

Small VET providers: the quiet achievers



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Presenters



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Why study small providers?

Training organisations and students by type, 2014

Type	Providers	Students	Median
TAFE institutes	57	1 115 865	16 661
Private training providers	2 557	2 095 171	204
Higher education (public)	37	1 263 653	31 395
Higher education (private and other)	103	109 561	373

Why study small providers?

Ratio of the working age population (15-64 years) to VET providers

Region	Year	Population	Providers	Ratio
Australia	2014	15 611 000	4 989	3 129
Canada (Ontario)	2015	9 387 900	597	15 725
Germany	2012–13	53 259 812	9 426	5 650
New Zealand	2009	2 853 120	759	3 759
South Korea	2015	35 998 522	8 401	4 285
United Kingdom	2015	41 591 111	3 418	12 168

Who are small providers?

We looked at **non-school**
registered training
organisations (**RTOs**) that
had **fewer than**

100 students

and were **stable*** small
providers.

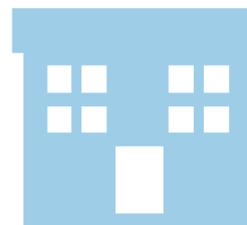


Small provider
<100 students

OTHER STABLE PROVIDERS

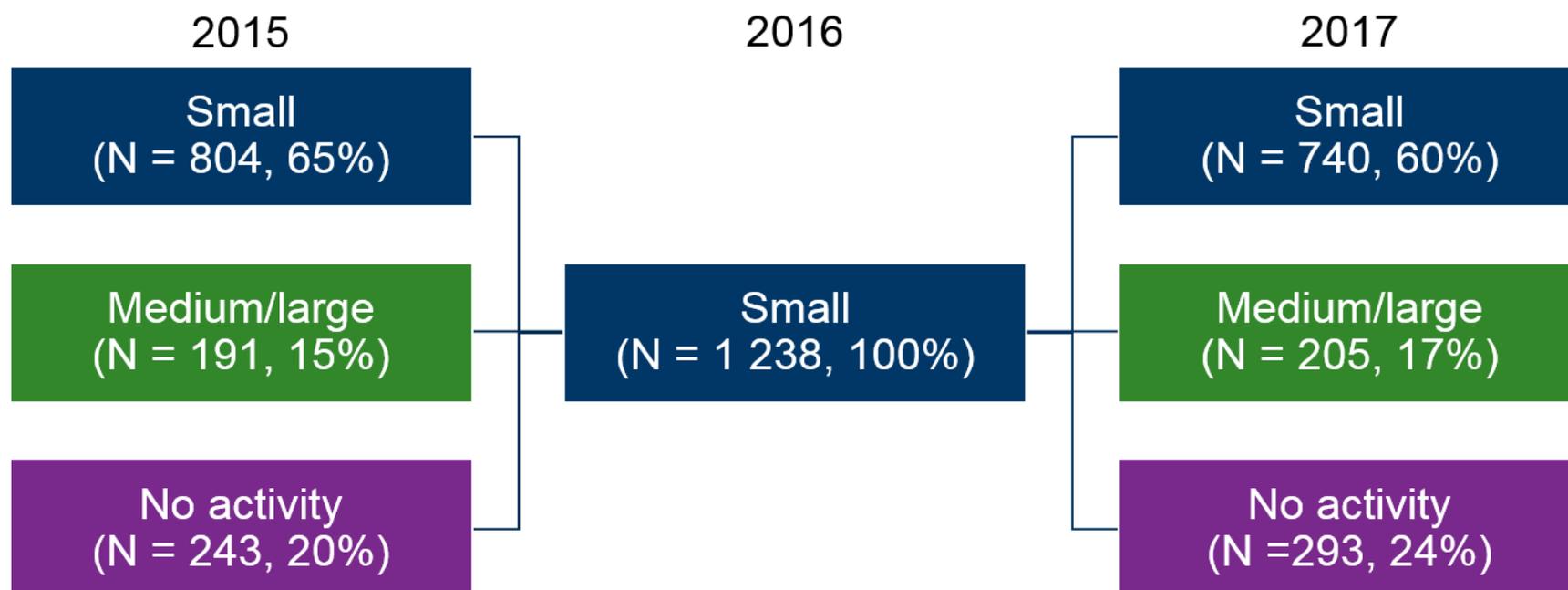


Medium provider
100-999 students

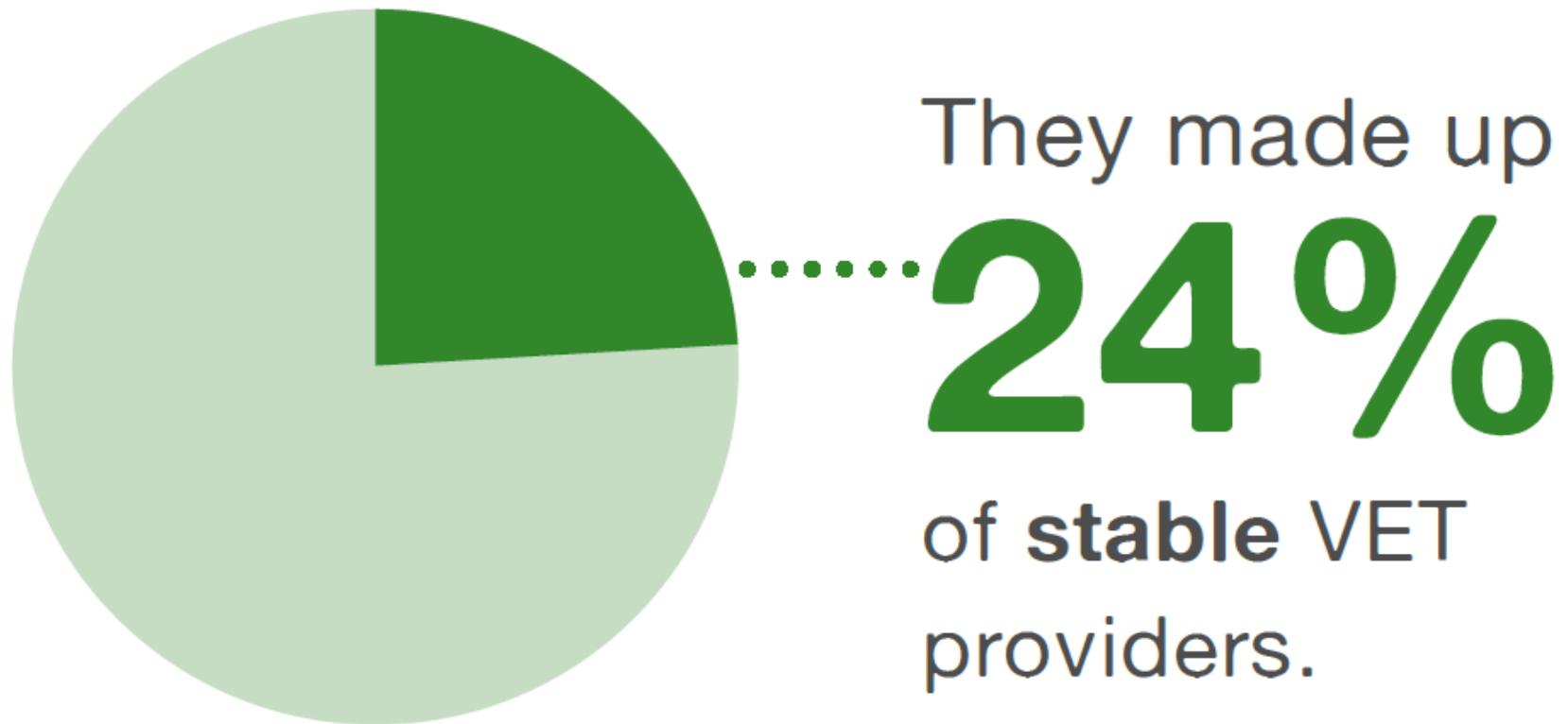


Large provider
1000+ students

Providers in transition



Almost a quarter of providers

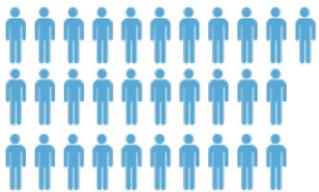


What do small providers look like?

They had a **median** number of

31

students each.



They had more enrolments in **higher-level** qualifications than other stable providers.



33%

of their program enrolments were at the **diploma level or higher**.

While they offer courses found at other stable providers, they also offer many **niche** courses:



Dancing



Acting



Theology



Religious ministry



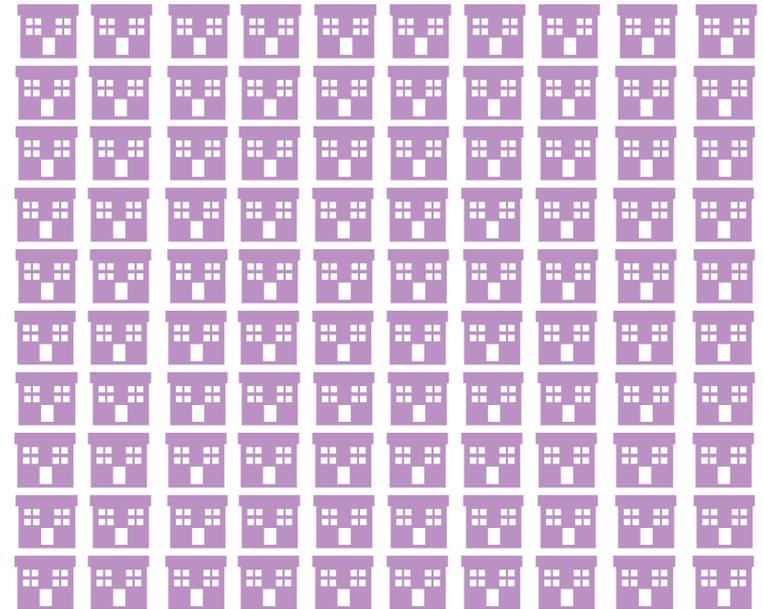
Yoga

What are small providers doing for diversity?

5 or 10 large providers?

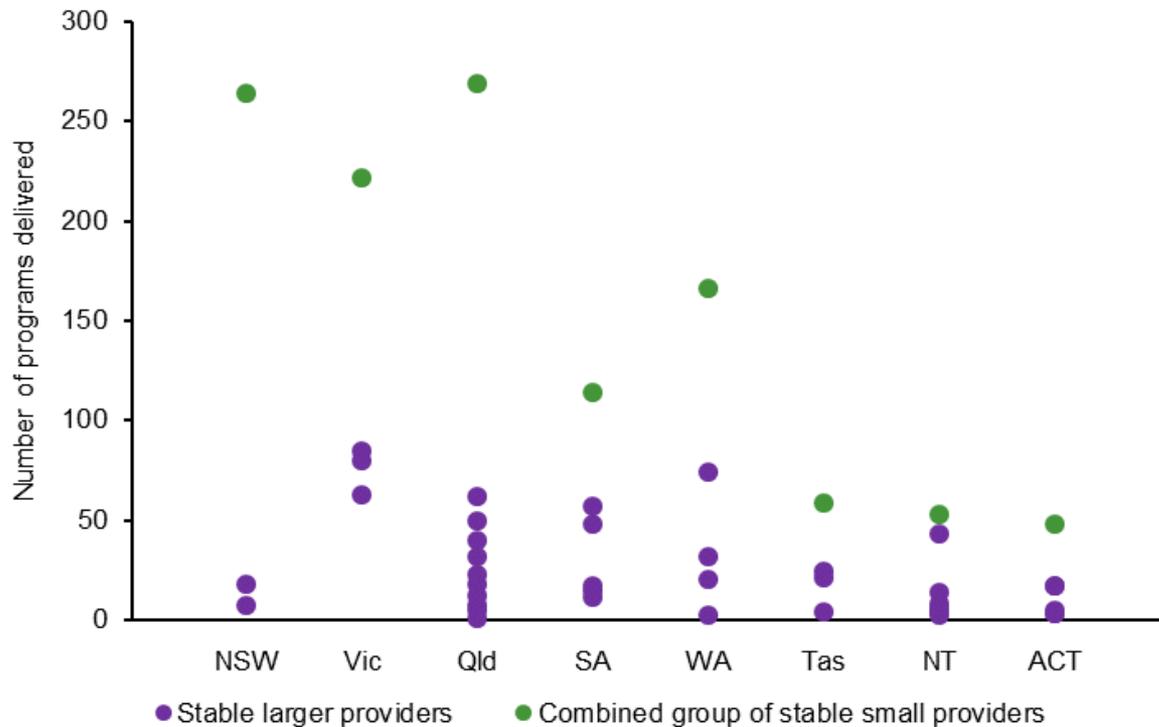


100 or 200 small providers?



What are small providers doing for diversity?

Combined scope of delivery of stable small providers compared with single stable large providers of a similar size by state/territory, 2017



What are small providers doing for diversity?

Students by student characteristic, 2017 (%)

Student characteristic	Small providers	Medium providers	Large providers
Disability status			
With a disability	7	6	4
Without a disability	79	83	79
Not known	14	11	17
Indigenous status			
Indigenous	6	4	4
Non-Indigenous	83	85	83
Not known	11	10	13

Who is funding students at small providers?

Students by funding source, 2017 (%)

Funding source	Small providers	Medium providers	Large providers
Government funding	30	44	51
Fee-for-service (domestic)	62	45	46
Fee-for-service (international)	8	13	5

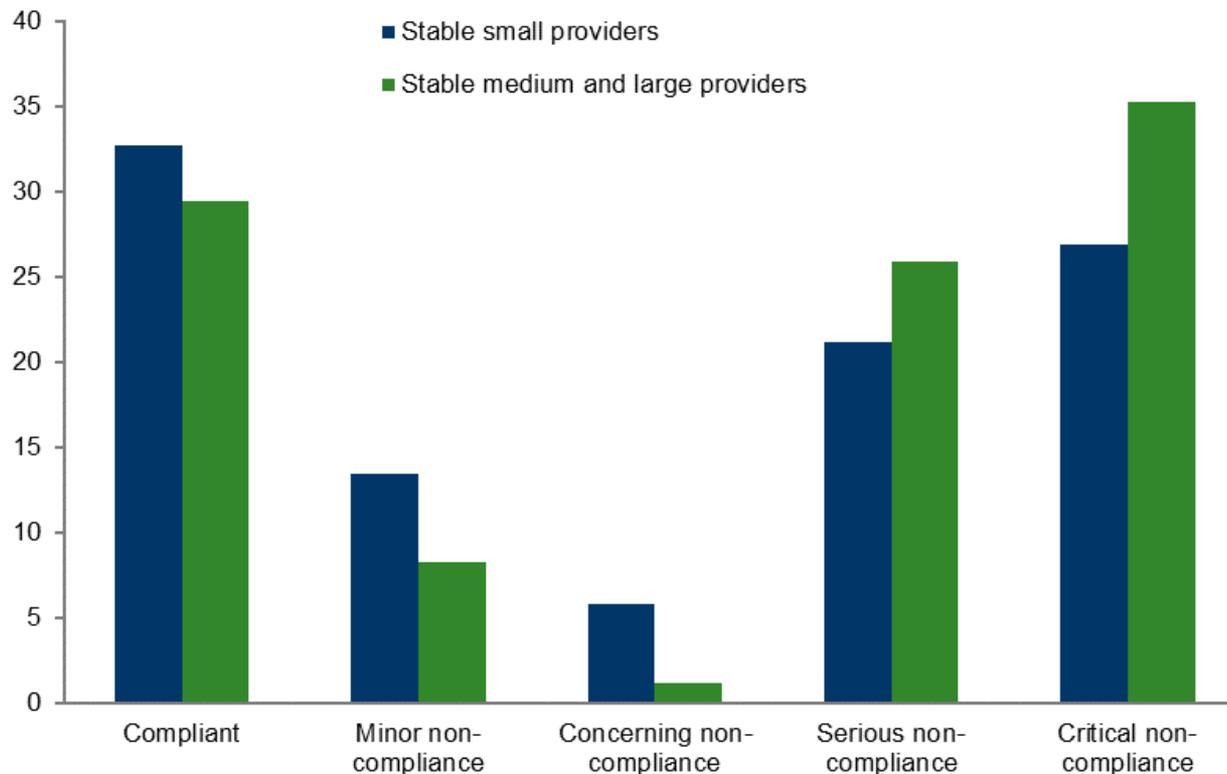
Note: Percentages do not sum to 100% because students can undertake training supported by multiple funding sources.
 Source: Korbil, P & Osborne, K 2019, *The role and function of small VET providers*, NCVER, Adelaide.

How do small providers deal with regulation?

- Small providers were audited by their regulator (ASQA) slightly less often and were slightly more compliant when selected for audit than stable larger providers.
- This suggests that stable small providers are not riskier educational choices than larger providers

How do small providers deal with regulation?

Audit results for compliance monitoring or post-initial audits by provider size category, 2016-17 (%)



How do small providers deal with regulation?

- Findings did show small providers had more difficulties adding new programs or subjects to their scope compared with medium and large providers
- This appears to be the main regulatory challenge for stable small providers

How do small providers deal with regulation?

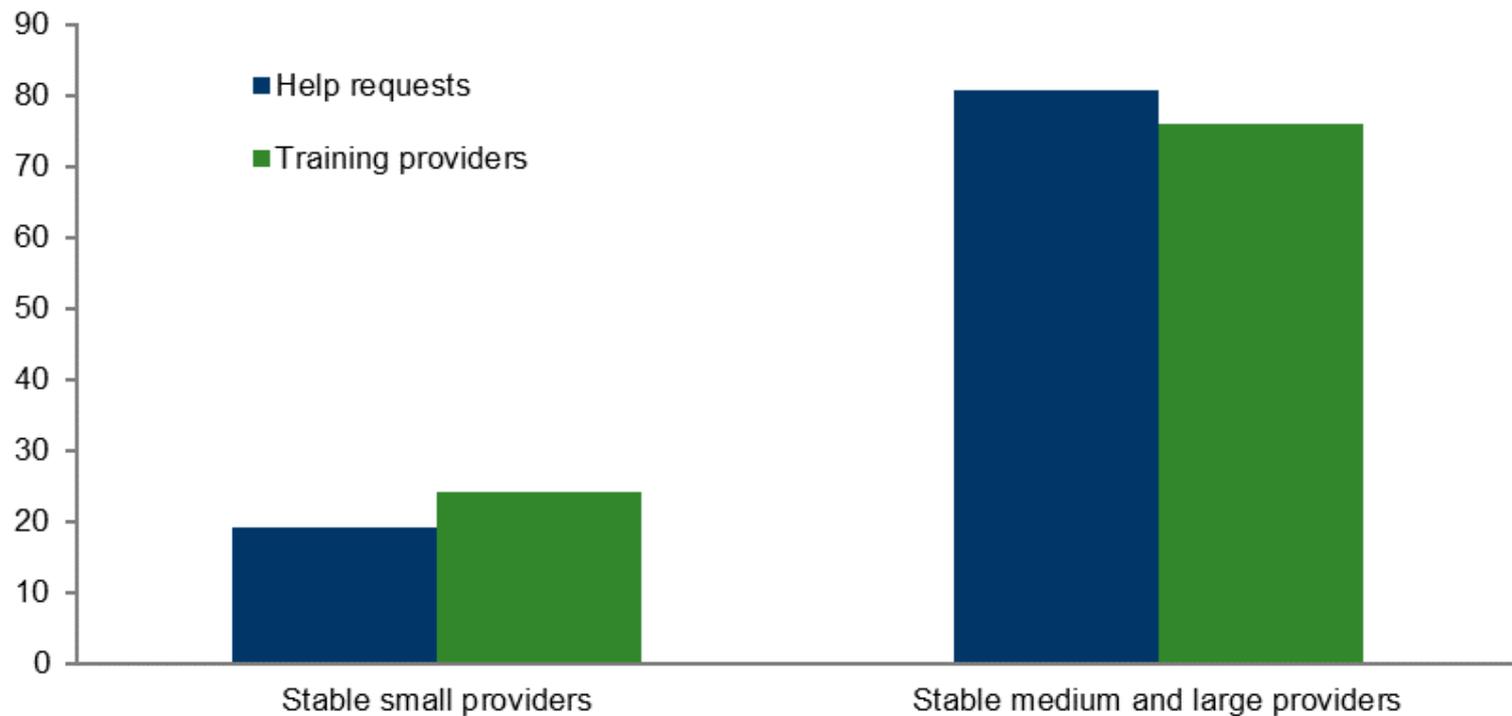
- There's no evidence small providers are more risky or have more trouble adhering to regulation than other sized providers

How do small providers deal with regulation?

- Part of regulation is that providers have to report data to NCVER
- We looked at the number of calls and emails to the NCVER reporting help desk

How do small providers deal with regulation?

Help requests and training providers by size, 2017 (%)



How do small providers deal with regulation?

- Small providers actually made less ‘calls’ than providers of other sizes!
- Now, not every issue a provider encounters will prompt contact with NCVER through the help request system
- This does suggest overall that small providers don’t find it more difficult than medium and large providers to meet their data reporting requirements

Conclusion

- In many ways, our research has shown that stable small providers are similar to medium and large stable providers.
- Nevertheless, stable small providers are distinctive and unique in other ways, which may partly explain their role and function in the VET system.

Conclusion

- As a group, stable small providers deliver a wider range of courses than single stable large providers of comparable size, indicating they contribute to the diversity of student choice within the system.
- Many of these stable small providers deliver qualifications not offered by medium and large stable providers (or by very few of them).
- Some stable small providers were specialised providers that had clearly focused on providing training to students with a disability and Indigenous students.

Conclusion

- These are the special contributions that small providers are making to the VET system, representing roles and functions that set them apart from other providers and defining their ongoing place in the VET system.

Conclusion

- Smaller providers have an almost paradoxical place in the VET system.
- On one hand, because there are so many of them and they make up a large percentage of the providers in the system, they represent a large part of the diversity of the expansive Australian VET system and thus cannot be ignored.
- On the other hand, stable small providers had less than 1% of students in 2017; it is the large providers with which most students will have contact in their experience of VET.

Upcoming Events



28th National VET Research Conference
10-12 JULY 2019
NO FRILLS
Adelaide
The student journey: skilling for life

The student journey:
skilling for life

 NCVER   Government of
South Australia