

Fulbright Scholar to improve VET workforce development

Issued 18 March 2010

Issues around loss of knowledge as people retire, and better workforce management to enhance the capability of the vocational (technical and further education) sector will be the focus of Fulbright research over the next year.

Mark Harris, Senior Strategy Officer with the Queensland Department of Education and Training, Product Services in South Brisbane has been awarded the 2010 Fulbright Professional Scholarship in Vocational Education and Training (VET) sponsored by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

Through the Fulbright Scholarship, Mark will spend up to four months with State University of New York in Oswego researching the area of vocational education and training.

In congratulating Mr Harris, Executive Director of the Australian-American Fulbright Commission, Dr Joe Hlubucek, said that his research will play an important role in the development of better teaching, learning and assessment practices in the VET sector.

“Mark's work will give him a once in a lifetime opportunity to see how this issue is managed elsewhere and bring this knowledge back to Australia,” Dr Hlubucek said.

“He will look at crucial issues in the sector such as how to improve retention of knowledge as people retire and how to attract and reward staff to keep them working in the area.”

The scholarship was established in 1995 to support the exchange of research and ideas in VET between Australia and the United States.

Previous winners of the Fulbright VET Scholarship include:

- Mr Martin Riordan, 2009, Researching the set-up and operation of the U.S. community colleges.
- Christopher Ainsworth, 2008, Risk and Emergency Management Education Centre, University of Adelaide Research to increase professional respect between full-time and volunteer emergency management staff through equitable access to training
- Mr Mark O'Rourke, 2007, research to explore how current practice and theories of training-based game products can contribute to the development of alternative delivery strategies and tools for VTE. It is expected that these tools will find a ready application in industries where workers deal with sophisticated machinery or hazardous environments.
- Dr Mark Brophy, 2006, VET Division of the Victorian Government Department of Education and Training, Researching 'Study Circle's' as a learning approach and their application to the VET sector, with a focus on disadvantaged learners.
- Metta Young, 2005, Enhancing educational pathways for desert Indigenous people