

# Skills for a Green Economy: Practice, Possibilities and Prospects

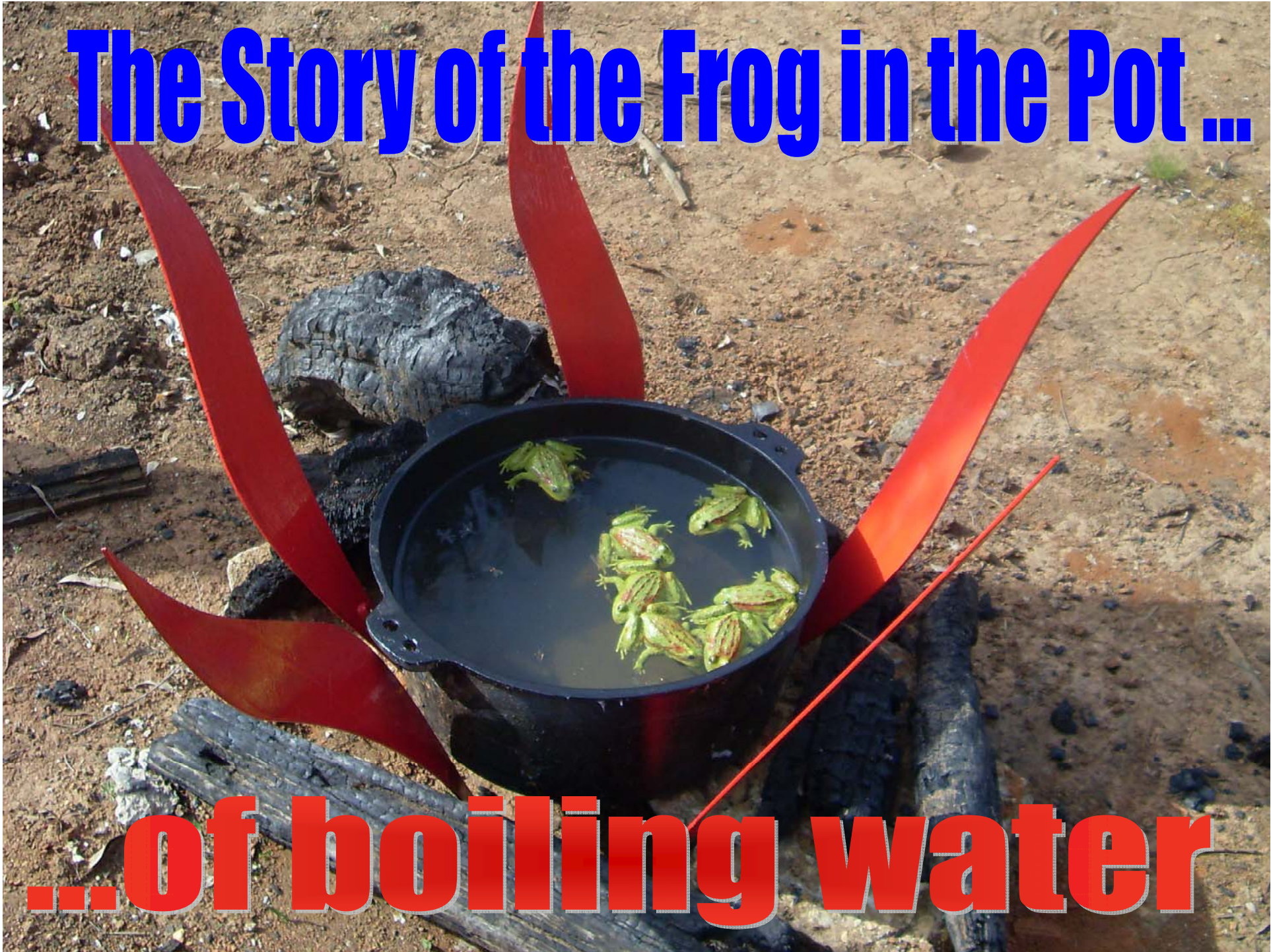
John Fien and Jose Roberto Guevara  
RMIT University, Australia

Third International Congress on  
Technical and Vocational Education and Training

13-16 May 2012, Shanghai, China

**The Story of the Frog in the Pot ...**

**...of boiling water**



A photograph showing several green frogs with reddish-brown stripes on their backs, clustered together in a dark, shallow container. The frogs are looking in various directions, some towards the camera. The background is dark and indistinct.

**The frogs need to save themselves...**

**... and find a way to 'learn their way out'**



bunk...  
bunk...  
bunk...

It's a  
FROGGING!  
DISGRACE!

No frogs  
No  
Ecosys!

Save  
Our  
Swamps

if we croak...  
YOU'LL ALL  
CROAK!  
☠️

Frogs  
4 the  
future

From Jill Sanguinetti, Marysville, Victoria, Australia



**for us... there is no 'out' from our Earthly Pot.**

# What is the Green Economy?

UNEP defines a green economy as one that results in ***improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities.*** In its simplest expression, a green economy can be thought of as one which is low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive.

(UNEP 2011, p. 1; italics in original)

## Four key points can be made about the transition to a green economy

1. Government funded work may not be where most green jobs will be.
2. **Many green jobs will be highly skilled and will be found in cities** in such areas as construction, energy and water utilities, transport and manufacturing, as well as the countryside.
3. Whether in cities or the countryside, **many of these jobs are in less-well regulated sectors** and thus have poor health and safety records and industrial conditions. A green economy must address these issues to provide what the ILO calls “clean and decent work”.
4. The **gender equity dimension** to jobs in a green economy that needs to be acknowledged and addressed

## The International Labour Foundation for Sustainable Development (Sustainlabour) argues that the Green Economy should:

1. **Aim to satisfy human needs:** providing universal access to water, food, health, housing, education, transport, culture;
2. **Be based on justice:** be capable of distributing the costs and benefits fairly, between and within countries;
3. **Be inclusive:** young people, women...everyone must be part of it!
4. **Be a real economy:** do away with the speculative economy and the economic, financial and real estate bubbles;
5. **Be based on the four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda:** full employment, guarantee labour and trade union rights, social protection, dialogue and participation. (Sustainlabour 2011)



# Green skills for green jobs

- **Existing jobs** will all require additional skill sets related to ethics and sustainability.
- **New jobs in existing industries** which derive from the climate change adaptation initiatives - new mix of technical skills plus ethics, as might be found in mining or construction industries;
- **New and expanded industries** using existing technical skills plus ethical understanding and new technical skills, such as might be found in renewable energy sources; and
- **New and expanded industries using new occupations** (technical skills plus ethics and sustainability, yet to be developed).

(Wilson 2009, p. 2)

# Australia targets green skills development, not the creation of green jobs

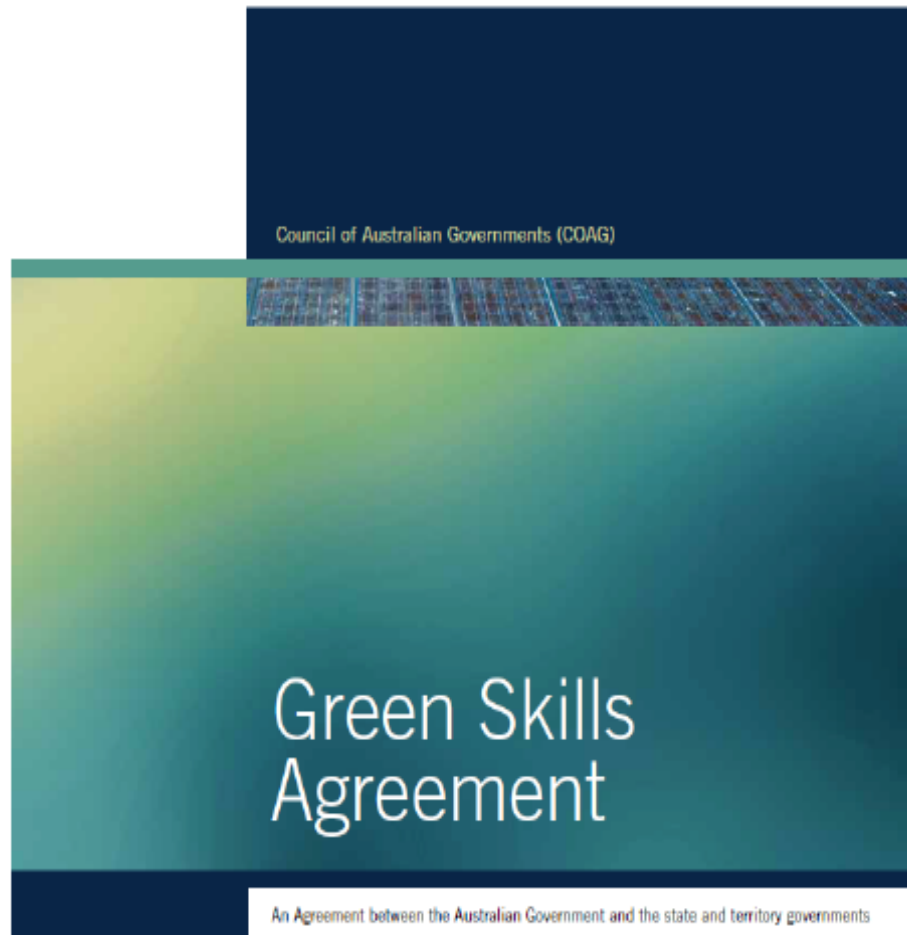
- Australia has not adopted a definition of a green job, nor does it deliver programs subsidising green job creation.
- Instead, the Australian Government has focussed on the concept of **skills for sustainability**, based on the premise that workers in all industries will need to develop green skills to support the transition to a low carbon, resource efficient economy.

## *Skills for Sustainability*

‘the technical skills, knowledge, values and attitudes needed in the workforce to develop and support sustainable social, economic and environmental outcomes in business, industry and the community.’

- From the *Green Skills Agreement*

# Green Skills Agreement - Objectives



- Endorsed by Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in December 2009.
- The Agreement has four objectives:
  - Develop standards in skills for sustainability within the national regulatory framework
  - Upskill the VET workforce to deliver sustainability training
  - Review and revise national Training Packages to incorporate sustainability concepts and practices
  - Develop transition strategies for vulnerable workers

# Lessons from the *Green Skills Agreement*

- Green skills apply to all jobs, not just jobs in the environment sector
  - Includes the **technical skills** to deliver sustainable products and services.
  - Also includes the **non-technical skills** to communicate, negotiate and advocate for sustainable business practices and implement organisational change.
- A collaborative approach works best
  - The Australian Government works closely with the state and territory governments, which are responsible for training delivery, and a range of industry stakeholders to implement sustainable skills.
- Teachers and practitioners are the key change agents
  - The key to transmitting sustainable skills and knowledge to students is upskilling practitioners and teachers.



Asia South Pacific Association  
for Basic and Adult Education  
Learning Beyond Boundaries

# Philippines Case Study

- **Increasing demand** for individuals with technical and vocational skills has resulted in the **TVET pathway being promoted aggressively.**
- Young people were encouraged to consider **TVET as a pathway to greater job opportunities and higher incomes.**
- However, despite the massive political promotion, in practice, **secondary schools continued to provide poor-quality TVET.**
- The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) **offers quality training** but limited number of centres, make **these programs inaccessible.**
- **Prerequisite that TESDA students be high school graduates make programs even more inaccessible.**
  - 51 percent of Filipinos are, at most, elementary graduates
  - Almost 30 percent of school-age secondary students drop out



Asia South Pacific Association  
for Basic and Adult Education  
Learning Beyond Boundaries

# Philippines Case Study

- Community-based TVET training programmes conducted by NGOs for marginalised individuals tended to be more **innovative and effective as a poverty alleviation strategy**.
- **Out-of-school youths, poor women and men**, are able to participate because the high school diploma requirement is usually waived.
- NGO training programs tend to **integrate other elements**, such as microfinance support programs that may be linked with institutions both locally and overseas.
- However, the disadvantage is that these **more accessible and integrated programs** are **often dependent on funds from overseas aid agencies**, which impacts on their long-term sustainability.



Asia South Pacific Association  
for Basic and Adult Education  
Learning Beyond Boundaries

# Philippines Case Study

1. If TVET is to truly contribute to poverty alleviation in the Philippines **it cannot be seen as a short-term solution to unemployment**, but should be grounded in the country's sustainable development framework.
2. TVET **must adapt to the rapidly changing demands of the labour market** without focusing solely on the global need for service sector labourers.
3. It must be **viewed from a lifelong learning perspective**, not just to develop skills to improving income, but skills to improve lives.
4. Resources should be allocated to TVET and Life Skills programs to **ensure that they are available and accessible** to the poorest of the poor and the marginalized youth.
5. Ensure that TVET is **not promoted at the expense of basic education, or to promote unbridled privatization of education** provision.

# Skills for a Green Economy: Practice, Possibilities and Prospects

John Fien

[john.fien@rmit.edu.au](mailto:john.fien@rmit.edu.au)

Jose Roberto Guevara

[robbie.aspbae@gmail.com](mailto:robbie.aspbae@gmail.com)

Thank you