

Inquiry into Innovation and Creativity: Workforce for the New Economy

**Submission from Navitas Limited
to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and
Employment
11 March 2016**

The Education and Employment Committee will inquire into and report on matters that ensure Australia's tertiary system can meet the needs of a future labour force focused on innovation and creativity; including the following matters:

- 1. The extent to which students are graduating with the skills needed for the jobs of today and of the future;*
- 2. Matters relating to laws and regulations that may act as a barrier to education providers being able to offer qualifications that meet the needs of the new economy and fastest growing sectors;*
- 3. Factors that discourage closer partnerships between industry; in particular small and medium enterprises, the research sector and education providers; including but not limited to: intellectual property; technology transfer; and rapid commercialisation.*
- 4. Relationships between tertiary education entrepreneurship programs and private incubator and accelerators.*
- 5. Other related matters that the Committee considers relevant.*

Navitas Submission

Last August, Navitas Group CEO Mr Rod Jones was invited to a Ministerial Roundtable with the then Minister for Trade and Investment, the Hon Andrew Robb MP, which informed the development of AIE2025, the long-term market development roadmap for Australian international education. Also present at the roundtable was the President of the Council of International Students Australia (CISA), Ms Nina Khairina.

One of Nina's many insightful comments has direct relevance to this inquiry. In comparing the US and Australian tertiary education systems Nina said that her view, and the view of many of her generation, was that in the US the dominant mindset is of 'creating a job' while the prevailing mentality in Australia is one of 'finding a job'.

To deliver the skills required for Australia's future workforce, our tertiary system must develop graduates that can both find and create jobs. The ability to innovate and create are central to being able to demonstrate to a prospective employer that you have the skills they require to deal with the challenges and opportunities facing their business now and into the future. These skills are also key to the drive and entrepreneurship needed to establish a new enterprise.

It is in this context that Navitas responds to the specific terms of reference of the inquiry.

1. The extent to which students are graduating with the skills needed for the jobs of today and of the future.

In the context of this inquiry innovation and creativity can be read as both defining the nature of our future labour force and as attributes required by that future labour force. Given Navitas' position as a quality provider of post-secondary education and training our submission will focus

on how the tertiary sector can deliver the skills needed for Australia's economy as we move into an era where ideas and knowledge are fundamental to our economic prosperity. Innovation and creativity are central to this, but they are macro-level attributes that are made up of a number of '21st Century' skills. Among these '21st Century' skills are: critical thinking and problem-solving; collaboration and influence; communication; curiosity and imagination; agility and adaptability; and ethics, action, and accountability¹.

It is important keep in mind that developing these skills in learners is as much about *how* their learning is supported as it is about *what* they are learning. This is one of the many drivers for Navitas' investment in a specialised unit that works across Navitas to support and encourage innovation and effective practice in learning and teaching, including the integration of technology, contemporary learning design, and holistic approaches to the student experience. An overview of Navitas Learning and Teaching is at **Attachment B**.

Australia's tertiary system is well regarded for our approach to learning and teaching from a technical and knowledge-based perspective. Notwithstanding this, more can be done to enhance the ability of our graduates to meet the challenges and pursue the opportunities that are present today and in the future. Sir Ken Robinson has posited that current education systems are no longer fit-for-purpose as they were designed in the industrial era where the imperative was to educate the masses, turning out standardised and measurable skills for industries. This model will struggle to meet the needs of globalised economies and societies of today and tomorrow.

A stronger emphasis in Australia's tertiary sector on the above mentioned 21st Century skills – that are captured at a high level by innovation and creativity – would go some way to ensuring graduates are ready to respond to the demands of jobs that are both provided and self-created. Work is, and will be complex, multi-faceted and have many inter-relationships. The ability of our graduates to meet these challenges and pursue the opportunities will be reliant on their ability to not only apply field-specific knowledge and technical skills, but also on how creative and innovative they can be. The great Albert Einstein recognised this when he said, '*imagination is more important than knowledge*'.

SAE Institute, a division of Navitas, embodies innovation and creativity in both their approach to learning and teaching as well as through the industry it serves, as the world's leading educator in creative media industries. SAE works across vocational and higher education to deliver certificates, diplomas, and bachelor degrees across six disciplines: animation; audio; design; film; games; and web and mobile. SAE's success is built on its extensive industry engagement. Learners are exposed to cutting-edge industry practice, are constantly applying their skills in first-class facilities or through industry placements and its graduates are sort out by businesses across the creative media industry.

Some specific recommendations to ensure that learners graduate with the skills needed to find and create the jobs of today and of the future include:

- Continuing to embed critical thinking and problem-solving; collaboration and influence; communication; curiosity and imagination; agility and adaptability; and accountability into the 'way' learning is supported in particular fields and vocations;
- Explicitly drawing-out these skills as standalone core competencies that are learned as part of all tertiary study, similar to the British approach to 'learning entrepreneurship';

¹ <http://www.tonywagner.com/7-survival-skills> and <https://globaldigitalcitizen.org/critical-21st-century-skills-every-student-needs>

- Consideration of models that foster greater interdisciplinary learning, such as combining science, technology, engineering and mathematics with creative arts (STEMCA); and
- Ensuring that 'digital competence' is embedded into all tertiary programs.

2. Matters relating to laws and regulations that may act as a barrier to education providers being able to offer qualifications that meet the needs of the new economy and fastest growing sectors.

Education, rightly, is a highly regulated industry. Navitas supports legislation and regulation that go to ensuring a high quality, diverse and sustainable tertiary education sector. Where legislation, regulation and quality assurance become a barrier to quality providers being able to respond flexibly to the emerging needs of the new economy and our fast growing sectors is when it is duplicative, untargeted or slow. Following are some specific examples of where the legislative and regulatory framework is hindering, not helping quality providers.

Training packages and recent changes to teach-out rules by the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)

Issues in this area include:

- Insufficient time for planned teach-out, assessment and award of superseded qualifications within 12 months;
- Insufficient time for the design and implementation of new curriculum resources within 12 months;
- Unnecessary undermining of the value of 'superseded' qualifications amongst students and employers;
- Unnecessary disruption to students' program of studies, particularly for part-time students who cannot complete superseded qualifications within the prescribed 12-month period and so must transfer to the new (often non-equivalent) qualification, resulting in additional study and debt burdens; and
- Inefficient diversion of resources into continuous course development and upgrade activities.

Continuous change to training package qualifications does not result in greater flexibility to meet the needs of the new economy and the fastest growing sectors. Navitas believes it acts as a deterrent to stable, planned partnerships with industry. A more efficient approach, and one that produces graduates with getting strengths in 21st Century skills, would be to introduce greater flexibility into the structure of VET qualifications. This would encourage enhanced cross and/or interdisciplinary approaches, for example:

- Reduce the number of core units in training package qualifications to one third of the total Units of Competency (UoC) identified in the packaging rules for a qualification;
- Reduce the number of 'listed electives', which are in effect compulsory electives and so restrict the ability to bring genuine electives into the qualification, to one third of the total UoC identified in the packaging rules for a qualification; and
- Increase the number of genuine electives, which is the UoCs that can be selected from any other training package or any accredited course, to one third of the total UoCs identified in the packaging rules for a qualification.

Another measure to enable providers to more rapidly respond to identified skills development needs in fast-growing sectors would be to reduce the period of evaluation of applications for course accreditation by ASQA from a minimum of nine months to one month.

Recent VET FEE-HELP reforms

Navitas welcomes the Australian Government's efforts to ensure quality, transparency and good governance in the VET industry. We have worked actively to support the Government's measures to weed out poor quality and unethical providers that tarnish the reputation of the vocational education and training industry.

However, the December 2015 legislative changes demonstrate legislation can be a blunt instrument when applied 'across the board'. A number of the recent measures in the legislation will impede low risk Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) being able to offer qualifications that meet the needs of the new economy and fastest growing sectors. For example, Navitas provides VET FEE-HELP supported programs in a number of growth industries including the creative industries, allied health and justice. Capping the VET FEE-HELP accounts of low risk providers at 2015 levels is preventing the roll-out of new programs developed with high levels of industry input, and impacting enrolments in current programs. This is not supportive of the changing needs of the Australian economy and business.

Higher education

Some specific recommendations on how to reduce barriers to higher education providers being able to offer qualifications that meet the needs of the new economy and fastest growing sectors include:

- Extending Commonwealth Supported Places to all providers providing Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) Level 5 and 6 awards as these are programs often undertaken by learners who are already working and looking to up-skill or re-skill within or beyond their current field.
- Extending Commonwealth Supported Places and access to equitable FEE-HELP conditions for students no matter where they choose to study (public or private Higher Education Provider HEP), or at what level.
- Compelling HEPs that receive government funding to provide Credit for Recognised Learning (CRL) for units or programs that have been completed at any Australia HEP. This would avoid a student having to pay twice for content and skills that have already been learnt and the opportunity cost of investing time in re-doing previously completed courses. In turn, graduates would be able to enter the workforce sooner and thus provide valuable skilled workers for our economy.

3. Factors that discourage closer partnerships between industry, in particular small and medium enterprises, the research sector and education providers, including but not limited to: intellectual property; technology transfer; and rapid commercialisation.

There are a range of factors that discourage closer partnerships between industry, in particular small and medium enterprises, the research sector and education providers. However, on the flip-side of those are the key success factors in nurturing and maintaining innovative relationships between industry and education providers, these include:

- A strong and long-term investment and commitment on behalf of the parties;
- Policy and funding certainty and stability;
- Incentives for providers and industry to form strategic partnerships.

- Match-funding grants available to support collaboration between education providers and industry that provide commercial outcomes and develops entrepreneurial cultures. Government funding in this regard should not be restricted to the research sector;
- Government facilitation of forums that connect industry and education providers to ensure relevance of curriculum and develop mechanisms for internships, work placements, other work experience opportunities and work integrated learning;
- Government promotion of the benefits of internships to employers and guidance on how to legally host an intern; and
- Development of more innovative approaches to assessment by education providers and acceptance of these by regulators, industry professional bodies and employers.

4. Relationships between tertiary education entrepreneurship programs and private incubator and accelerators

Much of the interaction and collaboration between tertiary education entrepreneurship programs occurs at an organisation-to-organisation level. Some potential measures to elevate collaboration to a systemic level include:

- Government facilitation of forums that bring tertiary learners together with entrepreneurial mentors; and forums that allow learners with a business idea to pitch to potential investors;
- Government facilitation/brokering of public-private education partnerships geared to developing entrepreneurs of the future; and
- Government matched funding for campus-based incubators and accelerators that equip learners with the business skills required to launch successful enterprises.

5. Other related matters that the Committee considers relevant

Nil

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About Navitas Limited

Navitas Ltd is an Australian global education leader providing pre-university and university programs, English language courses, migrant education and settlement services, creative media education, student recruitment, professional development and corporate training services to more than 80,000 students across a network of over 120 colleges and campuses in 31 countries. Navitas listed on the Australian Securities Exchange (ASX) in 2004 and is now an S&P/ASX Top 100 Company, employing more than 5,800 staff globally.

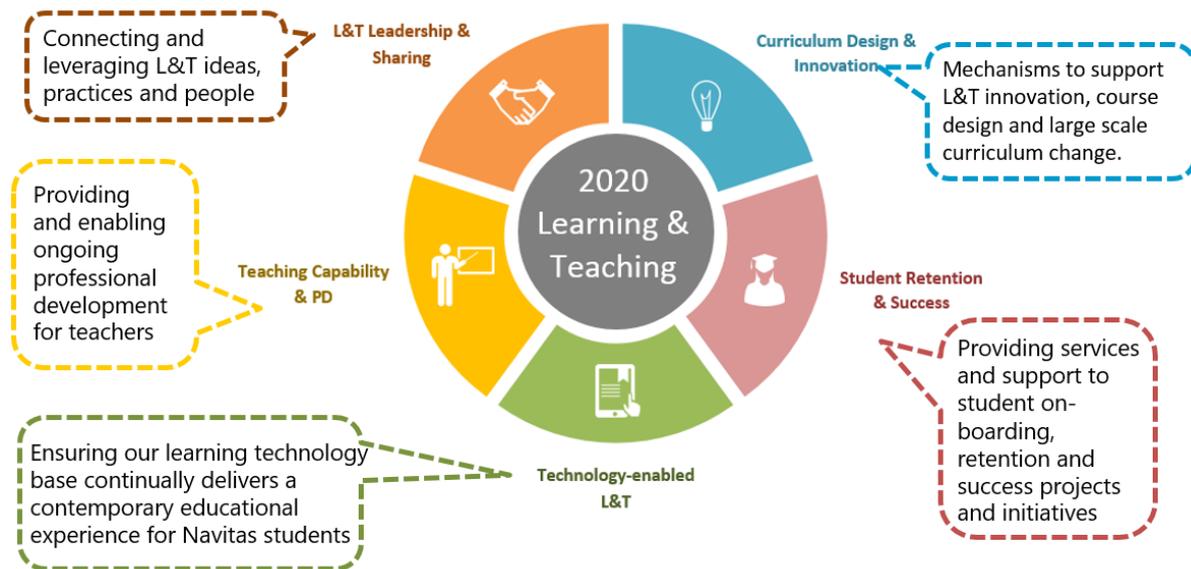
Navitas believes an innovative, diverse, globally connected public and private tertiary education and training sector is critical to Australia's future prosperity, intellectual capital and social cohesion and welcomes this opportunity to provide comment on how Australia's tertiary system can meet the needs of a future labour force focused on innovation and creativity.

Navitas Teaching and Learning Services

Navitas Learning and Teaching (L&T) Services is an enabling function that provides services, strategic advice and connected L&T leadership across Navitas globally. It supports and encourages innovation in learning and teaching, including the integration of technology, contemporary learning design, and holistic approaches to the student experience.



Areas of focus for 2016-17

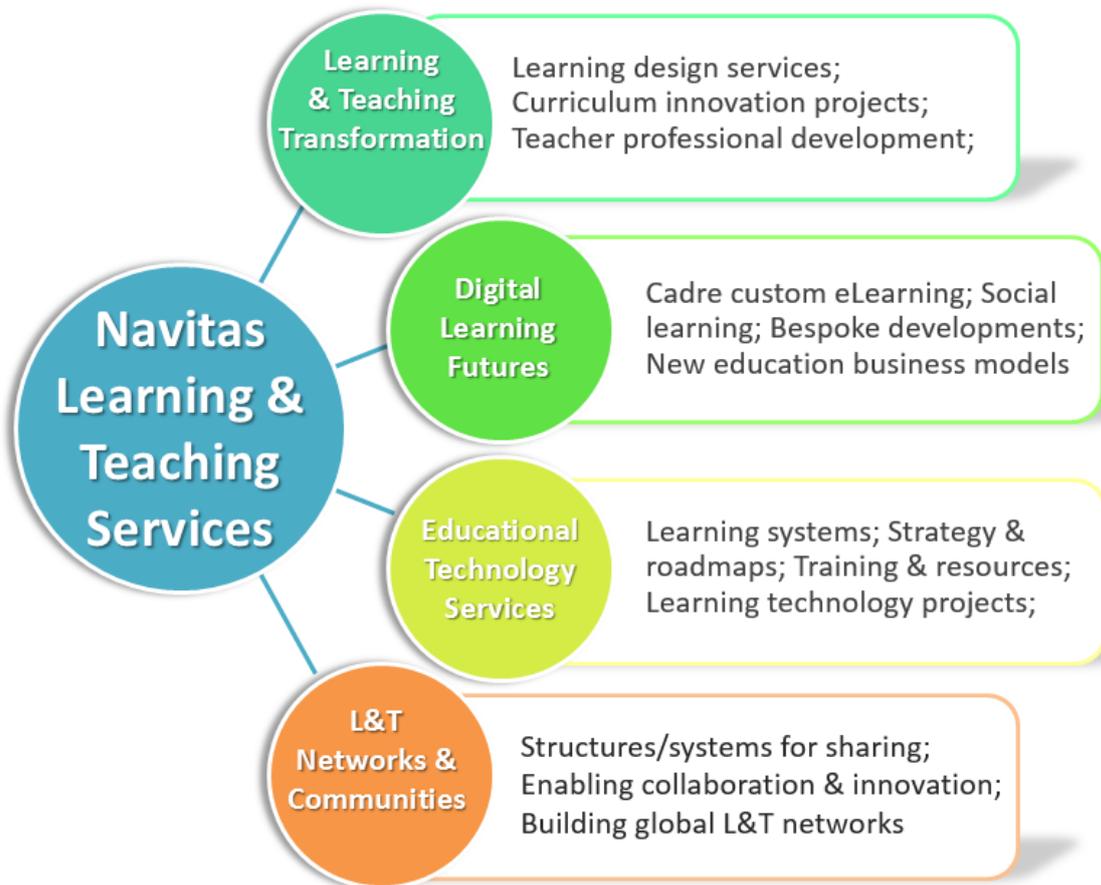


How Navitas Learning and Teaching works

Through a 'Network of Excellence' model, Navitas L&T Services work in partnership with strategic business units, learning and teaching leaders and functional groups delivering prioritised initiatives, projects and services



Structure





Projects and Initiatives – available at www.learningandteaching-navitas.com



Bringing Design Thinking to (real) life

Can Design Thinking offer us a concrete process to capture a richer understanding of the student experience? A former Centre Manager in ELICOS shares some practical reflections.



Re-thinking retention [series]: getting started with orientation

What gets students to stick with their study and complete their course? Find out what UPD Australia have been doing with their retention analytics project...



Revise and rewind: video for academic support

Research by Student Learning Support staff in NPI examines how video can help students build academic skills as part of their course.



Piloting iPads in the classroom [infographic]

How do you run a successful pilot to introduce iPads to a classroom of AMEP learners? This infographic takes us through some of the steps involved.



Linking study to work: defining graduate capabilities

A quick visual introduction to the graduate capability framework – one of the foundations of a re-vamped approach to the nursing curriculum in HSA.



Re-writing the rules on student feedback

Can we create more engaging feedback for students? NPI's English Language Proficiency team explores the power of screencasting to bring a human voice to feedback on written work.