families but there could be a benefit to communities to do these more broadly
- Celebrants also require business skills as they are running their own business.

Qualifications:

Diploma of Counselling:

- The ACA views that the current Diploma is appropriate as long as the worker is working within their skill level. e.g. mental health is a continuum with one end needing clinical support and the other end needing community support. With the latter served well by a worker trained with the Diploma qualification. The Diploma is also a good pathway to higher qualifications as people get experience in the sector
- The FRSA representative made an observation that there are increasingly people with a complexity of issues coming into services and one of the reasons services look to employ people with higher-level skills is so that worker can work with the person throughout the continuum as the Counsellor builds a rapport with the client and the client wants to remain with that worker. The additional challenge with the graduated process is that when you have a worker who ends up dealing with issues beyond their scope and they have to refer the client on

- The mix of HE and VET qualified staff can also create some disparity in teams e.g. when you have some clinical psychologists as well as financial counsellors working in a service and there is a status attached to their qualifications.
- The group thought that CS&HISC needs to ensure that career pathways are articulated really well and easily and there is a role for CS&HISC to push the message that you do not have to be degree qualified to be professional and look at all roles within a profession not just the VET roles.

Diploma of Community Services – Financial Counselling

- There has been an update to include 2 legal units. One of the units Ethics in the legal system does not reflect what the workers do in their job
- FAHCSIA has just released a tender for workers to be employed nationally as Problem Gambling Financial Counsellors. This gives more recognition to the role.
- Hunter Institute offers both the Certificate IV and Diploma but there are no job outcomes for the Diploma.

Overview of Project Plan

The CS&HISC Project Lead gave an overview of the project timeline and project phases.

National Information Forums have been scheduled during phase 1 (May and June 2012) to provide information to the wider sector.

Project Governance Structure

The Project Lead gave an overview of the proposed governance and consultation structure for this project.

The IRG provides cross-sectoral governance and strategic direction for the project. The Subject Matter Expert Groups (SMEGs) meet more frequently to advise and provide feedback on specific content related issues. Members of the SMEGs will be asked to contribute to a functional analysis of current job roles – this requires members to have experience in the job, or directly supervising the job.

The IRG agreed to the suggested SMEGs and were asked to provide nominations from their members.

ACTION 2: CS&HISC to distribute terms of reference and nomination form for SMEGs

ACTION 3: IRG to nominate appropriate members for SMEGs.

Workforce Development Session

The CS&HISC Workforce Development Industry Partner gave an outline of the CS&HISC workforce development strategies currently under developed to address training quality.

The IRG raised the following points regarding training delivery and quality:

- In NSW organisations are promoting fee-help to student and inferring that they will not have to pay it back as they will not earn enough. However it still affects their credit rating
- Regarding work placements (mainly in relation to the Diploma of Community Services work), there is increasing use of online delivery and training with no minimum requirement in training for field placement and supervision of work placement. ACWA is concerned that people could be presented with a qualification without having completed a work placement which is extremely dangerous in a community service context. ACWA recommends that minimum hours for work placements be specified in the Training Package. CS&HISC Project Lead mentioned that there is the possibility to strengthen the requirements for work placement within the streamlined units.

Next Meeting

The IRG recommended next meeting to be held during Project Phase 2 & 3, after discussions with SMEG groups and draft 1 components have been drafted.

The Chair proposed to circulate an appropriate date once scoping of work has been carried out.

ACTION 4: CS&HISC to send out date for next meeting.

Action Items

The table below identifies the actions and timelines for implementing the decisions made during the meeting:

Action Item	By Whom	When
ACTION 1: CS&HISC to liaise with the Attorney General's Department regarding representation and identify an organisation to represent Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander interests	CS&HISC Project Lead	30 June 2012
ACTION 2: CS&HISC to distribute terms of reference and nomination form for SMEGs	CS&HISC Project Lead	With minutes
ACTION 3: IRG to nominate appropriate members for SMEGs	IRG members	30 June 2012
ACTION 4: CS&HISC to send out date for next meeting	CS&HISC Project Lead	30 June 2012

Appendix A – Industry Reference Group meeting attendance 10 May 2012

Industry Reference Group attendees

Name	Position	Organisation	Representing
Lynda Ford	Chief Executive Officer	Australian Community Workers Association	Australian Community Workers Association
Philip Armstrong	Chief Executive Officer	Australian Counselling Association	Australian Counselling Association
Callum Campbell	Chief Executive Officer	Australian Mediation Association	Australian Mediation Association
Susan Sundstrom	President	Careers Advisors Association of NSW	Career Industry Council of Australia
Rona Goold	Secretary	Coalition of Celebrants Associations	Coalition of Celebrants Associations
Steve Hackett	Deputy Director	Family Relationship Services Australia	Family Relationship Services Australia
Bernadette Douglas	Training Manager	Financial and Consumer Rights Council	Financial Counselling Australia
Cliff Rundle	Manager, Australian Training Network	Jobs Australia	Jobs Australia
Vicki Field	Head Teacher Community Services	Hunter Institute	TAFE Directors Australia

Industry Reference Group apologies

Name	Position	Organisation	Representing
Frieda Marfleet	Executive Officer	Case Management Society of Australia	Case Management Society of Australia
Yet to be nominated		National Employment Services Association	National Employment Services Association

Cathy Walsh	Director	Conwal and Associates	Australian Council of Private Education
Ian Andrews			Industry Training Advisory Boards
Yet to be nominated			Community and Disability Services Ministers' Advisory Council (CDSMAC)

CS&HISC attendees

Name	Position	Organisation
Robyn McEwan	Training Packages Process Improvement Specialist	CS&HISC
Emma Richards	Training Packages Industry Partner	CS&HISC
Isabel Osuna-Gatty	Workforce Development WELL Broker	CS&HISC