ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Energy Services Industry Subcommittee

Inquiry into energy services industry

Chadstone — 12 December 2005

Members

Mrs A. Coote  Mr J. G. Hilton
Mr D. K. Drum  Ms J. M. Lindell
Ms J. T. Duncan

Chair: Ms J. M. Lindell

Staff

Executive Officer: Dr V. Koops
Research Officer: Mr D. Benjamin

Witnesses

Ms J. Trewhella, General Manager, Vocational Education and Training Division;

Dr W. Timms, Assistant General Manager, Planning and Industry Relations, Strategic Directions Division;

Ms M. Burdeu, Project Development Manager, New and Emerging Skills Branch, Vocational Education Training Division; and

Mr E. Hardman, Curriculum Consultant, Training Packages, Training and Operations Division; Office of Training and Tertiary Education, Department of Education and Training.
The CHAIR — The committee welcomes Jan Trewella, the general manager, and Wendy Timms, Margaret Burdeu and Edward Hardman from the vocational education and training division of the Department of Education and Training. Thank you for coming today and giving us your time and expertise. Hansard is recording all the evidence taken today, and in 10 days or so you will receive a proof version of the transcript to read through and make any corrections that are necessary. All evidence is taken under the provisions of the Parliamentary Committees Act and is protected from judicial review; however, comments made outside the precincts of the hearing are not protected by parliamentary privilege.

Ms TREWHELLA — I am happy to be interrupted with questions as we go along if something is not clear.

The CHAIR — It is dangerous, because we often do not get through. We will see how we go.

Ms TREWHELLA — Thank you very much for inviting us here today. We are responding particularly to term of reference 5 around the adequacy of training for the energy efficiency services industry. We have prepared a presentation in particular on what the training sector is doing in this area.

In June 2002 Minister Kosky released a ministerial statement Knowledge and Skills for the Innovation Economy. The statement set the future directions for vocational education and training in Victoria, and it was designed to ensure that the training system was better positioned to meet the needs of an innovation economy. Its key aims were to ensure that VET is innovative and responsive to the needs of existing and emerging industries, and able to specialise in key areas, such as environmental technologies. In the implementation of that part of the statement relating to environmental technologies, we have taken it that that term is taken broadly to include the promotion, design and application of more sustainable environmental technologies and associated practices. That includes energy efficiency, renewable technologies, waste reduction, recycling and management, water efficiency and management and recycling. It is quite broad.

The statement itself was to drive systemic change, to improve policy and resource allocation based on evidence-based priority setting and more effective planning, better delivery of training to meet industry’s needs and development of specific initiatives targeted to build the capability of the VET sector. Just to give you a bit of a picture of the training system in Victoria, in 2004 TAFE institutions, adult community education providers and private registered training providers provided training to over half a million people, just under half of whom were women. This represents over 111 million student contact hours of training. As a matter of interest, a student’s age group tends to influence the length of study undertaken, so younger people are enrolling in longer programs, which means they are getting more substantial qualifications. Fifteen to 19-year-olds represent about 20 per cent of all course enrolments, and 20 to 24-year-olds represent 17 per cent of all course enrolments, so we have seen a bit of a shift there from shorter courses to longer courses in those age groups.

On top of their government-funded training delivery, in 2004 our TAFE institutes delivered 18.82 million student contact hours, and our adult community education organisations delivered 1.75 million student contact hours in fee-for-service delivery. TAFE institutes delivered a further 6.92 million student contact hours to full-fee-paying overseas students. In 2005–06 the Victorian government targeted expenditure of approximately $2 billion on VET. That includes funding for public and private training delivery, programs and support services, programs in the adult and community education sector and integrated training support across all sectors — schools, TAFE and the adult and community sector.

In the industries that are covered by the energy efficiency services sector that are encapsulated by that broad definition, in building and construction — that includes civil operations, general construction, plumbing services and water — about 6 million student contact hours are delivered. In electrical and electronics, which is a sub-sector of the electrotechnology and communications industry group, 4.1 million student contact hours were delivered; and in engineering, which is a sector of the metals and engineering industry group, about 3.4 million student contact hours were delivered — so it is a reasonably sized delivery.

The Victorian vocational education and training system is part of the national system, which provides national consistency, drives flexible and responsive training to meet the needs of industry, promotes quality training through the Australian quality training framework and enables delivery by public and private providers of qualifications that are nationally recognised through the Australian qualifications framework. These qualifications draw on national training packages, which are nationally developed and endorsed. It is difficult, although we have had a go at it, to
estimate the number of packages that have direct relevance to the energy efficiency sector, but the key packages that seem to relate to that sector are the electrotechnology package — or the electricity supply package, which is the more common terminology — engineering, gas, building and construction. There are also state-accredited courses which are nationally recognised and to which I will come as well. The training packages specify the training requirements of industry. They describe the knowledge and skills that are needed by industry in the workplace. They include competencies, qualifications and assessment guidelines for a specific industry or a range of industries, and they are developed by national industry skills councils which comprise a range of representatives from industry and employee groups. State courses are developed and accredited to meet the needs of local industry or the community that are not met by the national training packages, and those qualifications are nationally recognised as well.

I will hand over to Wendy to talk about our planning framework, for which Wendy is largely responsible.

**Dr TIMMS —** The ministerial statement Jan referred to earlier identified the need for a different approach to planning which would provide advice to the Victorian Learning and Employment Skills Commission on how to better target government-funded training in Victoria. From that ministerial statement a planning framework has been developed and endorsed by the Victorian Learning and Employment Skills Commission, which generates a set of priorities for government purchase of training, primarily implemented through what we purchase through TAFE institutes in Victoria.

The foundation of the planning framework is a quantitative evidence base that we have validated through the National Institute of Labour Studies and Access Economics which draws upon ABS labour force data employment forecasts and also the DEWR list in terms of skill shortages and skill gaps. We have a model that basically forecasts industry needs for training and then we map that against what we purchase in terms of the supply of training. The training model is really about trying to identify opportunities to realign the government purchase of training between industry areas. It generates advice based on the quantitative analysis, but our methodology also includes a process where we generate a qualitative evidence base through research and consultation with key stakeholders from industry, other government departments and what we call study area reference groups, which incorporates community groups and members, local planning personnel from local government and also our TAFE providers. We have an approach that has a quantitative base, but we moderate all our evidence through providing an opportunity for qualitative evidence to inform the advice that goes ultimately to the VLESC.

As I mentioned, we then operationalise that annually through our performance agreements with TAFE institutes. On the whole the advice falls into three categories: we identify high-priority training where we have judged that there is an area of undersupply, so we base what industry need is forecast against supply. If we think it is in balance, then we say it is a high-priority area that we want to grow. If we think it is in oversupply, that is the evidence shows us that it is in oversupply, we call it low-priority training for government purchase. Then there is priority training, which essentially is where the evidence shows us that the current level of training that is being purchased by government is sufficient for industry need.

The areas and occupations that are of interest to this committee today fall across three different industry areas which Jan mentioned earlier. We draw advice from across those three areas. In relation to the electrical and communications industry area, we judge that the current supply of training is a priority in the sense that it is sufficient at the current level to meet requirements. Building and construction and engineering are also two industry areas that have occupations that fall in areas of interest to this committee, and they are currently judged to be high priority, so based on our evidence we have taken the VLESC advice that says over the next three years there needs to be an increasing government purchase of training in those areas, and we have negotiated that with TAFE institutes, so we are expecting an increase of supply in those areas and the occupations that fall within them.

We also need to moderate statewide advice — this is statewide advice that we generate because it is a macro analysis. Our methodology also enables us to moderate the applicability of that statewide advice at a regional level, so we have 13 regions — we call them delivery catchments — across Victoria, and we have our study area reference groups, which we use to help generate an evidence base to determine the applicability of our statewide advice in a particular area. Central Gippsland is an important region for the energy industry, and we have provided a study area report for the Central Gippsland area which identifies the local training needs, which include cable layers and cable joiners, ecologically sustainable design, maintenance workers, plumbing, gas fitting and technicians. We provide advice on the training needs for those occupations, some of which, as I have mentioned, will require an increase in supply of training over the next three years to meet industry need.
Ms TREWHELLA — That is the way in which we plan. We thought we would also give you some information about energy efficient training within that range of training packages so you get a sense of the extent to which it is integrated. Having looked at those packages, integrated energy efficiency training is currently available in a number of those training packages. The competencies relating to the broader area of sustainable resource management are even more widely available, and much of this training is embedded in course materials. The gas industry training package is currently being reviewed, and it is proposed that all qualifications will include reference to sustainable energy principles and practices and environmental policy and procedures. It is expected that that package will be implemented in 2006 and that all providers will have transferred to the new package within 12 months of that.

Energy efficiency competencies are also included in a range of the electricity distribution and transmission qualifications that are specific to electrical powerline trades and line workers. The electrotechnology industry or the electricity supply industry packages provide also for energy efficiency competencies as they relate to tradespersons who are engaged in the installation and/or construction of buildings or energy-consuming appliances or equipment and the provision of advice on appliances, equipment or buildings. Competencies are also available in the engineering, and building and construction packages, including sustainable energy practices, developing and managing sustainable energy principles and the principles of energy-efficient design to buildings. So we are seeing a move within those packages for energy efficiency competencies to be integrated into them.

There are also a number of specific energy efficiency and sustainability Victorian courses being developed. These cover a range of skills needed by the sector for technical capabilities relating to energy efficiency as well as broader skills relating to project management and development of policies and procedures. In addition, the new competitive manufacturing initiative training package, which is an across-industry training package, covers a range of industries, including automotive, engineering, food, furnishing, textiles and process manufacturing. There are also elements of energy efficiency competencies within that package. There is also a set of qualifications that are dedicated to energy efficiency, as well as broader sustainability qualifications. The national qualifications are a certificate IV in electrotechnology renewable energy, which is currently being delivered by the Chisholm Institute of TAFE and the Swinburne University of Technology TAFE division. In 2004 there was a total of 72 enrolments for that course. A diploma of electrotechnology renewable energy is being delivered — again, by Chisholm, the Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE and, again, by Swinburne. In 2004 there was a total of 17 enrolments.

In terms of state courses, there is a graduate certificate in environmentally sustainable building design, which is being developed by BuildSmart, which Bart would have told you all about, and there is a graduate certificate in sustainability which has come out of Swinburne. There is also a graduate diploma of sustainability, which is a broad, four-unit qualification encompassing two compulsory units and a wide range of optional units. It was developed by a specialist centre, which I will talk about in a moment, called the National Centre for Sustainability. It is based at the Swinburne University of Technology but it has three partners — Ballarat University, Sunraysia Institute of TAFE and South West Institute of TAFE. They all specialise in different areas of sustainability.

Over time the aim with the graduate diploma of sustainability is to create a dual-qualified professional who can address the sustainability issues in the context of their substantive skill area — for example, that might be a diploma of engineering or of business. It enables participants to focus their skill development in a relevant area but also to encompass energy efficiency competencies. I have some quite detailed information which talks about those particular areas within training packages that have energy efficiencies competencies in them, but because of the time we might provide that separately to you. In addition there is a range of fee-for-service activity that our TAFE institutes undertake. The 2005 Victorian government vocational education and training electronic courses guide, which is on the web, lists a subset of courses being offered by registered training organisations and adult and community education organisations around energy efficient design, drafting, building management, rating and industrial management and sustainable and renewable energy. They are offered by a range of providers.

Short courses are often used to fill the skills gaps of existing workers because many workers just want a top up; they do not want to have to do a whole course. For example, since July 2004 all new homes in Victoria, as you would know, have had to meet a 5-star environmental rating. Sustainability Victoria’s First Rate energy rating software assists the building and construction industry to comply with the 5-star rating through energy efficient design. The program enables the evaluation of energy performance of each part of a house, making design for energy efficiency easier. Eleven TAFE institutes have been involved in the delivery of accredited training in the use of that software in 17 locations across the state — although only two of them have actually advertised it in the short-courses guide.
In addition to the sort of core capacity of the VET system, the ministerial statement in 2002 also had a range of innovation initiatives. They included the establishment of 15, at the time, specialist centres — there are now 19 specialist centres — delivering, as their title suggests, leading-edge, high-end specialist training directly to industry; the innovation fund, which enables TAFE institutes to divert some of their student contact hour profile to innovate in particular areas for groups of students or for particular industries so that they can provide more directly relevant training to those groups; the establishment of industry liaison agents, which were designed within the manufacturing sector to broker training for small-to-medium-sized enterprises; and the TAFE development centre, which is about raising the professional standing of the TAFE work force.

There are four specialist centres that are developing and delivering energy efficiency initiatives, with over $1.3 million having been allocated to their establishment. They were all provided with seed funding and then they needed to develop their own fee-for-service market — and they all have, so they have been very successful. There is the National Centre for Sustainability, which I referred to earlier; BuildSmart, which Bart has provided you with a briefing on; a specialist centre in environmental technologies at the Gordon Institute of TAFE; and the specialist energy training centre at the Central Gippsland Institute of TAFE. You have been briefed on the BuildSmart show house, so I will just keep going through this. Bart has shown you photos of that, so I will not go over it, but obviously that was one of the initiatives of BuildSmart. In addition, through the innovation fund a smart green house has been designed to train students in the application of a sustainability rating system. It has around a 12-star rating. Through that smart green house there will be a centre which will be on display for around seven years to demonstrate a sustainable house relevant to the western region community. It also promotes new smart house technology — for example, in alarm systems and so on. Importantly, it will be used as a vendor training and display centre by the industry partners, Clipsal and Middendorp, and there is a Koori unit advising and working on a water-wise indigenous garden associated with the smart house.

The environmental sustainability centre at the Gordon Institute of TAFE is planning to establish and demonstrate renewable energy technologies, including photovoltaic and hydrogen cells and solar and wind power generation. The purpose of the project will be to introduce renewable energy training and education elements to industry and to provide working models of how renewable energy devices can be installed and used in everyday life. The national centre for sustainability has been involved in a number of projects associated with local government designed to promote sustainable technologies and practices to the community. It has also been undertaking research in the most efficient applications of these technologies.

In summary, in response to your terms of reference the ministerial statement has given us a framework through which in a number of our specialist centres and our other activities we have been able to promote energy services training. We have identified environmental technologies as a key priority area for innovation because it is an increasingly emerging sector. National training packages and state courses provide for a range of training to the energy efficiency sector, and a number of courses have been independently driven through the state to deal with energy efficiency issues. That is the end of our formal presentation.

The CHAIR — Thanks very much, Jan.

Mr DRUM — I am concerned from a local aspect about training. You talked about down in Gippsland where they might need cable joiners and there might be an identified shortfall there. However, the local TAFE colleges are struggling for funding. The advisory group identifies that there is a shortfall in a particular area and they need to introduce a new course but, while it is important, you will not have 30 people in a cable joining course, so it is going to be expensive for that TAFE institute to run the course and it is going to tell you it does not have the money to run such a specialised course. What happens when something is needed to improve our sustainability and our practices and to get the education out there and yet the education people are saying they do not have the money to run such a specialised course?

Dr TIMMS — I need to emphasise that the planning framework is around the reallocation of government-purchased training. It is identifying areas in which we think there is an oversupply of training and working with TAFE institutes to get them to shift away from delivery in a particular low priority area into a high priority area. We do that through a series of negotiations over the course of the year when they are developing up their training plans and we are developing up the performance agreement. The approach we take with each individual TAFE institute is very much customised to their local requirements and their local client and business needs. Through that negotiation we work with them to identify areas where they can reduce delivery and therefore
free up some resources and shift them into an area that is considered a priority and they are equipped to deliver. It is about a realignment of the effort, and with that the resources.

Ms TREWHELLA — Just to add to that, last year, for example, there was enormous demand at Central Gippsland Institute of TAFE’s ETTA Chadstone campus for line workers, so we did provide them with further funding to deliver extra line worker training, because there was a demand from industry and we were able to assist in that way. As I understand it, they are also working with the generation companies, and the generation companies are actually paying for quite a lot of that training themselves because it is either industry specific or it is enterprise specific. Industry has indicated on many occasions that it will pay for training where it is directly relevant to enterprise improvement.

Mr DRUM — When TAFE colleges are simply forced to cut courses because they do not have the student contact hours in each of those courses, that makes the training of trades really difficult in country Victoria, where I am from. We are having that happen nearly every year now, with plastering going one year and then engineering courses the following year and hydraulics going the next year. With some of these high-capital courses that may or may not have the sustainability aspects to them we are finding it really difficult to meet our supply: we have 500 students who cannot get into TAFE courses in the Bendigo region. It is frustrating when we talk about the compromises that need to be made simply on a funding basis. You are saying that if there is an identified demand you are able to find additional funding to make those courses happen?

Dr TIMMS — What we are talking about is the shifting of funding. I will use a concrete example. One of the industry areas where we have judged through our research and our model that there is currently an oversupply of training is culture and recreation. We know that our TAFE providers are delivering well in excess, through government funding, in training in culture and recreation, and a lot of young people want to go into those areas. A lot of people are attracted to those areas, and they are knocking on the TAFE institutes’ doors. The TAFE institutes have responded by providing government-funded training. Essentially our framework has been able to identify that that is an area of oversupply. As we operationalise it, we set targets with our TAFE institutes that cap how much they can deliver in that area, and then we work with them to identify where they could shift the dollar essentially — to try and increase the level of training in the areas where there is unmet demand, such as those you have referred to. We have been able to identify through the planning effort points of elasticity so it is better targeted government-funded training.

Mr HILTON — Sustainability Victoria has mentioned to us that it does not believe sustainability principles are particularly well integrated into trade courses. I think they showed us a graph showing that in some trades they hardly get any sustainability education at all. Would you agree with that?

Mr HARDMAN — Would I agree with that? I have not seen the figures on it. What it boils down to is about the particular training, whether it is, in particular, a qualification within a training package. Most of the qualifications are based on a core elective structure, and there is that provision to include energy efficiency competencies within the actual structure itself. Whether they provided that training would rely on the local demand.

Mr HILTON — Is it a role of the department in any way to monitor the content of these courses to ensure, for instance, that they all contain appropriate sustainability principles?

Mr HARDMAN — I do not think we have a policy on that, have we?

Ms TREWHELLA — No, we do not. These qualifications are developed nationally, and they are developed heavily in consultation with industry and the needs of industry. Energy efficiency services are still an emerging sector. You will have seen with BuildSmart the way industry came on board. I would imagine that over time — over the next three years or so — we will see more and more of these competencies being integrated into existing packages. Those packages go through a three-year revision cycle, so as they are revised these sorts of issues will be examined.

Mr HARDMAN — Could I just elaborate on that? It is a three-year cycle, but there is such a thing as continuous improvement and they can actually be changed throughout those three years. But just picking up what Jan was saying, in particular with gas, transmission distribution, generation, they are including sustainability, renewable energy-type units within the core of the actual qualification. They are making it a core requirement for somebody who does that qualification.
Mr Hilton — Picking up what you said there, Jan, about the industry really being the player in this business which determines to some extent the content of the course, if we have an industry which is reluctant to change, how can we make sure that the courses are reflecting more up-to-date methodologies and technologies?

Mr Hardman — Only by input from industry. The industry has to identify emerging technologies or work practices and they will actually tell on a national level the ISCs and on a state level the industry training advisory bodies, the ITABs.

Mr Hilton — So if a particular industry group was particularly conservative, it may not change and there would be no other way of changing it without having that input?

Mr Hardman — There is evidence of that, yes. I think it is the old story, the squeaky wheel gets the oil.

Mr Drum — The industry would never have gone for 5-star housing.

Ms Trewhella — We have helped to drive that through our specialist centres, and we will continue to do that in Victoria, but these are national issues. As we have outlined there is a range of state-based qualifications there that are being delivered by our providers, and more and more industries will come on board so we would hope that therefore Victorian industry will influence what goes in to those national packages.

Mr Hilton — But I suppose an extension of what Damian is saying is we had to legislate for 5-star to get it introduced. Maybe from what you are saying we have got to legislate in other ways as well rather than relying on industry to do what it sees as best for it rather than necessarily the best for the wider community.

Ms Trewhella — I guess though the market also influences those things. We are seeing it in heritage trades and a number of other areas where the market is actually helping to drive industry practice, so we are also seeing that through those four centres that I referred to. We are seeing them in fact get quite a lot of fee-for-service business which means the industry recognises it needs that training in order to gain market share.

The Chair — But if we look at the glazing industry and the window industry and see how appallingly they have responded or they simply have not responded, how do we actually drive a change there? Anywhere else in the world you actually have a choice of windows, and one of the choices would not be what we get sold here. So as a community we have been absolutely duded by a particular industry because it has shown no inclination to upskill or improve or service. How can a market develop when an industry is simply not there? Have we got one? Is there more than one window company in Melbourne where you can get double-glazed windows?

Ms Trewhella — I am not sure.

The Chair — Where is the role for government? Where is the role for the department in actually driving that change?

Ms Trewhella — One of the features which Margaret could speak about in more detail of the BuildSmart House and of the green house are those sorts of glazed windows. Both of those houses will be display houses. Industry has not only contributed in both those cases to the materials but is it also there as an educational centre for industry. So as more young people come through you begin to drive consumer demand. We are seeing that in wastewater and so on with environmental technologies in Geelong. More and more industries and others are paying for training, particularly the building industry in terms of how they manage that. It is an iterative process; but change always is. We can see that we can drive that from a supply side by getting them on board as partners in these sorts of initiatives but the market also has a role. The more people demand this sort of thing and the more it is promoted to them, the more industry will be required to meet demand.

The Chair — But double-glazed windows were available in England at probably the turn of last century. They were built into the stock in the 1940s and 1950s.

Ms Trewhella — The role of training is obviously to provide the skill base. It is not the role of training to — —

The Chair — To lead?
Ms TREWHELLA — To lead demand, although it can influence, and that is what we are trying to do.

The CHAIR — I have a couple of questions. I will take you back to the beginning where we had the ministerial statement. There is obviously a priority being given to ESD. Can you tell me if the department itself has had a look at its energy use, its water use? Has it responded as a department in how it conducts itself? Also, can you talk to me about where the barriers are in energy performance contracting and why that maybe has not happened within the department? I am talking about the provision of energy performance contracts where someone can come in and tell you how to save X percentage of your power bill and you enter a contract with those people to actually do whatever it is that you need to do to reduce your energy use. They take part of your monetary savings but then you have ongoing savings as well. But obviously we all have savings on the environmental side of the whole energy use.

Ms BURDEU — The department actually has had quite an extensive process of getting a strategy together on the whole issue of energy savings. I will get more generally onto sustainability issues, with a priority focus on energy at this point in time. They have been looking at various ways to drive that. TAFE institutes are obviously a very major user of energy. Part of our office has been working together with TAFE colleges on the purchase of their energy and how they are going to meet those targets, and what work they are doing moving down those pathways.

From a point of view of the TAFE colleges, two of the TAFE colleges — Kangan Batman TAFE and Swinburne University, including its TAFE division actually are specialists and driving this — are both signatories to sustainability covenants. So there is actually a process now of saying, ‘Join that leadership’. I think you will probably find that because there is quite significant use of energy in the TAFE institutes that there is a bit of an economic driver there as well.

In the TAFE area there has been significant encouragement of sustainable and energy efficient design. We have had some very good design around the state: one in Mildura which was designed as their sustainable land-water management centre. There is also work being done here at Holmesglen. I know that there are energy efficiency and sustainability principles built into the new building they are building at Moorabbin, because I have had discussions in the context of the BuildSmart process. It is actually becoming an increasing issue. It certainly has also been an important issue in the schools in terms of new buildings and how that can be addressed, and looking at schools and thinking about what strategy can be used to encourage efficiency and the barriers being old school buildings — how do you address those things when you rely to some degree on behavioural change, particularly in smaller schools and things like the waste water wise management —

The CHAIR — Sustainability of schools, yes.

Ms BURDEU — They are actually building on those sorts of things. So from a departmental point of view there has been a quite significant strategy. As far as the energy performance contracting is concerned, I am not familiar with how much the institutes have been involved with the particular consultants, but obviously two universities — one university and TAFE division and one of the TAFEs — have been quite active in looking at these issues.

Ms TREWHELLA — We might have to come back to that. I know that issue was raised. I was on the group that was overseeing the development of our strategy which has now been endorsed and implemented for the department including waste management and a whole range of things, such as better use of lighting, so we have all had those lower-level lights installed and those sorts of things. But that issue was certainly being looked at but I can not answer the question today about where that is up to.

The CHAIR — A little bit of feedback would be great because it is one of those things that other people mention to us and we actually have not been able to get a firm answer as yet as to why this is not happening.

Mr DRUM — In relation to the BuildSmart home, is there any way you are going to be able to monitor the effectiveness of the program especially the school-based program? If you are going to bring in 4000 or 5000 kids through that house every year, is there any way you going to be able to monitor the effectiveness? I know it is going to be 10 years before they are building the first house. But we have so many really good programs that we come across in this inquiry, yet we have no monitoring. We have people stand before us all the time saying, ‘We have got this great program going’, but we have no monitoring to categorically and clearly state, ‘This is what was happening before we started this program and this is what is happening now that we have this program going’.  

12 December 2005  Environment and Natural Resources Committee  108
This is a fantastic house that is going to show so many brilliant ideas, but are we going to introduce some sort of monitoring process so that we will be able to say, ‘Right, this is a program we need to replicate to make sure that we get the message out there’? Our big fear is that the message is not getting through to the average person wanting to build a house. Will there be any monitoring process with the BuildSmart house?

Ms TREWHELLA — We have not formally put one in place because Holmesglen has devolved responsibilities in our TAFE sector and this is an issue which Holmesglen would be looking at. We have not taken a benchmark which we would have needed to have done with that. In our discussions with Holmesglen we had always talked about the iterative change we would see over time through the market demand and the change in building practices. That was the measure we were looking at; we were not looking at anything more definitive. But I am going to take your point that with this range of initiatives it is just that you would need a longitudinal study to get that information.

Mr DRUM — You would have to start somewhere.

Ms TREWHELLA — Yes.

Mr DRUM — If we are able to see a 20 per cent increase in double-glazed windows over a period of years at least we could come back and say — —

Ms BURDEU — I can say that Swinburne actually did some of that evaluative work in its work with local councils, the National Centre for Sustainability actually did some of that work. It looked at people who came to a series of community sessions on energy efficiency: how many of them installed more efficient light globes, how many did this or that; what sort of initiatives did they actually take? They have tried to build that evaluative material into it.

Dr KOOPS — Following on from sustainable building and things like that, are there any mechanisms you have for spreading the lessons from that around to other building TAFEs and so on? Is there some kind of formal process?

Ms TREWHELLA — We have sent it to all of our specialist centres connected to this area and also other TAFE institutes that specialise. We are building a range of networks because specialist delivery is often quite expensive and quite innovative. Over the last two years we have been running a series of seminars where we invite all the relevant TAFE institutions in. We certainly ran seminars around the BuildSmart initiatives and environmental technologies at Geelong as well as the National Sustainability Centre. One of our roles in my division is to make sure that we maintain people’s knowledge about what each of the centres is doing, so you do get that cross-fertilisation. You are right; unless you systematise those initiatives you are not going to get a broader change. So we certainly see that as part of our mission, and it is in our business plan to do that.

Ms BURDEU — I say again that the four institutes involved in the National Centre for Sustainability last year ran a statewide training conference for teachers across the state. That was funded partly by us and partly by a range of other organisations that supported them. They also produced a CD-ROM of professional development materials that was very much focused on sustainability issues and those sorts of things. It is not energy specific but in terms of sustainability messages there is a range of materials developed for teachers to assist them, a lot of case study materials.

Ms TREWHELLA — That was sent out to all our institutes.

Dr KOOPS — Is that something you could provide us with?

Ms TREWHELLA — Sure.

The CHAIR — Thank you very much.

Witnesses withdrew.