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# **Leading through Learning**

**Evaluation Report of the Second Round of the  
Flexible Learning Leaders Project - 2001**

**February 2002**

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## 1. Leading and Learning in Vocational Education and Training

Flexible Learning Leaders (FLL) is a major staff development initiative which was launched in 2000 to provide an opportunity for a select group of people to enhance their skills, knowledge and experience in Flexible Learning so that they could provide a key Leadership role in guiding and supporting the design and implementation of innovative and flexible approaches to learning in VET.

The program, now its second year, is primarily an individual staff development activity focused on Leadership in flexible learning but it does have a strong organisational change and development aspect. Participants are required to work closely with their organisation to ensure their learning outcomes reflect the strategic directions of their organisations and contribute to ongoing improvements in organisational effectiveness and efficiency. Participants are also expected to use their new knowledge, skills and insights to make a wider Leadership contribution to the development and implementation of flexible learning at the state/territory and national levels.

### Purpose of Evaluation

The primary purpose of the evaluation of the second round of Flexible Learning Leaders program (2001) was to establish whether the project has achieved its aim to develop an effective network of Leaders in flexible learning. To achieve this, the evaluation examined:

- the individual experiences of those VET practitioners participating in the project
- the success of specific events within the project such as the National Induction Workshop, the On-line Forum, the Sharing Workshop and Final State Presentations of Outcomes
- the level of organisational support for the project and the participants
- the development of linkages and networks
- the outcomes of the program for the individual, the sponsoring organisations and the VET sector.

### Major Findings

The evaluation has focused on a frenetic period of activity from May 2001 to December 2001 during which program participants planned and implemented a program of research, site visits and reporting in line with their proposed project plans. In many ways, this period represents the beginning of a longer-term learning and development period during which program participants will implement plans and build on initial outcomes in the following ways:

- Participants will maintain networks and partnerships to enhance their own continuing professional development
- Participants will define and adopt Leadership roles and functions within their organisations and more broadly in the VET sector

- Organisations will benefit from participant’s new knowledge, skills and networks both strategically and operationally.


Table 1.1 (below) provides a summary of the current activity (2001), which was the focus of this evaluation, against projected future activity (2002 – 2003)

Table 1.1 Project Activity 2001 against Projected Activity (2002 to 2003)

Activity 2001	Projected Activity 2002	Projected Activity 2003
Project planning Research Planning and conducting interviews Planning and conducting site visits Disseminating information Global and national networking Building relationships Defining Leadership roles Reporting	Defining and adopting Leadership roles Implementing project outcomes Providing strategic advice Policy input Managing projects Maintaining and extending networks Disseminating Information Building visions Building team approaches	Maintaining a local and national Leadership in flexible learning Managing and supporting organisational change Maintaining currency through networking Providing ongoing strategic advice Implementing flexible solutions Building partnerships

Working within this short and longer-term view of project activity and outcomes, the major findings of the evaluation are:

1. The 2001 project has been successful in establishing a knowledgeable and skilful group of people willing and able to undertake a Leadership role in flexible learning. However, significant challenges lie ahead for all stakeholders in maintaining currency and adding value to VET planning and development in flexible learning. In particular, all stakeholders have a responsibility to maintain global and national networks; carve out ongoing Leadership roles; manage and enhance existing knowledge and skills; disseminate information; and promote flexible learning approaches nationally and locally.
2. The 2001 program has involved a diverse range of people from a diverse range of organisations. This recognition of the diversity of the VET sector had added vibrancy and vigour to the program. Future programs should build on this diversity to broaden and deepen the network of flexible learning Leaders. Future programs should also recognise and build on diversity in Leadership acknowledging a range of Leadership styles in a range of contexts at a range of levels within organisations.
3. Learning is the core of the Flexible Learning Leaders program and the management, promotion and support of continuous learning approaches should continue to be the key component in developing Leadership in flexible learning.

4. The program has been managed effectively and efficiently. Future iterations will require some fine turning of approaches but these are understood and appreciated by the national Project Managers who have a commitment to continuous improvement of project processes and approaches.
  5. Significant tangible and intangible outcomes are already evident for both individuals and organisations. However, these early outcomes only provide a platform for the future development. Significant outcomes and benefits need to be considered in the medium and longer term and future approaches in program development, program management and evaluation need to build on current foundations to support the achievement of medium and long term outcomes.
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## 2. Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation in 2001 differed from that of the 2000 project in that it was considered that the effectiveness of the project management and of the application procedure had been sufficiently dealt with in that round, and so these did not form a focus of the 2001 evaluation.

Instead, greater attention has been paid to the subject of outcomes for individuals, organisations and the VET sector as a whole, and the closely associated subject of Leadership in flexible learning.

The approach and associated methodology adopted by the Evaluation Team relied on the establishment and maintenance of strong collaborative links between stakeholders. Collaborative approaches also contributed to a team-based approach to continuous improvement of the project's processes and procedures.

A range of evaluation strategies was adopted by the Evaluation Team and information provided in this report is based on data collected in a variety of ways including:

- Observation of the On-line Forum, National Induction Workshop, Sharing Day and State Presentations
- Informal discussions with project participants, the national Project Managers and other key stakeholders
- Semi-structured telephone interviews with Leaders and their sponsors (copies of interview proformas are provided in Appendix 1)
- Surveys on particular topics (copies of survey instruments are provided in Appendix 2).

Data analysis was based on the following approaches:

- Systematic documentation of data to ensure complementary analysis and reduce alternative interpretations
- Cross-project analysis allowing themes and patterns to emerge
- Key criteria and key questions to structure and guide analysis
- Tabulating and categorising evidence to facilitate the development of logical links between the data and explanation/generalisation.
- Reflection – the Evaluation Team's own insights and experiences.

This last point led to research and examination of the understanding of Leadership among the participants.

As well as this final evaluation report, an interim report was provided to the Steering Committee in September 2001. This provided advice on progress under the following headings:

- National Induction Workshop
- Project management / time management
- Organisational support
- On-line Forum
- Networking
- Emerging issues and future evaluation priorities.

An incomplete draft final report was presented to the Steering Committee in December 2001. As far as was feasible, members' comments have been incorporated in this final version.



### 3. Major Events of the 2001 Flexible Learning Leaders Program

In line with the Evaluation Brief, this section of the report provides findings on the project's major events:

1. The National Induction Workshop
2. The Online Forum
3. Sharing Day
4. State Presentations.

#### National Induction Workshop

The Flexible Learning Leaders National Induction Workshop was held in Melbourne on 4 and 5 June 2001 (a third day was devoted to site visits). All thirty Flexible Learning Leaders attended the two-day workshop. As well as inducting people into the program, the workshop had a number of specific objectives:

- To provide new Leaders with insight into the strategic directions for the Australian Flexible Learning Framework.
- To provide opportunities for networking and relationship building with other Leaders (past and present), decision makers, policy makers and international and national innovators in areas related to flexible learning.
- To allow Leaders to share their professional development plans.

Based on surveys and interviews with key stakeholders it is clear that the workshop achieved all its objectives. Participants reported that the workshop was informative, helpful and enjoyable. The following major outcomes were also reported.

- The National Workshop contributed significantly to collaboration between Leaders (all Leaders reported that they were appreciative of the opportunity to meet with other participants and to discuss plans and share ideas).
- All participants reported that the Workshop contributed greatly to setting a positive tone for the project. They also reported that the workshop did much to encourage enthusiasm and commitment. The active participation of the ANTA Chief Executive Officer in the workshop was highly appreciated by all participants.
- The workshop provided an opportunity not only to establish networks with other Leaders but also to learn about others' programs and to develop working links with those who were working in complementary areas.
- The workshop provided an opportunity to meet and network with other key players in the program including the Project Team, members of the Steering Committee, 2000 Leaders and key people within the VET sector.

## The Workshop's Contribution to the Success of Individual Programs

Leaders were asked to rate the contribution of the workshop to the success of their individual learning projects. Table 3.1 (below) summarises their responses.

Table 3.1 Contribution of Induction Program to the Success of Participants' Projects

Limited Contribution		Moderate Contribution			Significant Contribution	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
				30%	20%	50%

The vast majority of Leaders reported that the National Induction Workshop made a significant contribution to the success of their projects. Through interviews, participants provided more detail on how the program contributed not only to the success of their projects but also to the enjoyment of the project. Two aspects were of primary importance to 2001 Leaders. First was the fact that the workshop clarified directions and generated high levels of enthusiasm for the project among the participants. Secondly, Leaders reported that a valuable aspect of the workshop was the opportunity to meet with and discuss issues and concerns with other Flexible Learning Leaders.

Other aspects that participants reported as useful or valuable are described below.

- **Validation of the project** – all participants reported that the Workshop provided them with a sense that the project was an important and significant national project. Furthermore, the workshop highlighted the high expectations held by stakeholders that project outcomes will provide significant benefits to individual participations, participating VET organisations and to the national VET system. As one participant reported, ‘...the project came with a heavy responsibility that I didn’t really appreciate before the workshop.’
- **Networking** – all Leaders reported that the workshop provided a great opportunity to ‘meet and swap stories’. Additionally, several Leaders reported that ‘keeping in touch with other Leaders is going to be so much easier after this.’
- **Reflection and revision** – all participants reported that the workshop provided a opportunity to test and refine project strategies and approaches through informal discussions with other Leaders. Leaders also reported that the workshop encouraged them to reflect on their plans and to revise their approaches. All the Leaders who subsequently revised their plans reported that it led to improvements and/or more streamlined approaches.
- **New understandings** – The majority of Leaders reported that the workshop facilitated a better understanding and appreciation of what is happening in the wider VET community.
- **Commitment** – all participants reported that they appreciated the attendance at the workshop of key personal from ANTA and other

government agencies. It provided tangible evidence of the national commitment to the project and to the Leaders themselves.

#### Suggestions for Future Induction Workshops

While all participants considered the workshop to be highly successful and useful, there are opportunities for continuing improvement. Suggestions worthy of further consideration include the following.

- Limiting the number of guest speakers to two or three who can help set the agenda for learning and development. As one Leader stated, ‘some of the speakers didn’t really contribute any new insights – we need people who will challenge and enthuse us. We don’t need people telling us what they’re done, after all, as future Leaders we can seek out the good people ourselves; people who might be doing things that are more relevant to our specific projects.’
- Increasing time for sharing development plans and learning about the projects of other Leaders. As one Leader put it, ‘..the three minute speeches were good and provided a good overview and justification for projects but a follow up in small groups where there could be a more detailed discussion of various projects would have been useful.’ Several Leaders suggested a secondary activity to support and extend the three-minute activity. Some suggested that a secondary activity might be ‘self-selected’ with participants forming small groups to investigate linkages and opportunities for collaboration.
- Inclusion of a description of projected organisational and system outcomes for projects. Guiding questions could include: What is the product/tangible outcome? How will it be used/implemented within your organisation? How will it be disseminated within the VET sector?

The suggestions listed above point to minor improvements only and have been provided within the context of high levels of satisfaction with the workshop outcomes.

#### RECOMMENDATION

**National Induction Workshops should continue to be a major feature of the Flexible Learning Leaders program. Modifications should be in line with continuous improvement practices adopted by the National Project Managers and aim to further challenge and enthuse Leaders, to stimulate networking and collaboration, and to emphasise individual and organisational learning.**

## The Online Forum

The Flexible Learning Leaders on-line forum was a key program initiative that aimed to stimulate networking and encourage collaboration. It aimed to build an online learning community to engage Leaders in an ongoing, collaborative investigation of contemporary issues in flexible learning.

2001 Leaders were invited to rate the contribution of the forum to the success of their projects. Table 2.2 (below) summarises their responses.

Table 3.2 Contribution of the Online Forum to the Success of Participants' Projects

Limited Contribution		Moderate Contribution			Significant Contribution	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	5%	5%	10%	35%	25%	20%

The majority of Leaders indicated that the Forum made a moderate to significant contribution to their projects. A small number of Leaders indicated that the Forum made a limited or moderate contribution to their program. Through interviews, these views were elaborated. Participants reported that the forum was useful to:

- promote socialisation between Leaders
- overcome feelings of isolation
- develop a sense of ‘team’ and promote collaboration
- share practical information – conferences dates and venues, visits etc.
- share project information – ‘to just hear what other people are doing’
- highlight contemporary issues in flexible learning
- collect and disseminate useful resources
- provide and share project updates
- develop contacts and links with other Leaders and their projects – some Leaders reported that they used the Forum as a *springboard* to pursue specific issues with specific people by other means, usually telephone or private email.

However, despite a high percentage of Leaders indicating positive views about the Forum, participation was patchy. Reasons for limited participation in the Forum included:

- Forum protocols were confusing
- Active participation in the Forum was very time consuming and its benefits did not warrant such a heavy commitment.

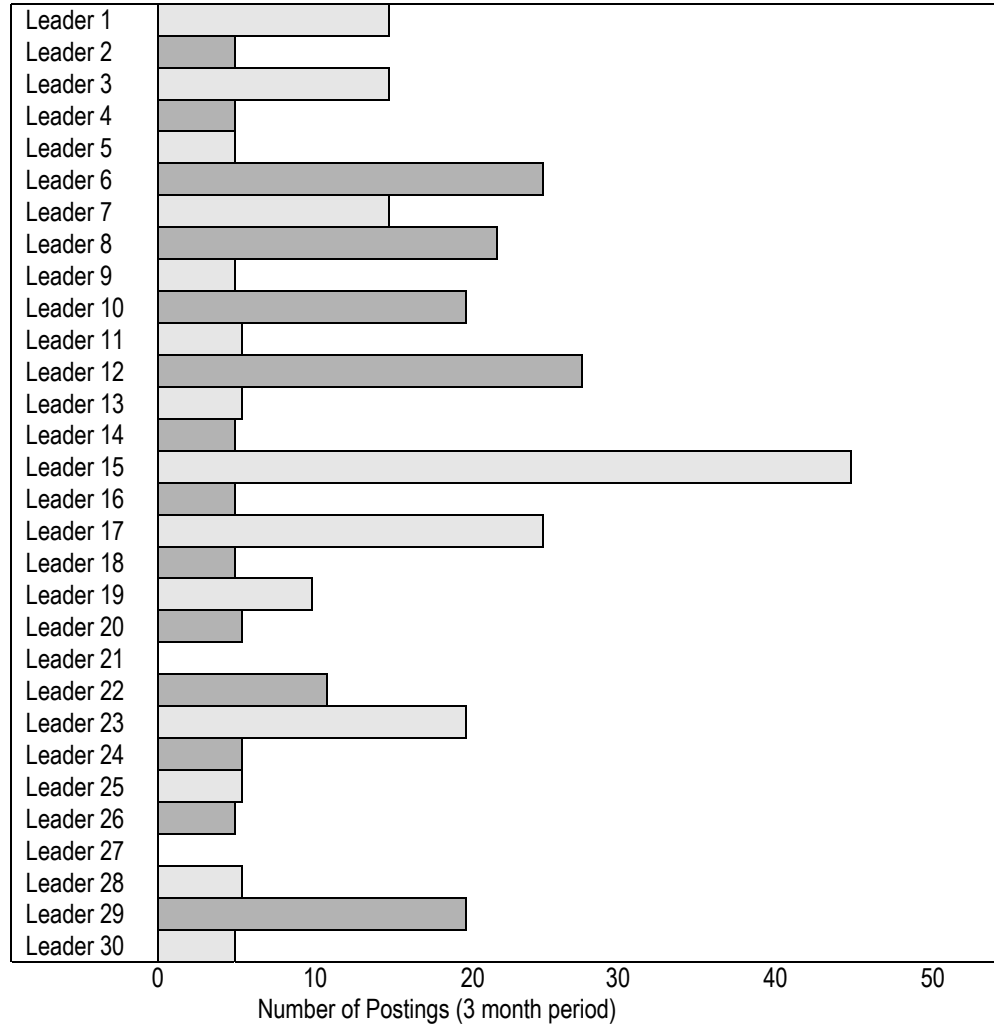
### Forum Participation

Leader participation in the Forum was examined over a three-month period. The period examined was over the middle months of the project following the

completion of initial strategies to stimulate discussion but before the final reporting period for participants.

Table 3.3 (below) presents Forum participation by Leaders over a three-month period.

Table 3.3 Number of Forum Postings by Leaders over a Three-Month Period



The graph is indicative of forum usage over a three-month period in the middle of the project. Postings by individual Leaders waxed and waned depending on their circumstances. For example, while conducting visits some Leaders found it difficult to maintain a presence on the Forum due to technical and other issues; others maintained a high presence giving other Leaders regular updates on their experiences.

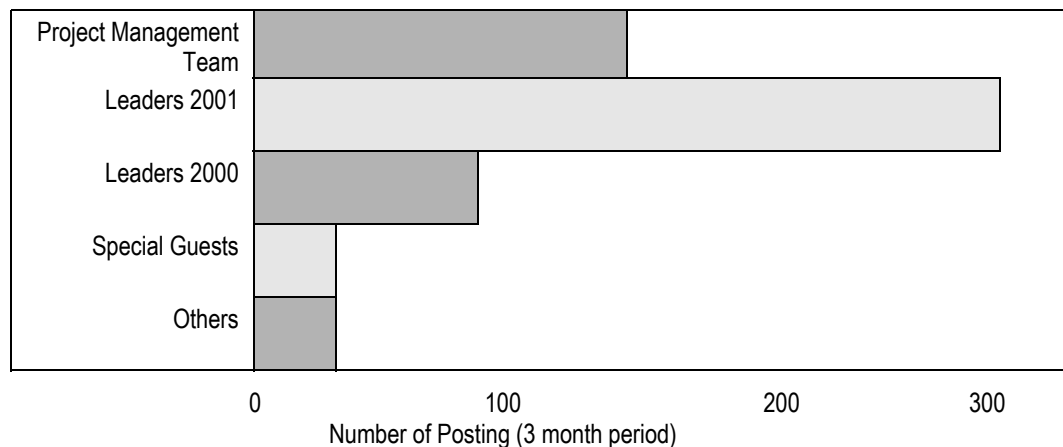
Average postings over this period amounted to approximately nine per Leader but there are wide variances with two Leaders making no postings during the three months and one Leader made 44 postings.

In general terms the analysis of the number of postings supports verbal feedback obtained by Leaders about their participation in the Forum. A small number of Leaders reported that they found the Forum of limited benefit and made a conscious decision not to participate actively. The majority of Leaders, however, found the Forum of significant benefit and participated regularly. However, even Leaders who found considerable benefit in participation reported that participation was very time consuming and some reported difficulty in navigating through discussions.

Activity on the Forum was also examined by participation of major groups over the same three-month period. Major groups were identified as being the Project Management Team, Current Leaders (2001), Past Leaders (2000), Special Guests and Others.

Table 3.4 summarises posting by these major groups.

Table 3.4 Number of Forum Postings by Major Groups of Users over a Three-Month Period

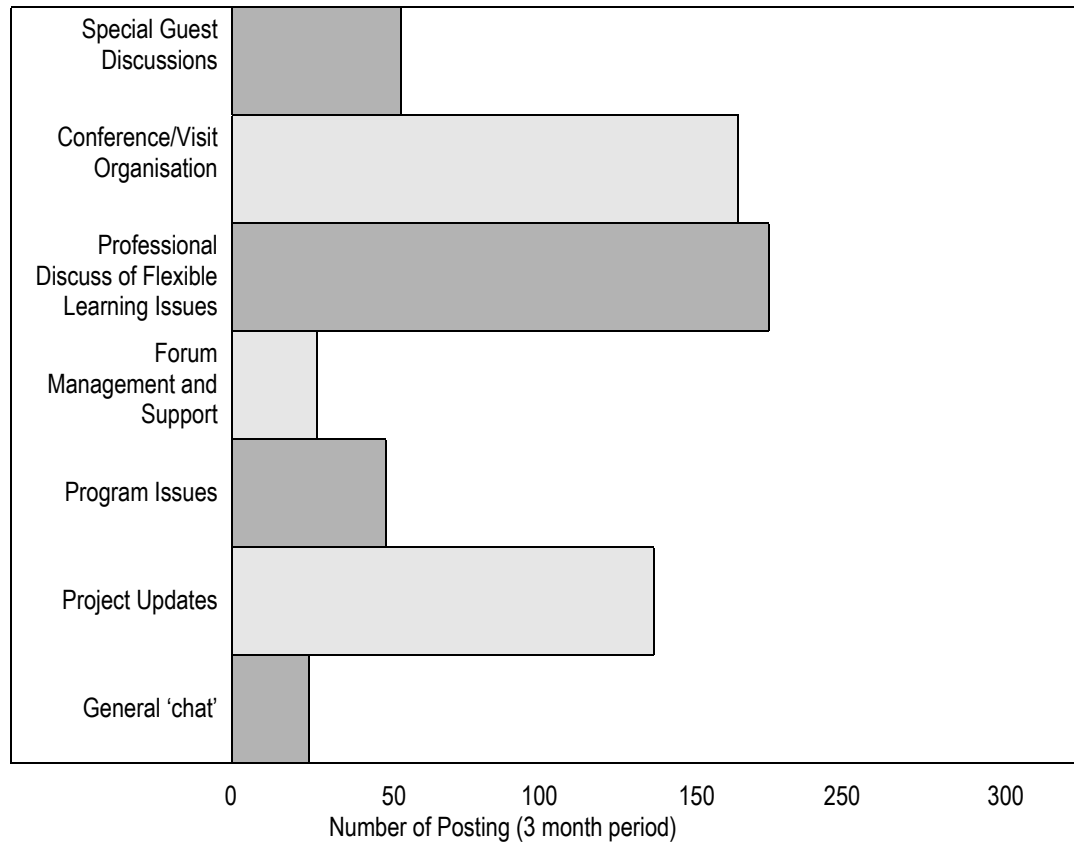


As expected, the graph shows that the 2001 Leaders were the major contributors to the Forum. Significant activity by the Project Management Team illustrates the high levels of management, support and encouragement provided to the Forum users by the Project Managers. The activity by past Leaders is also significant and is a result of their ongoing role in mentoring and supporting 2001 Leaders.

Lastly, Forum activity was examined by major categories of participation. Major categories were identified as Special Guest Discussions, Organisation of Conferences / Visits etc., Professional Discussion of Issues impacting of Flexible Learning in VET, Forum Management and Support and Program Issues.

Table 3.5 (below) summarises Forum activity by major categories.

Table 3.5 Forum Postings by Major Categories



Like the earlier graphs, this graph also provides only an indication of activity. For example, the number of postings on ‘Guest Discussions’ varied according to the period studied – some guests generated substantial interest while others achieved only moderate levels of interest and participation.

The graph clearly shows that the majority of postings focused on the discussion of issues relating directly to flexible learning. Such issues included the role of the facilitator/moderator in online learning; workplace assessment; reusable learning objects; managing information; instructional design; equity of access (bandwidth); and leadership in flexible learning.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Despite somewhat patchy participation by 2001 Leaders in the Online Forum, it offers significant benefits to the program now and into the Future and should continue to be a major feature of the Flexible Learning Leaders program. It has a vast potential to build further on its current achievements to share information, generate debate, disseminate resources and contribute to a national network of Flexible Learning Leaders.**

## Mentoring by 2000 Leaders

2001 Leaders were also invited to rate the contribution of the past Flexible Learning Leaders in mentoring and facilitating forum activity. Mentoring in the Forum by past Leaders was a new initiative aimed at encouraging participation and stimulating debate.

Table 3.6 (below) summarises responses to the mentoring program by past Flexible Learning Leaders.

Table 3.6 Contribution by past Flexible Learning Leaders to Facilitating Online Forum Activity

Limited Contribution		Moderate Contribution			Significant Contribution	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5%	10%		20%	40%		25%

The majority of Leaders valued the contribution of past Leaders with 80% of all Leaders rating the contribution of past Leaders from moderate to significant. Information gained through interviews elaborates these findings. Comments from Leaders included:

*They really helped me come to grips with the value of the Forum. I could see what I might learn from their experiences. Some of their comments helped me to redefine the purpose of my visits.*

*It was good to have them involved especially early on during the project... they could point the way to potential problems.*

*The early small group activity was a great introduction to the Forum, especially for me. I wasn't that experienced with Forums.*

Comments from some Leaders also pointed to the Forum's role in the development of a growing 'Community of Leaders' drawn for both rounds of the program as well as from future rounds of the program.

### RECOMMENDATION

**Forum mentoring and support by past Leaders should be included in future rounds of the Flexible Learning Leaders program. Mentors should be selected from both 2000 and 2001 Leaders to contribute to the development of an evolving and growing network of Flexible Learning Leaders.**

### Management and Coordination of the Forum

All Leaders reported high levels of satisfaction with the management and coordination of the Forum. Particular features of the management and coordination of the Forum that were seen as contributing to its value and ease of use included:

- Enthusiasm and commitment of the Forum moderators
- Ongoing support and motivation
- Swift responses by the management team to problems and difficulties being experienced by users
- Updates and tips for using the Forum effectively and efficiently
- Summaries of discussions
- Regular archiving.

### RECOMMENDATION

**Management and coordination approaches to the On-line Forum during 2001 have been highly effective and efficient and have provided a strong platform for further development and refinement by the Project Management Team. Future modifications should both heed the suggestions and recommendations listed in this report and be in line with continuous improvement practices adopted by the National Project Managers.**

### Functionality of the On-line Forum

Leaders were invited to rate the functionality of the Forum in terms of its User Friendliness. Leaders were invited to comment on five broad areas: Overall Ease of Use; Posting Messages; Reading Messages; Threading and Sorting Messages; and, Logging on and Moving about in the Forum.

Table 3.7 (below) summarises their responses.

Table 3.7 User Friendliness on the Online Forum

#### Overall Ease of Use

User unfriendly		Moderately user friendly				User friendly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		10%	60%	20%		10%

#### Posting Messages

User unfriendly		Moderately user friendly				User friendly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		20%	60%			20%

### Reading Messages

User unfriendly		Moderately user friendly				User friendly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		30%	55%			15%

### Threading and Sorting Messages

User unfriendly		Moderately user friendly				User friendly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	10%	40%	20%	20%		10%

### Logging On and Moving about in the Forum

User unfriendly		Moderately user friendly				User friendly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
			50%		35%	15%

The data gathered and presented in Table 3.7, was further examine through interviews. Major difficulties experienced by the Leaders included the following.

- Difficulties with attachments – both posting and downloading of attachments was not intuitive to Leaders and many were initially reluctant to post attachments; some Leaders reported that they missed information because of their initial inability to download attachments.
- Difficulties in navigation resulting in problems following discussion threads leading to reading messages out of context.
- Slow loading.

Some Leaders reported that they felt their difficulties were a result of their lack of knowledge and experience with the technology rather than inherent problems with the technology platform.

Leaders were also invited to suggest alternative platforms that might offer enhanced service delivery for future Forum activities. Leaders declined to offer suggestions reporting that all platforms had positive and negative attributes and there was still considerable debate regarding the merits of each platform. They felt that, regardless of difficulties with the platform, the most significant barriers to participation resulted from the unexpected and consequently unplanned for time commitment required for meaningful participation.

### Barriers to Participation and Suggested Improvements

Overall, the Forum has made a significant contribution to the 2001 Flexible Learning Leaders program. However, Leaders identified a number of barriers that have impacted negatively on participation. Some of these have been described earlier in the report, but they are listed again below as they were constantly reported by Leaders.

- Active engagement in the Forum was very time consuming.

- Lack of information about the roles and expectations of Forum participation lead to initial confusion about the extent of involvement.
- Lack of initial information about the size and scope of the Forum also contributed to initial confusion.

Participants expressed strong views about areas in which the Forum might be improved in future years. As indicated above, the vast majority of Leaders were surprised at the amount of time required to participate meaningfully in the Forum. The time required to participate in the Forum was totally unexpected and Leaders strongly expressed that future rounds of the program should ensure that the roles and expectations of Forum participation be clearly stated at the application stage along with a statement about the amount of time required for Forum participation. They also suggested that roles and expectations of Forum participation should be strongly re-emphasised at the Induction program. It was suggested by Leaders that participation in the Forum should not be mandated but that expectations be clearly defined and participation be negotiated between Leaders and the Project Management Team.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**The role of the Forum in future rounds of the Flexible Learning Leaders program should be clearly articulated at the application stage of the project and reinforced at future Induction seminars. Expectations for participation should be clearly documented and provide a basis for ongoing negotiation regarding the operation of Forum.**

### Sharing Day

The Sharing Day held on the day after the Networking 2001 Conference was a new initiative of the program aimed at providing an opportunity for Leaders and key stakeholders to share the learning gained during the program.

Leaders were invited to rate the contribution of the Sharing Day to the success of the projects. Table 3.9 presents their responses.

Table 3.9 Contribution of the Sharing Day to Participant's Projects

Limited Contribution		Moderate Contribution			Significant Contribution	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
			10%	30%	30%	30%

As the table indicates, Leaders valued the Sharing Day with all Leaders reporting that it made a moderate to significant contribution to their projects. The views of participants were detailed through interviews. Comments from Leaders are presented below:

*I really enjoyed the dinner (Progressive Dinner Discussion) it was a lot of fun and it also generated a lot of great ideas for future programs.*

*It was terrific to have everyone involved especially past Leaders and Fellows – I got a glimpse of what the next year holds in store for me.*

*While I had developed strong relationships with many of the Leaders and knew about their projects, I really appreciated the opportunity to hear from people whose projects I didn't know about.*

*Just when I thought I knew all there was to know... more learning opportunities. There is so much great work going on.*

*I really appreciated the work done by the Project Managers...getting the documents after the Sharing Day was great as I missed the opportunity to hear everyone. I also liked the report on Leaders' reflections.*

While Leaders enjoyed the Sharing Day and found it a valuable and important initiative, they also made suggestions for future improvements. The following quotes are indicative of comments made by Leaders.

*The Sharing Day is a great initiative but the format should be changed, 2 minutes per participant is not long enough for any meaningful dialogue to take place.*

*I wanted to hear from everyone but time didn't allow.*

*I would have preferred to hear more from Leaders. I think the Leadership component could have been chopped and more time given to discussion of findings. It's a bit late for a Leadership program at the closing stages of the project.*

#### RECOMMENDATION

**The Sharing Day, which recognises individual and collaborative learning by Leaders, should continue to be a feature of future Flexible Learning Leaders programs. Modifications to the program should build on the success of the 2001 activity and continue to focus of continuous collaborative learning by the Leaders (past and present).**

## State Presentations

In November and early December, state presentations were held in Canberra, Sydney, Alice Springs, Darwin, Brisbane, Adelaide, Hobart, Melbourne and Perth. The invited audience consisted (depending on location) of senior VET agency staff, the organisational sponsors of the current Leaders, past Leaders, and other interested parties. The evaluators attended the Brisbane and Melbourne presentations.

At each of these, Leaders (singly or in pairs) made a brief presentation focusing on the discoveries of their projects. The visual parts of the presentations can be seen on the FLAG web site at [www.flexiblelearning.net.au/](http://www.flexiblelearning.net.au/). Leaders' sponsors also commented briefly in panel discussions on the impact of the program on their organisation.

As the result of much work on the part of the Project Team, these events achieved a significantly higher profile and reached a wider audience than those of the 2000 program (for example, state VET CEOs attended in some cases).

The value of this activity will be seen in

- an increased awareness of the program among VET providers and state/territory agency staff
- an increased awareness across the VET system of the achievements of Leaders, and the Leadership potential thus developed
- an increased awareness across the VET system of the variety of expertise developed by the Leaders, and therefore the development of intellectual capital
- the consequent ability of the VET system to draw on the Leadership resources and expertise of the 2001 Leaders.

The ultimate value will therefore not be assessable until later in 2002.

## 4. Leaders' Experiences

### Project Management

The major project management issue for Leaders was the management of time. The majority of Leaders reported throughout the project that they had significantly underestimated the time required to manage, organise and coordinate key aspects of the project. Aspects of the projects requiring more time than Leaders originally envisaged included the following.

- Arranging travel and site visits – the vast majority of Leaders reported that the organisation of site visits was much more time intensive than they foresaw.
- Contributing to the Online Forum - the vast majority of Leaders reported that the time taken to contribute to the online discussion forum was more significant than originally envisaged. As one Leader reported. ‘ the online discussion is great but it takes a fair bit of time. I wish I had some advance warning so I could have planned for that time commitment.’ (This issue has been discussed in the preceding chapter of this report.)
- Bureaucratic processes – several Leaders reported frustration with the time taken to get approval for site visits and conference attendances. A couple of Leaders have reported that approval for overseas travel took several weeks. Managing the approval process is both time consuming and frustrating.
- Reporting – while the majority of Leaders found the reporting procedures were fair and manageable, some related that they had underestimated the time required for reporting especially time for reflection.

### Collaboration and Networking

The establishment of collaborative partnerships and networks has been a major outcome of the learning process. All Leaders report that the process of establishing networks was both enjoyable and productive. All Leaders, as well as their sponsoring organisations, recognise the importance of these networks and all Leaders have expressed a strong commitment to maintaining and enhancing the networks that have been established during the project.

### Interaction within Sponsoring Organisations

All Leaders developed strong networks and links within their organisations. These networks and links have contributed significantly to participants being recognised as Leaders and experts within their organisations.

Leaders reported the following approaches to developing and maintaining network and project linkages within their organisations.

- Developing and facilitating workshops within their organisations to report on and apply learning outcomes.

- Working with colleagues on new projects (in some cases these projects have been a direct result of early outcomes of the FLL program).
- Developing informal 'common-interest' networks of people focusing on particular issues e.g. on line assessment.

### **Links with other Projects**

Leaders developed and/or strengthened links with a range of related projects during the program. In particular Leaders have worked closely with other VET practitioners involved in projects and initiatives that are part of a suite of projects designed to support the aims and objectives of *National Flexible Learning Framework*. In particular strong links have been developed with LearnScope and its workplace learning projects throughout the nation. Other national projects with which links have been established include:

- Flexible Learning Fellows
- On-line Product Development
- Good Practice in Flexible Learning
- Networking 2001
- Technology Infrastructure projects
- Flexible Learning Research projects
- Promotion and Marketing projects.

Leaders have also developed and or strengthened links with other projects including:

- State-based projects
- Organisation-based projects.


### **Site Visits and Research**

Site visits and research were a the key feature of the 2001 Flexible Learning Leaders project. As in the previous round of the project (2000) there was a mix of national and international visits. All Leaders found this element of the project to be personally rewarding and of significant value to them professionally. Information from site visits and associated research has already proven to be of value to their organisations.

2001 Leaders generally worked with the Project Managers, past Leaders and between themselves to ensure that their visits and research built on the work already undertaken in Flexible Learning (particularly the work of past Leaders). This resulted in three outcomes:

1. Reduction in duplication of site visits and research
2. A broader span of organisations and initiatives were incorporated into the program bringing new information and insights
3. Greater collaboration between Leaders on outcomes of visits.

Many Leaders reported that their visits filled them with confidence regarding the implementation of flexible learning in Australia. They found that, in many cases, Australia was leading the way in flexible learning. This knowledge has given them added confidence to undertake a Leadership role in their organisation and in the VET sector as a whole.



## 5. Support for Flexible Learning Leaders

### National Support

The interest, support and encouragement provided by the Chief Executive Officer of the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) was a significant feature of the 2001 program. The CEO maintained a strong presence in the program from the June induction program to the close the project. Leaders are confident that her interest both in their individual professional development programs and their ongoing involvement in the development of flexible learning approaches locally, regionally, nationally and globally will continue in future years. They are confident not only in her continuing support of flexible learning in the VET sector but are also confident of ongoing professional access to her, primarily through email and discussion forums.

Leaders reported that they highly valued her contribution to the program especially in the following areas.

- Recognition of the importance of the work being done by the Leaders individually and collectively
- Raising the profile of the project
- Motivating and encouraging Leaders
- Challenging assumptions and approaches
- Participating in the On-line Forum.

The Leaders were also very appreciative of support and guidance provided by the National Project Manager and her team. Ongoing communication between Leaders and the National Project Management Team was achieved through workshops, telephone discussions, e-mail, the On-line Forum and face-to-face discussions. These approaches have been successful in developing strong relationships and have resulted in the following outcomes:

- Project Management and administrative information has been provided in a logical, coherent and timely manner.
- Reporting responsibilities have been made clear to Leaders and they have been able to submit and share reports with other Leaders in an effective and efficient manner.
- Positive working relationships have developed between the Leaders and the Project Management Team.

Project Management approaches by the National Project Manager and her team have built on good practice adopted during the first round of the project by continuing to recognise the value of learning and that successful innovation and Leadership must be well planned, highly consultative and reflective. In this way, the Project Management Team has modelled good practice and effective Leadership. The management approaches during 2001 have been characterised by:

- Open communication and timely information sharing

- A strong emphasis on continuous learning both individually and collaboratively
- Respect for diversity
- Flexibility.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**Future National Project Management and Support approaches should build on the principles adopted by Project Managers in 2000 and 2001 which value learning (individual and collective) and recognise that successful innovation and Leadership must be well planned, consultative and reflective.**

**Organisational Support**

The Leaders’ sponsoring organisations contributed financially to the program – funding of \$20000 was provided through the project, and the organisation was required to provide a minimum of \$10000 in matching funding. However, support for Flexible Learning Leaders extended well beyond the financial contribution.

The majority of organisations viewed the program as an investment in organisational improvement and development. Support provided by organisations occurred at many levels within the organisations and was provided by colleagues, by mentors selected by Leaders, by work unit managers and by members of the Executive. Support provided by some organisations included:

- Moral support in the form on encouragement and motivation
- Recognition of the importance of the program and the Leadership potential of the participant which was illustrated by invitations to planning sessions, meetings and workshops
- Time release and backfilling of positions
- Provision of clerical assistance.

Organisations were asked to provide an indication of the scope and quality of the support they provided to Flexible Learning Leaders during 2001. Their responses are summarised in Table 5.1 (below).

Table 5.1 Scope and Quality of Organisational Support

Scope of Support provided to your Flexible Learning Leader by your Organisation.

No Support		Moderate Support			High Levels of Support	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
				35%	60%	5%

Quality of Support provided to your Flexible Learning Leader by your Organisation.

Poor		Moderate				Good
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
			20%		40%	40%

The majority of organisations reported that they provided moderate to high levels of support for their Leaders. While this has been verified by the majority of Leaders, some Leaders noted that while they were generally happy with the support provided, they felt that it was limited to support from middle management, and that Executive level support appeared to be lacking at times. As one Leader put it, *I'm not even sure that the Director knows about the program let alone what I'm doing for the Institute.* Leaders who experienced difficulties in communicating with Executive level managers reporting feeling frustrated and isolated at times. Their experience, research and site visits had consolidated the importance of Executive level endorsement and support for change and new approaches but they were having difficulties opening and maintaining basic communication. These problems were unique to larger and more bureaucratic organisations and present particular challenges to some Leaders both now and into the future. Importantly, the Leaders realise that the solutions to the Leadership challenges arising from their situations are ultimately their own responsibility and are working with others to develop effective strategies.

Some sponsors noted that they were not required to be proactive in supporting their Leaders. Their Leaders operated independently and professionally accessing support only when needed. As one sponsor put it, *she operated very independently as I would expect a future Leader to do...*

The nature and quality of organisational support is critical to the success of the Flexible Learning Leaders Project. During 2001, relationships between sponsoring organisations and their Leaders have resulted in the following:

- Promotion of the Flexible Learning Leaders program within the organisations.
- The strengthening of links between Leaders' professional development programs and organisational strategic directions.
- The development and/or strengthening of links between Leaders' professional development programs and other work teams and projects within the organisation.
- Recognition of the knowledge, skills and insights gained by Leaders and an appreciation of their potential contribution to organisational improvement.

Leaders who experienced high levels of support from their organisation reported the following benefits:

- Quick, easy and reliable access to senior people (decision makers)
- Regular opportunities to discuss issues and concerns

- A willingness of senior people and colleagues to listen to ideas and discuss the potential benefits of the FLL project to the organisation
- A willingness of senior people to make suggestions for improvements
- A feeling of being valued (personally and professionally).

On the other hand, those Leaders who experienced limited support from their organisation reported the following difficulties:

- Limited access to senior people (decision makers)
- Feelings of frustration and isolation.

#### RECOMMENDATION

**Organisations should continue to be required to contribute financially to the program as an investment in organisational development and improvement. Expectations of ongoing organisational participation in the project and support for individual Leaders should be made explicit at all stages of the project.**



## 6. Outcomes of the Program

### Outcomes – Now and into the Future

In line with the project brief, the main period of interest of this report is from June to December 2001. This period covers a brief frenetic activity period in which Leaders undertook research and conducted site visits to investigate their areas of interest. While important outcomes have been achieved during this period for both the individuals involved and their organisations, further outcomes will be seen over the next two-year period (see Table 1.1 on page 2).

This section of the evaluation report documents the tangible and intangible outcomes of the period June to December 2001 and also indicates the likely future impacts during the next few years. Outcomes and predicted future impacts are addressed in three complementary and interrelated areas.

1. Outcomes for individual project participants
2. Outcomes for organisations
3. Outcomes for the VET sector as a whole.

Flexible Learning Leaders are a diverse group of professional people – they represent directors, senior and middle managers, teachers, lecturers, learning coordinators, training specialists, training consultants and support officers. They come from a range of organisations including Institutes and Colleges of TAFE; Enterprise-Based Training Development Centres; Government Departments of Education, Training, Health and Emergency Services; product development units; and, private training organisations. Most importantly they have a wide variety of backgrounds, interests, experiences and learning styles. This diversity is a major strength of the program and it is reflected in the outcomes of the project.

### Outcomes for Individuals

The FLL program is primarily a staff development program for individuals with the aim of developing a national network of Leaders who will actively contribute to the development of new and innovative approaches to the design, delivery, management and support of flexible learning.

Leaders were asked to rate how the program had influenced their personal development in six key areas. The key areas were:

1. Development of new skills and understanding in Flexible Learning (both for yourself as a professional and for your organisation).
2. Development and maintenance of new professional networks
3. Ability to undertake a Leadership role within their organisation
4. Ability to undertake a Leadership role within the VET sector as a whole
5. Ability to engage with and influence policy frameworks within their organisation
6. Ability to engage with and influence national policy frameworks.

Table 6.1 (below) summarises the responses of participants regarding the impacts of the program.

Table 6.1 Impacts of the Program on Leaders

Development of New skills and Understandings in Flexible Learning for Yourself

No Influence			Moderate Influence			High Influence
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
					40%	60%

Development of New Skills and Understandings in Flexible Learning for your Organisation

No Influence			Moderate Influence			High Influence
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		5%	15%	80%	50%	

Development and Maintenance of New Professional Networks

No Influence			Moderate Influence			High Influence
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
			5%		35%	60%

Your Ability to undertake a Leadership role within your Organisation

No Influence			Moderate Influence			High Influence
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
			5%	10%	45%	40%

Your ability to undertake a Leadership role within the VET Sector as a Whole

No Influence			Moderate Influence			High Influence
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
			10%	20%	50%	20%

Your Ability to Engage with and Influence Policy Frameworks within your Organisation

No Influence			Moderate Influence			High Influence
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
			40%	50%	10%	

Your Ability to Engage with and influence National Policy Frameworks

No Influence			Moderate Influence			High Influence
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		20%	20%	30%	20%	10%

All Leaders rated their development of new skills as having a moderate or high impact on themselves, their organisations and the VET sector as a whole. There is

a slight deviation between the perceived influence of the individual professional development outcomes and organisational outcomes with between 20 and 40% of Leaders rating the influence on organisations as moderate compared with a 0% to 10% rating in areas addressing personal development. This may be explained by the fact that the opinions of Leaders were gathered at the conclusion of what was an intense personal development phase of the project.

In interviews, Leaders all stressed that the major outcome of the program for them was personal growth. Particular benefits reported included:

- Increased and improved knowledge in a wide range of areas of flexible learning leading to higher levels of professional confidence and an enhanced ability to make informed decisions
- Improved communication skills especially in the areas of negotiation; information dissemination; presentation of workshops, conference papers etc; and relationship building
- An appreciation of the complexities of change management
- Improved understanding and appreciation of the links between strategic and operational planning
- Better professional relationships within their organisations.

Other outcomes for individual Leaders can be best illustrated by the following vignettes drawn from the Leaders' personal learning journeys.

#### **Reflection as a key to Learning**

In some instances the process of reflection takes a back seat to what might be considered the more active processes of discussing, planning and taking action. But reflection is a powerful learning process that is often the basis for achieving new insights and developing innovative responses to both new and old challenges.

While some Leaders reported difficulty in overcoming work and project pressures to find the time to reflect, all Leaders recognised the power of reflection in the learning process. Leaders were encouraged to reflect on their learning and their project directions throughout the year. Written reflections were gathered and shared between Leaders after the completion of Interim Reports. A small selection of Leaders' reflections are provided below:

*Considering where I started from and where I've been, where do I now want to go? It seems to me there is energy in on-line learning in organisations where all courses have an Internet presence, even if they are not seen as on-line courses... On-line delivery can become part of the repertoire of teaching strategies of all teachers, not just the technology enthusiasts. I believe this is the direction we should take now.*

Graham Anderson, Queensland

*The visits have given me a good insight into how institutions are evolving and changing to move into online and flexible learning. New positions, skills and support will be required. What is interesting though is that the places I have been are still not at the end of their journey.*

Kerry Ashcroft, New South Wales

*Having researched extensively both nationally and internationally, it is heartening to note how advanced Australia is in the development of flexible learning technology. In many areas we are a world Leader.*

Margaret Barron, South Australia

*The project has enabled me to focus and spend time on concepts that previously were off in the distance, unattainable, to be done when all other work was done. My knowledge has expanded and skill increased. I have learnt of my own inability/reluctance to come to grips with making a meaningful online contribution.... I have been forced out of a comfort zone and this has enabled me to encounter new experiences and ideas.*

Peter Forbes, Western Australia

#### **Networking, Sharing and Collaborative Learning**

The most valued aspect of the Flexible Learning Leaders program was the opportunity for the Leaders to learn together and with others. Leaders formed their own learning groups or collectives based on common interests or the opportunity to learn from one another. Leaders also learned with and from people outside their immediate circle – networks formed across the nation and across the globe. These learning networks will continue to operate well into the future and will continue to have a positive impact of the 2001 Leaders, their organisations and the Australian VET sector.

*My learning journey has taken me down two paths. One path is the path of immediate concern; the other is the path of the future. Occasionally these paths meet to form a wider road.....on the path of immediate concern there have been many stops along the way to talk to other travellers and to learn from their knowledge and experiences. I have also made stops along this path to visit organisations and to learn from them. This path has been well lit....it has had many travellers.*

Melanie Sorensen, Western Australia

*Also important are the networks established both within industry .....and of course with the Flexible Learning Leaders. I have found individuals to be the most priceless source of inspiration and innovation.*

Olga Brown, New South Wales

*The opportunity to immerse oneself in this environment and have the opportunity to reflect and discuss throughout the duration with experts and practitioners in the field is incredibly valuable. I think the implications of this can only be beneficial to all micro and macro levels of the VET environment from our closest peers in our work tasks to committees, funding bodies, partnering organisations and individuals and the networks established nationally and internationally.*

Joeena Simpson, Queensland

### **Leading through Learning**

The learning undertaken by many Leaders has contributed directly to their Leadership development.

*Being able to research and reflect on issues that I face regularly in the work situation, being able to step outside my known world and get a national and global perspective has been invaluable. I find myself speaking with new authority on a whole range of issues and my level of intellectual engagement has risen steeply. I have a global network to draw upon when I have vexing issues and I feel like I am breaking new ground.*

Heather Crawley, Victoria

*The learning I have gained through visitations, conferences and courses have instilled in me an increased level of confidence that the vision and Leadership I employ are viable and supported both nationally and internationally. The networking contacts I have forged are proving to be invaluable for support and reflection in implementing and managing change at the local level.*

Mary Stewart-Craig, Victoria

### **Outcomes for Organisations**

While primarily an individual staff development initiative, the 2001 FLL projects have been highly contextualised and the results have regularly gone beyond the individual development of new skills and knowledge to improvements in organisational performance and effectiveness.

Sponsors within organisations were asked to rate the impact of the program on their organisation three key areas. The three areas were.

1. Contribution to the development of new skills and understandings in Flexible Learning
2. Contribution to strategic and organisational planning in Flexible Learning
3. Contribution to innovation within the organisation.

Table 6.2 (below) summarises their responses.

Table 6.2 Contribution of the Flexible Learning Leaders to Organisational Development

Contribution of Flexible Learning Leaders to the Development of New Skills and Understandings in Flexible Learning within the Organisation.

No Contribution		Moderate Contribution			Significant Contribution	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		5%		15%	60%	20%

Contribution of Flexible Learning Leaders to Strategic and Organisational Planning in Flexible Learning within the organisation.

No Contribution		Moderate Contribution			Significant Contribution	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		5%		75%		20%

Contribution of Flexible Learning Leaders to Innovation within the Organisation.

No Contribution		Moderate Contribution			Significant Contribution	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	5%	10%	25%		30%	30%

The responses from sponsors vary from category to category. A majority of sponsors rated the contribution of the Leaders to the development of new skills and understandings in Flexible Learning highly. This is an area where Leaders have made an immediate impact through the adoption of proactive information dissemination strategies within their organisations. However, sponsors have rated the Leaders contribution to strategic planning, operational planning and innovation less highly mainly because these areas are still to achieve their potential. As one sponsor reported in interview:

*While our Leader has already demonstrated Leadership qualities and contributed knowledge and ideas to planning activities, the real contribution has yet to be realised.*

It is important for the program and all its stakeholders to now address the medium and long terms outcomes of the project. It will be important for all stakeholders to monitor and evaluate activity over the next two years so that all outcomes can be ascertained and a return on investment quantified. Future approaches are discussed further in Chapter 8 of this report, *Future Directions*.

Sponsors were also invited to indicate whether the organisation had developed a clearly defined role for the Flexible Learning Leader post 2001. Responses are provided in Table 6.3 below.

Table 6.3 Future Organisation Roles for Flexible Learning Leaders

Has the Organisation Developed a Clearly Defined Role for the Flexible Learning Leader after the Completion of his/her Program?

Role Not Defined		Role evolving				Role defined
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5%			30%	35%	30%	

The vast majority of sponsors indicated that a future role for the Flexible Learning Leader was evolving. From interviews it emerged that these evolving roles were characterised by functions rather than specific projects or tasks within the organisations and included:

- Mentoring of key staff in flexible learning
- Maintaining networks
- Accessing resources
- Conducting workshops and disseminating information about flexible learning and related issues
- Advising on planning and future directions
- Contributing to decision making through the provision of strategic advice
- Contributing to team building within the organisation
- Overseeing and/or implementing flexible learning plans and initiatives.

Finally, sponsors were asked whether the organisation would participate in future programs. Table 6.4 presents responses.

Table 6.4 Organisational Participation in Future Program

Is the Organisation keen to participate in Future Programs and/or Opportunities arising from the FLL Program?

No		Under Consideration				Yes
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		5%			15%	80%

The vast majority of sponsors are keen to participate in future programs.

While both individual Leaders and their organisations recognise that significant outcomes will accrue during 2002 and 2003, the majority of FLL sponsors within organisations reported that there have already been positive impacts on the organisation.

- Sharing of information and knowledge within the organisation – as stated previously in this report, all Leaders have been conscientious in disseminating outcomes and keeping all organisational staff informed of project progress.

- Providing advice on the establishment and operation of flexible learning / product development units within organisations – adapting and applying models from the experiences of other organisations. both national and international.
- Improved access to networks of flexible learning practitioners and experts.
- Improved access to contemporary resources
- New ideas and concepts.
- New levels of enthusiasm.

One Leader reported that the real benefit to the organisation, now and into the future, is the Leader’s ability to take a much more strategic approach to planning in flexible learning. Another sponsor summed up the immediate benefits to the organisation in the following way:

*The program has impacted on the Leader, the Project Teams and the Institute. It has been well received by everyone and has engendered pride, excitement and increased involvement. Through this project we have been able to proclaim our commitment to innovative learning.*

#### Potential Longer Term Outcomes for Organisations

The potential of longer-term outcomes for the organisation is recognised by all stakeholders. These depend on a range of variables both within and outside the organisation and are consequently hard to predict with clarity and accuracy. However, the following vignettes illustrate the longer-term potential of some of the activities that will be undertaken by Leaders in 2002 and 2003.

#### **Alternative and Innovative Approaches to On-line Assessment**

Janice Anderson (Canberra Institute of Technology) has examined the opportunities provided by Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) for new assessment opportunities and strategies.

Janice argues that if students are encouraged to take more responsibility for their learning in an online environment and are offered more flexibility in the pathways they can take, it follows that the assessment of their competence and knowledge also need to be more flexible.

Online technologies, coupled with creativity and innovation by teachers and learners, can push teachers to develop new a range of creative online assessment approaches – in consultation with learning facilitators, students can choose their own assessment items from a smorgasbord of offerings.

During 2002, Janice will continue to explore and develop new assessment approaches with the network of colleagues (new and old; national and international) that she has built over the last year.

### **Flexible Approaches to Indigenous Education and Training**

The primary aim of Dion Barnett (Eastern Pilbara College of TAFE) was to examine and develop appropriate and culturally sensitive approaches to the delivery of indigenous program in remote centres.

Dion's work is illustrating the potential value of learning technologies and flexible learning in meeting some learning needs of indigenous people. The outcomes of his work will be of interest to all remote and rural communities.

His approaches recognise the benefits of a wide range of strategies to suit community needs including more traditional approaches to learning. His work has highlighted the continuing access problems being experienced by rural and remote communities. While the outcomes of his work are designed to be implemented locally, they will provide useful insights and strategies for consideration by rural and remote communities across Australia.

### **Regional Infrastructure and Community Development**

One aspect of the work being completed by Jennifer Batten (Western Institute of TAFE, NSW) focused on the major problem of providing satisfactory bandwidth to rural Australia. The problem is a complex one that requires a consideration of a range of issues including: profitability of telecommunications providers, equity; community renewal and community sustainability.

Drawing on her overseas experiences, Jennifer is developing a model for community and enterprise consortiums that will increase bargaining power with telecommunications providers; consolidate resources to make more effective use of limited resource; and, provide opportunities for cost savings. Jennifer is working with others to apply the model in her regional community during 2002 but the consortium model being developed should prove beneficial to a range of regional and rural enterprises and communities struggling to maintain access to equitable infrastructure.

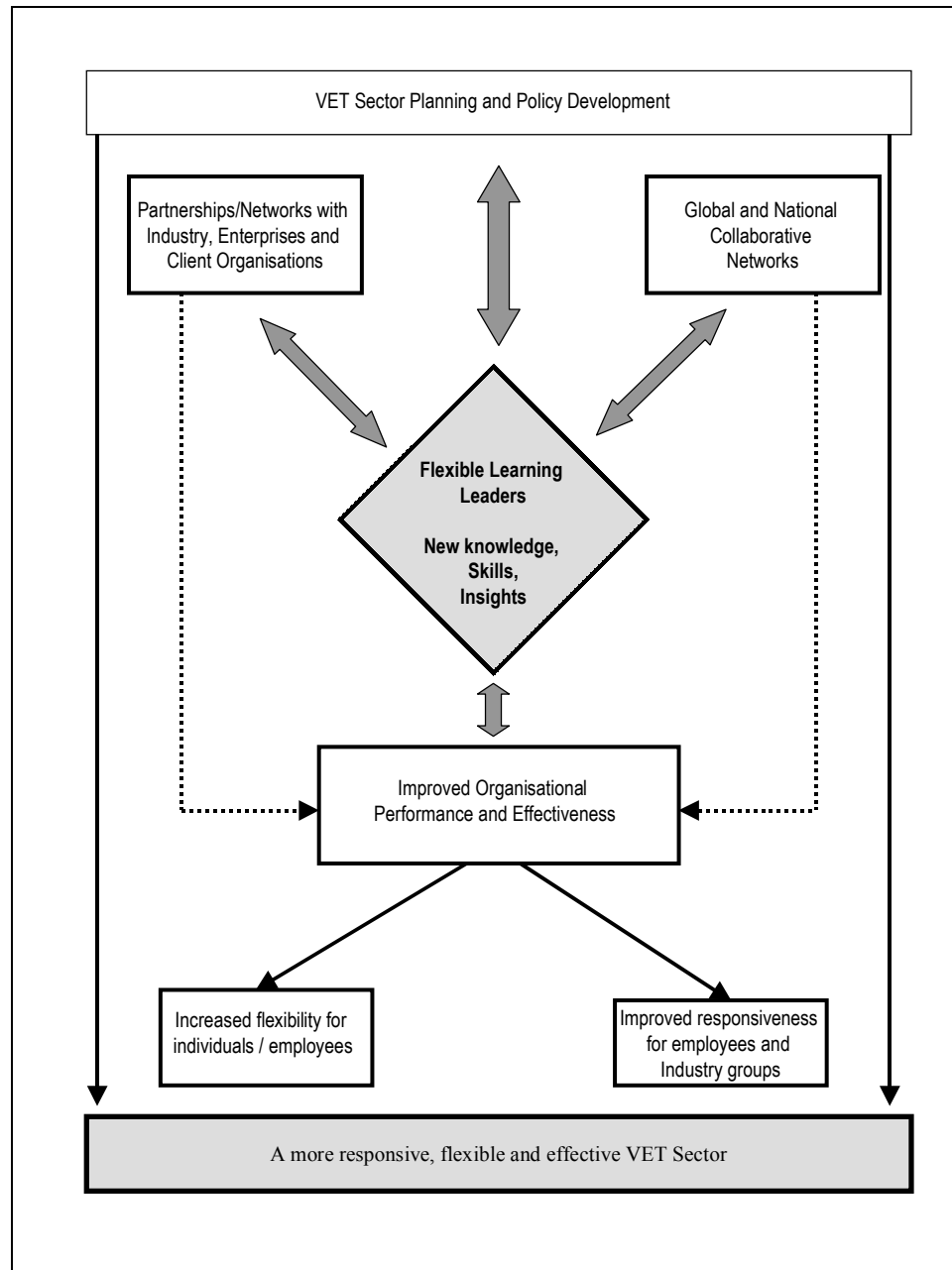
### **Facilitating and Supporting On-line Learning**

Brad Beach (Central Gippsland Institute of TAFE, Victoria) aimed to develop useful and practical knowledge and skills for facilitating and supporting online learning. He has developed a range of very practical strategies, guidelines and tips which are useful to all people designing or supporting online learning.

## Outcomes for the VET Sector

The outcomes for individuals and organisations described in the preceding sections are also important outcomes for the VET sector as a whole. That is, outcomes for individuals and organisations impact on the sector as a whole. This interrelationship is presented in Figure 6.1 (below).

Figure 6.1 Interrelationship of Project Impacts within the VET Sector



As Figure 6.1 illustrates, there are outcomes (both immediate and potential) that impact on subsections of the VET sector including the Australian National Training Authority, State and Territory systems, industry associations and users or clients of the sector including Enterprises, employers, individual institution based learners and work-based learners.

Flexible learning occurs at the local level and among its aims is the strengthening and improvement of relationships between training providers and users/clients. From a whole of VET perspective, the adoption of flexible learning focuses on this relationship between provider and client by:

- Increasing the flexibility and responsiveness of providers by removing barriers to flexible learning and improving the effectiveness and productivity of learning
- Providing clients with greater choice and control over program content and delivery.

The Flexible Learning Leaders program has contributed significantly to this aim by:

- Facilitating access to information for providers and clients
- Facilitating access to resources for providers and clients
- Researching and documenting features and functions of learning management and support systems
- Investigating and reporting strategies for investment in infrastructure
- Working with partners to develop resources
- Working with partners to investigate shared infrastructure
- Promoting flexible learning approaches locally and nationally.

#### Longer-Term Outcomes for the VET Sector

Like outcomes predicted for individuals and organisations, projected future outcomes for the VET sector as a whole depend on a range of variables. The achievement of longer-term outcomes will be enhanced if the remaining systemic barriers to the implementation of flexible learning in VET are addressed including:

- Restrictive resource allocation models
- Inappropriate performance measures.

## 7. Leadership in Flexible Learning

### Diversity of Leadership in Flexible Learning

The Flexible Learning Leaders program reflects and encourages diversity in Leadership roles and functions in many ways:

- it selects program candidates from different levels within organisations
- it incorporates a range of organisations varying in size and scope
- it empowers individual participants to make their own decisions and manage their own learning activities
- it promotes networking and collaboration
- it facilitates sharing of information
- it establishes links between individual learning and organisational improvement.

As a consequence, each Flexible Learning Leader develops unique Leadership skills, abilities and insights based on their needs and interests. Furthermore, Leaders are now in the process of developing clear but unique strategies for applying their new skills to guide and support future approaches to flexible learning. Recognition of this diversity has added breadth and depth to the 2001 program.

#### RECOMMENDATION

**Future Flexible Learning Leaders programs should continue to recognise and build on diversity in Leadership and acknowledge a range of Leadership styles in a range of contexts at a range of levels within organisations.**

Not all Leaders, however, have yet developed a clear understanding of how their new knowledge and skills can be applied to an ongoing Leadership role either within their own organisations or to the wider VET sector.

In interviews with Leaders it was apparent that all Flexible Learning Leaders have a clear view and understanding of their future role in championing flexible learning; assisting with solving training problems through flexible learning approaches; planning and supporting innovation; and, implementing flexible solutions. However, a significant number of them have difficulty appreciating how these activities and the skills and knowledge that support them relate to Leadership. Indeed a number of Leaders are uncomfortable with the term 'Leader' and have suggested that the program change its name. These Leaders equate Leadership only with vision setting, decision-making, budgeting, staffing and strategic planning. In short, they confuse management and Leadership.

The program needs to come to terms with this issue and develop and promote a broader concept of Leadership as outlined in the next section of this chapter.

### **Leading through Learning – the Core Roles of Leaders**

The core roles of leaders in contemporary organisations focus around learning and the facilitation of learning. In these organisations leaders perform a number of key functions some of which are listed below. The key functions listed below have been expanded to more accurately incorporate the contexts of the Flexible Learning Leaders.

- Leaders actively contribute to the development of shared visions about the future of flexible learning in organisations and in the whole VET sector.
- Leaders communicate their visions for flexible learning. They communicate their belief that flexible learning approaches assist training systems and organisations to be more client-focused and to respond more quickly to client requirements.
- Leaders build consensus and ownership around the shared vision and are influenced by the views of others in their organisations and networks.
- Leaders model the actions they want to develop in others.

Most important of all, Leaders continually learn themselves. They network with a wide variety of people and interests; they read books and articles and share the information with others; they attend workshops, training sessions and conferences; they foster an environment which encourages innovation and risk taking; they ensure that decision makers are keep informed of contemporary developments in flexible learning; and, they promote continuous learning for all stakeholders in flexible learning.

These aspects of Leadership should be recognised and actively promoted during future iterations of the program.

#### RECOMMENDATION

**Future Flexible Learning Leaders programs should recognise and promote a broad, encompassing definition of Leadership that focuses on continuous learning by both individuals and organisations.**

This is not to argue that management skills are unimportant to Leaders. Management skills are important to many Leaders (particularly those in middle management positions) but a fairly clear delineation of management and Leadership needs to be adopted and promoted to future Leaders. There also needs to be a stronger recognition that Leadership can occur at any and all levels of an organisation.

The following table provides a starting point for further consideration of the distinctions between management and Leadership.

Table 7.1 Comparing Management and Leadership

Management	Leadership
<p><b>Planning and Budgeting</b></p> <p>Establishing detailed plans and budgets for the implementation of flexible learning approaches. Allocation of resources necessary to make it happen</p>	<p><b>Establishing Direction</b></p> <p>Developing a shared vision of the future of flexible learning.</p> <p>Outlining strategies and approaches to achieve the vision</p>
<p><b>Organising and Staffing</b></p> <p>Planning a structure for accomplishing flexible learning plans and providing appropriately skilled people.</p> <p>Delegating responsibility and authority for implementing the plan.</p> <p>Providing policies and procedures to help guide people to implement flexible learning solutions.</p> <p>Creating systems to monitor outcomes.</p>	<p><b>Aligning People</b></p> <p>Communicating future approaches by words and deeds to all people whose cooperation may be needed so as to influence the creation of teams and partnership.</p>
<p><b>Controlling and Problem Solving</b></p> <p>Monitoring results and implementing solutions to implementation problems.</p>	<p><b>Motivating and Inspiring</b></p> <p>Energising people to overcome political, bureaucratic and resource barriers limiting the progress of flexible learning.</p>
<p><b>Producing a Degree of Predictability and Order</b></p>	<p><b>Producing Change</b></p> <p>Developing new products and new approaches that (1) provide clients with more choice and control over program content and delivery. And (2) increase the organisations and the systems flexibility and responsiveness and improving the effectiveness and productivity of learning.</p>

Adapted from Stace and Dunphy (1998)

While the management approaches outlined above are important to success, Flexible Learning Leaders are not always in a position to undertake management roles. However, all Flexible Learning Leaders regardless of their current position and function within an organisation can successfully adopt the Leadership functions.

### Three Agendas for Leaders

Another way of looking at and supporting the development of Leadership in the Flexible Learning Leaders program is through an examination of a framework developed by Stace Management Networks Pty Ltd (1998). The framework identifies three key agendas for Leaders – the intellectual agenda, the management agenda and the behavioural agenda. Leadership, according to Stace, is about stretching the limits of all three agendas.

The following table uses the framework to illustrate the current and future roles of Flexible Learning Leaders in providing Leadership in all three areas of the Stace Framework.

Table 7.2 Leadership Functions of Flexible Learning Leaders

The Agendas	General Functions	Role of FLLs
The Intellectual Agenda	Setting directions Defining Business Value adding for stakeholders	Providing up to date information and knowledge of national and international directions and approaches Identifying possibilities for change and organisational improvement Accessing national and international networks and resources
The Management Agenda	Technologies and Resources Structures and Networks Management Systems	Advice on technology infrastructures and platforms Advice on management and support systems for Flexible Learning Access to experts and experienced users of various structures and network Team Building Re-engineering learning processes and delivery methods
The Behavioural Agenda	Values Learning Reinforcement	Acting as Flexible Learning mentors and champions Facilitating learning across the organisation Modelling good practice

## 8 Future Directions

ANTA CEOs have now endorsed *Strategy 2002 – next steps to the learning society* which continues the work commenced in 1999 when CEOs endorsed the *Australian Flexible Learning Framework* to create and share knowledge about flexible learning and to support its take-up by training organisations across the public, private and community sectors. The Flexible Learning Leaders program has contributed significantly to the achievement of the aims of the Framework by developing a cohort of flexible learning champions and change agents who have proven themselves to be willing and able to create, access and share knowledge and information on flexible learning throughout the VET sector. They have also demonstrated their ability to support the organisational take-up of flexible learning to meet the changing requirements of their clients.

The challenge for the future is not only to broaden and deepen the national network of Flexible Learning Leaders but to also ensure its sustainability through approaches that (i) add value to the knowledge gained during past years of the program; (ii) promote the network of Leaders at all levels of the VET sector; (iii) encourage and facilitate use of the Leaders' skills, abilities and insights by the VET sector; and (iv) advance the establishment of links between the Flexible Learning Leaders program and other *Flexible Learning Framework* projects and most importantly, (v) develop stronger links between the program and the aims of the National Strategy for Vocational Education and Training and the initiatives arising from the strategy. There is a growing need for the program to encourage past and future Leaders to look beyond the *Australian Flexible Learning Framework* to the contribution they could make to the achievement of the goals of the National Training Framework.

### Management of Program Outcomes

The area of knowledge management has already been recognised by the Steering Committee and the Project Managers as a key focus of future rounds of the program. There will be a strong emphasis on sharing, storing, managing and promoting the knowledge, skills and insights developed over two years of the program. It is also recognised that this knowledge is constantly evolving as past Leaders continue to maintain and expand their professional networks and support the implementation of flexible delivery locally and nationally. 2002 Leaders will also be active contributors to the growing body of knowledge in flexible Learning.

Knowledge Management is a term that is closely aligned with *knowledge sharing, organisational learning, communities of learning, intellectual asset management and continuous learning*. Whatever term is adopted the processes associated with knowledge management are focused on sharing and learning. Much of this report has focused on the central role of learning in supporting the adoption of flexible learning in VET. Approaches to the management of the knowledge, skills and insights brought to the VET sector of Leaders should also focus on collaborative and continuous learning. Within this context there may be three approaches to Knowledge Management suitable for adoption in future Flexible Learning Leaders programs.

1. Recognition and promotion of the ‘knowledge assets’ of the program that include but are not limited to the following.
  - New skills in flexible learning
  - Networks of flexible learning ‘experts’
  - Information of processes, projects, organisational models etc.
  - Research and site visit findings
  - Insights, ideas and new concepts
  - Business opportunities and partnerships.
2. Building on the intellectual capital in the heads of the Flexible Learning Leaders – their individual experiences, their unique insights, their intuition and the trust and respect they have developed in the relationships they have formed within and outside their organisations, or in other words the tacit knowledge that cannot be written down and is extremely difficult to transfer. The effective and wide use of this knowledge relies on the Leaders themselves and on their organisations developing approaches to organisational learning that recognise and build on this tacit knowledge.
3. Developing learning communities of Flexible Learning Leaders - there are now opportunities to develop learning communities (virtual and real) that involve all Leaders – past, present and future. These communities are likely to be a diverse as the Leaders themselves. They may involve subsets of Leaders who meet for a specific purpose over a short time frame; they may be longer-term communities of Leaders committed to removing the significant remaining barriers to flexible learning; and, they may extend beyond the network of Leaders and include employers, industry groups and students. The identification of such communities should be the responsibility of the Leaders themselves but the Steering Committee and the National Project Managers have a responsibility to provide infrastructure and processes to support them over the life of the Flexible Learning Framework (to 2004).

#### RECOMMENDATION

**Knowledge Management approaches adopted by future Flexible Learning Leaders program should place a strong emphasis on sharing, storing, managing and promoting the knowledge, skills and insights developed over two years of the program.**

**Knowledge management approaches should focus on the development of learning communities (real and virtual) through which knowledge, skills, experiences and insights can be enhanced and applied in new and meaningful ways.**

## Links with other Projects

A feature of the 2001 program was the development of links with other projects. These occurred in two major ways. Firstly, the Project Managers used a range of methods and approaches, primarily the On-line Forum, to facilitate many of these links. Secondly, individual Leaders identified similarities between particular projects and their areas of interest and established links with them.

The majority of links were formed with other *Flexible Learning Framework* projects. Most notable among these included links with LearnScope and its work-based learning projects; Good Practice in Flexible Learning; Toolbox projects; and Flexible Learning Fellows. Other links were established with a range of research and product development projects conducted nationally or within States and Territories.

While these links added significant value to the program and should be maintained and strengthened in future rounds, it is also timely to extend links beyond the boundaries of the *Flexible Learning Framework* projects. Future programs should seek to develop links with a broad range of organisations and projects within the VET sector especially those that will link flexible learning more strongly with broader policy initiatives. Flexible Learning Leaders have much to contribute to the VET sector and should be actively encouraged to engage in broader policy debates and support a wide range of VET initiatives.

### RECOMMENDATION

**Future Flexible Learning Leaders programs should maintain and enhance links with projects and initiatives arising from the *Australian Flexible Learning Framework* as well as actively promote links with a broader range of organisations and initiatives throughout the VET Sector.**

## Fellows and Leaders

The Steering Committee has already made a commitment to combine the existing Flexible Learning Fellows program with the Flexible Learning Leaders program. In 2002, there will be three levels of funding available to participants that will take into account different professional development objectives and outcomes and the varying abilities of organisations to match the funding. This approach has the potential to enhance outcomes in several ways:

- Higher profile for the program
- Enhanced opportunities for collaborative learning between people from all levels of VET organisations
- Stronger links between outcomes at practitioner level and the strategic outcomes of organisations
- Consistency in change management approaches within organisations
- Opportunities for collaborative programs within organisations. For example there may be opportunities for an organisation-based 'Flexible

Learning Team' comprising a senior manger, a middle manager and a practitioner.

### **Future Evaluation Activities**

Evaluation projects were conducted for both previous rounds of the Flexible Learning Leaders programs (2000 and 2001). Both evaluation projects focused on the management and support of Leaders over a short time frame as they conducted activities that were highly focused on research, site visits and planning. The outcomes of the evaluations have contributed to refinements and improvements in the project.

The evaluation outcomes coupled with the continuous improvement approaches adopted by the Project Management Team allow future programs to proceed with confidence that the project procedures and processes will contribute to the achievement of the project's aims and the realisations of quality outcomes for individuals, organisations and the VET sector. There is no point in conducting further evaluations of the project processes implemented to support the frenetic period of activity that characterises the initial phase of the program.

Future evaluation activities should focus on the following:

- The maintenance and enhancement of a network of Leaders which, in 2002, will include almost 100 VET practitioners
- The medium and longer tem outcomes of the program for individuals, organisations and the VET sector
- The sustainability of the network of Leaders
- Knowledge management approaches that add value and promote outcomes from the program.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

**Future evaluation activities should be designed to examine the program over three years (2000 – 2002) and focus on the medium and longer-term outcomes and the issues surrounding sustainability and knowledge management.**

## 9. Conclusion

In summary, the 2001 Flexible Learning Leaders program can clearly be seen to have built on and extended the success of the previous round, thanks to the efficiency and supportiveness of the Project Team, the support of sponsoring organisations and the Steering Committee, and most of all to the enthusiasm and dedication of the Leaders themselves. It is clear that for most if not all of them, participation in the project has been an event of considerable significance personally as well as professionally. They have brought to it their personal energy, their professional expertise and a willingness to make the most of the opportunity granted to them. They are well aware of their privilege even while (in many cases) experiencing no little fatigue at the end of the project.

The VET system as a whole has gained, from the 2000 and 2001 programs, a group of over 50 individuals who are already developing a reputation as a source of information, contacts and wisdom about many aspects of flexible learning. This group has the potential to be influential in the future development of VET at the organisational, state/territory and national levels, bringing to bear its combined intellectual capital over a wide range of knowledge from the conceptual to the practical. Leaders from both rounds are in general generous and enthusiastic in making their learning available, and the sense of cohesion in the group will be of use in harnessing the energy of its members.

While, as has already been discussed, the outcomes will more realistically be judged in succeeding years, it is evident that organisations value the program. The process of participating in the evaluation has encouraged reflection on its value and impact, and this may be expected to maximise the deliberate incorporation of the Leaders' outcomes into the organisation.

The subject of Leadership and the understanding of Leadership has been discussed at some length in this report. It is the opinion of the evaluators that it would be valuable to build an extension of this discussion at an overt level into future rounds of the Flexible Learning Leaders program.

Another subject touched on briefly in this report is the opportunity for Leaders to extend the ambit of their influence beyond the sphere of the Flexible Learning Framework to the wider VET arena. It is important that flexible learning, and the Framework, be seen as a part of, and not separate from, the broader VET policies and directions. The Flexible Learning Leaders are in a position to contribute to the national debate at this broader level, and many of them are aware of this. It is vital that they play their part on the national stage in this context.

## List of Recommendations

1. National Induction Workshops should continue to be a major feature of the Flexible Learning Leaders program. Modifications should be in line with continuous improvement practices adopted by the National Project Managers and aim to further challenge and enthuse Leaders, to stimulate networking and collaboration, and to emphasise individual and organisational learning.
2. Despite somewhat patchy participation by 2001 Leaders in the Online Forum, it offers significant benefits to the program now and into the Future and should continue to be a major feature of the Flexible Learning Leaders program. It has a vast potential to build further on its current achievements to share information, generate debate, disseminate resources and contribute to a national network of Flexible Learning Leaders.
3. Forum mentoring and support by past Leaders should be included in future rounds of the Flexible Learning Leaders program. Mentors should be selected from both 2000 and 2001 Leaders to contribute to the development of an evolving and growing network of Flexible Learning Leaders.
4. Management and coordination approaches to the On-line Forum during 2001 have been highly effective and efficient and have provided a strong platform for further development and refinement by the Project Management Team. Future modifications should both heed the suggestions and recommendations listed in this report and be in line with continuous improvement practices adopted by the National Project Managers.
5. The role of the Forum in future rounds of the Flexible Learning Leaders program should be clearly articulated at the application stage of the project and reinforced at future Induction seminars. Expectations for participation should be clearly documented and provide a basis for ongoing negotiation regarding the operation of Forum.
6. The Sharing Day, which recognises individual and collaborative learning by Leaders, should continue to be a feature of future Flexible Learning Leaders programs. Modifications to the program should build on the success of the 2001 activity and continue to focus on continuous collaborative learning by the Leaders (past and present).
7. Future National Project Management and Support approaches should build on the principles adopted by Project Managers in 2000 and 2001 which value learning (individual and collective) and recognise that successful innovation and Leadership must be well planned, consultative and reflective.

8. Organisations should continue to be required to contribute financially to the program as an investment in organisational development and improvement.
9. Expectations of ongoing organisational participation in the project and support for individual Leaders should be made explicit at all stages of the project.
10. Future Flexible Learning Leaders programs should continue to recognise and build on diversity in Leadership and acknowledge a range of Leadership styles in a range of contexts at a range of levels within organisations.
11. Future Flexible Learning Leaders programs should recognise and promote a broad, encompassing definition of Leadership that focuses on continuous learning by both individuals and organisations.
12. Knowledge Management approaches adopted by future Flexible Learning Leaders program should place a strong emphasis on sharing, storing, managing and promoting the knowledge, skills and insights developed over two years of the program.
13. Knowledge management approaches should focus on the development of learning communities (real and virtual) through which knowledge, skills, experiences and insights can be enhanced and applied in new and meaningful ways.
14. Future Flexible Learning Leaders programs should maintain and enhance links with projects and initiatives arising from the *Australian Flexible Learning Framework* as well as actively promote links with a broader range of organisations and initiatives throughout the VET Sector.
15. Future evaluation activities should be designed to examine the program over three years (2000 – 2002) and focus on the medium and longer-term outcomes and the issues surrounding sustainability and knowledge management.

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## Appendix 1: Interview Proformas

### FLEXIBLE LEARNING LEADERS – RECORD OF INTERVIEW(1)

Name of Interviewee	
Date of Interview	
Purpose of Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make contact with Leaders following Induction Workshop and provide, if necessary, further information on the evaluation program.</li> <li>• Gather participant comments on National Induction Workshop.</li> <li>• Gather initial participant views on emerging issues.</li> </ul>
Starter Questions and Interview Notes	
National Induction Workshop	
<p>(What were your expectations of the National Induction Workshop? Were they met? Timing of the program? What were the outcomes of the program for you? Have you communicated with the Project Manager or other fellows since the Induction? How? What was most useful to you personally? What was least useful? How might you improve the program for future rounds of program? )</p>	
Emerging Issues	
<p>(At this early stage of the program, are there issues you would like to raise which have impacted on the program or, in your view, might impact on the program?)</p>	
Post Interview Notes – Evaluator’s Reflections	

FLEXIBLE LEARNING LEADERS 2001– RECORD OF INTERVIEW (2)

Name of Interviewee	
Date of Interview	
Purpose of Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To identify and examine emerging issues.</li> <li>- To gather further information on the use of and value of the Discussion Forum.</li> <li>- To identify the usefulness of networks and project links.</li> <li>- To identify learning outcomes.</li> <li>- To provide an opportunity for Leaders to raise other issues of relevance to their program?</li> </ul>
Starter Questions and Interview Notes	
<p style="text-align: center;">Emerging Issues</p> <p>(How is the program going? What successes / high points have you experienced? What difficulties have you experienced? Are there any issues you would like to raise that are impacting on the program (positively or negatively? Have your expectations of the program changed? If so, How?)</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Discussion Forum</p> <p>(What are your current views of the forum? Are you currently using it? Why / Why not? How has your usage changed? Why?</p> <p>To what extent is the forum contributing to the development of a learning community, or to the success of the project in general?</p> <p>What was your Level of experience with Web CT before getting into the Forum?)</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Organisational Support</p> <p>(In what ways has your organisation supported you and the program? In what way has your organisation not supported you and the program?</p> <p>How have you interacted with your sponsor? What has your sponsor contributed to the program?</p> <p>Have you experienced negative responses within your organisation? If so, how have you handled this? Have you any advice on how this might be handled across the project?)</p>	

Sharing and Dissemination

(Have you done anything outside your own organisations in the way of sharing and disseminating?)

Networks and Linkages

(What have been your most useful networks to date? Have you developed linkages/networks with other Framework Projects? If so, what projects? Have these links been useful?

What links have you developed with Past Leaders? Past Fellows? Have you developed formal and informal partnering arrangements?

Are you working with industry or industry groups? What is the nature of your relationships with industry?

Special questions for Leaders who have an Flexible Learning Fellows or Leaders in the same Institution. What has been the impact on you, your project outcomes and on the Fellowship outcomes?)

Outcomes

(What are the most important things you have learnt through the program to date? What skills / knowledge have you developed? How will these new skills / knowledge help you in your future work? How will they help your organisation? What will they contribute to the whole VET sector?

How would you assess the balance between Professional Development outcomes and tangible outcomes?)

Future Directions

(What case would you make to ANTA about why the Leaders program should be continued OR not? In what ways can VET best get a return form the program?

Other Issues

(Are there other issues you would like to raise?)

Post Interview Notes – Evaluator's Reflections

FLEXIBLE LEARNING LEADERS 2001 – RECORD OF INTERVIEW WITH FLL SPONSORS/ORGANISATIONS

Name of Interviewee	
Date of Interview	
Purpose of Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Make contact with sponsors to ascertain organisational views of FLL Program.</li> <li>- Seek information on organisational benefits / challenges.</li> <li>- Seek views on future directions of FLL outcomes for the organisation.</li> </ul>
Starter Questions and Interview Notes	
Organisational Views	
<p>(What were the organisational expectations of the FLL Program? Were they met? What were the outcomes of the program for the organisation? What has been most useful to the organisation? What was least useful? How might you improve future rounds of program? )</p>	
Post Interview Notes – Evaluator’s Reflections	

## Appendix 2: Survey Instruments

### FLEXIBLE LEARNING LEADERS (FLL) PROJECT 2001

#### PARTICIPANT SURVEY

*The purpose of this final survey of FLL participants is threefold.*

1. *To collect data at the end of the program to validate information gathered during the project.*
2. *To provide a final opportunity for participants to reflect on and report on their experiences of the program.*
3. *To provide an additional avenue for participants to give feedback on the program and its future directions.*

#### Section A Major Events of the 2001 FLL Program

Please rate the contribution of each of the program's major events to the success of your FLL program.

##### Induction Program

Limited Contribution			Moderate Contribution Significant Contribution			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

##### On-line Forum

Limited Contribution			Moderate Contribution Significant Contribution			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

##### Mentoring by 2000 Leaders

Limited Contribution			Moderate Contribution Significant Contribution			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

##### Networking 2001 Presentations

Limited Contribution			Moderate Contribution Significant Contribution			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

##### Sharing Day

Limited Contribution			Moderate Contribution Significant Contribution			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

##### Additional Comments on Major Events

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## Section B Impacts of the Program

Please rate how the program has influenced the following:

**Development of new skills and understandings in Flexible Learning for yourself**

No Influence			Moderate Influence			
			High Influence			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Development of new skills and understandings in Flexible Learning for your organisation**

No Influence			Moderate Influence			
			High Influence			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Development and maintenance of new professional networks**

No Influence			Moderate Influence			
			High Influence			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Your ability to undertake a Leadership role within your organisation**

No Influence			Moderate Influence			
			High Influence			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Your ability to undertake a Leadership role within the VET sector as a whole**

No Influence			Moderate Influence			
			High Influence			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Your ability to engage with and influence policy frameworks within your organisation**

No Influence			Moderate Influence			
			High Influence			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Your ability to engage with and influence national policy frameworks**

No Influence			Moderate Influence			
			High Influence			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Additional Comments**

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## Section C    Functionality of the On-line Forum

The Project Team will need to make decisions about the platform for the on-line forum for next year. Please tell us how you have experienced the forum this year.

### Overall ease of use

User unfriendly			Moderately user friendly			
			User friendly			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

### Posting messages

User unfriendly			Moderately user friendly			
			User friendly			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

### Reading messages

User unfriendly			Moderately user friendly			
			User friendly			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

### Threading and sorting messages

User unfriendly			Moderately user friendly			
			User friendly			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

### Logging on and moving about in the forum

User unfriendly			Moderately user friendly			
			User friendly			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Please suggest any features, characteristics or specifications that would make the forum platform work better for you.

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Is there a specific platform you would recommend for adoption in future rounds of the program?

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**Section D Program Outcomes and Future Program Directions**

What has been the major outcome of the program for you as a VET practitioner?

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What has been the major outcome for your organisation?

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How might future FLL programs be improved?

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Additional comments

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## FLEXIBLE LEARNING LEADERS (FLL) PROJECT 2001

### SPONSOR SURVEY

The purpose of this survey of sponsors of the FLL program is threefold.

4. To gather information on the levels of organisational support provided to participants of the program.
5. To collect data at the end of the program on the impacts of the program on VET organisations.
6. To provide an opportunity for sponsoring organisations to give feedback on the FLL program and its future directions.

### Section A Organisational Support

Please rate the scope of support provided to your Flexible Learning Leader by your organisation.

No Support		Moderate Support			High Levels of Support	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Please rate the quality of support provided to your Flexible Learning Leader by your organisation.

Poor		Moderate			Good	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Additional Comments on Organisational Support

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### Section B Impacts of the Program on Your Organisation

Please rate how the program has contributed to your organisation.

The program has contributed to the development of new skills and understandings in Flexible Learning within the organisation.

No Contribution		Moderate Contribution			Significant Contribution	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The program has contributed to strategic and organisational planning in Flexible Learning.

No Contribution		Moderate Contribution			Significant Contribution	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The program has contributed to innovation within the organisation.

No Contribution		Moderate Contribution			Significant Contribution	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The organisation has developed a clearly defined role for the Flexible Learning Leader after the completion of his/her program.

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Role Not Defined		Role evolving			Role defined	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The organisation is keen to participate in future programs and/or opportunities arising from the FLL program.

No		Under Consideration			Yes	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Additional Comments

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### **Section C Program Outcomes and Future Program Directions**

What has been the major outcome for your organisation?

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How might future FLL programs be improved?

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Additional comments

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