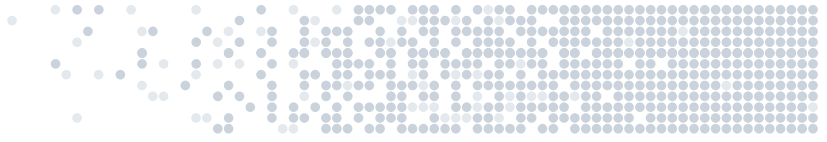


## MINUTES– ASQA Meeting with Adult Learning Australia

7	June	2016	Meeting No	16 - 2
Venue	ASQA Sydney Office Level 10, 255 Elizabeth Street, Sydney		10.00 – 11.30 am	

	AGENDA ITEM
1.	<p><b><u>Welcome and Introductions</u></b></p> <p>Chris Robinson, Chief Commissioner, ASQA welcomed the following ALA representatives to the meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stephen Dunn – Chief Executive Officer, Adult Learning Australia</li><li>• Michelle Simpson - Executive Officer, Tamworth Community College NSW</li><li>• George Papallo - Macquarie Community College NSW</li><li>• Frank Krasovec - Training and Administration Manager, Jesuit Community College, Collingwood VIC (via teleconference)</li><li>• Merv Gardiner – MS &amp; GA Gardner, Caboolture QLD (via teleconference)</li></ul> <p>Secretariat: Julie Northridge, Executive Officer to the Chief Commissioner</p>
2.	<p><b><u>ASQA Update</u></b></p> <p>Commissioner Robinson provided an update on the following areas:</p> <p><b><u>Regulatory Update</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ASQA regulates all RTOs other than the RTOs that deliver only in Victoria and/or Western Australia.</li><li>• Victorian Community Colleges are largely regulated by ASQA.</li><li>• Since the last ALA meeting there has been no further progress on the referral of regulatory powers from Victoria to ASQA.</li><li>• Since 2011 ASQA has taken a decision to refuse/suspend/cancel the registration of around 10% of RTOs.</li><li>• The ASQA investigations team has been strengthened.</li><li>• The recent budget allocation to ASQA included a planned reduction of \$1.9M, based on an increased allocation the previous year. In prior years ASQA received additional resources that enabled it to implement a risk based approach to regulation, to develop a new IT system and to conduct RTO workshops around Australia about the new Standards were implemented. Media reporting about the recent budget allocation was not accurate.</li></ul> <p><b><u>VET FEE-HELP (VFH) Audits</u></b></p> <p>Early in 2015 ASQA commenced its scrutiny of VFH providers. As a result four providers were de-registered and sanctions applied to ten other providers. Joint activity was taken with the ACCC and some issues arising from that scrutiny are currently before the courts.</p> <p>The 2016 schedule of audits of another group of VFH providers is about to commence.</p> <p><b><u>National strategic review - short course durations</u></b></p> <p>In 2016 ASQA will also continue its scrutiny of short courses through the conduct of a national strategic review. RTO websites have been surveyed as part of this activity.</p> <p>ASQA has also been advocating for the inclusion of new parameters in training package courses, including the specification of the minimum number of hours required by new learners to complete each course/unit.</p> <p><b><u>Strengthening Regulation</u></b></p> <p>ASQA is strengthening its regulatory model through the following changes to its processes.</p> <p><b>a) Reconsideration process</b></p> <p>ASQA will identify RTOs of concern who will not be provided an opportunity to seek a reconsideration of ASQA</p>



decisions.

**b) Earlier publication of regulatory decisions**

From 1 July 2016 ASQA will publish its regulatory decisions on its website at the time decisions are taken. Adverse decisions following renewal of registration audits and compliance audits will be published.

**c) Removal of rectification periods**

From 1 July 2016 the ASQA processes for issuing 'notices of intent' and 'notices of non-compliance' will be aligned to provide one period for the rectification of non-compliance. This means that ASQA will issue providers with 'notices of intent' at the same time as notices of non-compliance.

**Update on next stage of delegations**

ASQA has implemented a staged process for inviting RTOs to become delegates for the purpose of managing changes to scope. A new round of invitations to become an ASQA delegate has been sent to RTOs. Some RTOs may require an audit of their training and assessment as part of the delegation process.

The delegate must have a system that places the provider in the position of the regulator when evaluating applications for additions/deletions to scope. ASQA must be notified of the decisions taken under delegation.

Michelle Simpson indicated that Tamworth Community holds delegation from ASQA and has found it useful.

**Sharing information with the jurisdictions**

ASQA has formalised its engagement with jurisdictions to facilitate the early exchange of information in order to identify RTOs of concern. The mutual exchange of information will assist ASQA to identify more rapidly the risks associated with individual RTOs as well as to identify systemic risks across the sector.

**3. ALA Items for Discussion**

The following questions were submitted as agenda items.

1. Question: *ASQA has proposed a targeted audit process for VET Fee Help providers. How does that differ from compliance audits undertaken for providers in general?* (Stephen Dunn)

Answer: The Department of Education is the regulator responsible for the VFH program and it is developing processes to monitor compliance with the VFH requirements.

ASQA audits VFH providers for compliance with the NVR Act. In some cases involving serious issues, ASQA will conduct investigations of VFH providers, with a deeper scrutiny of all the relevant issues.

2. Question: *What will be the main focus of the new Commissioner for Regulatory Operations? How will that impact on providers?*

Answer: Commissioner Mark Paterson has commenced his role and taken over from Dr Dianne Orr. He will lead the regulatory operations teams and continue to implement ASQA's regulatory approach. Commissioner Paterson has a strong background relevant to his new role, including being a former member of the ANTA Board.

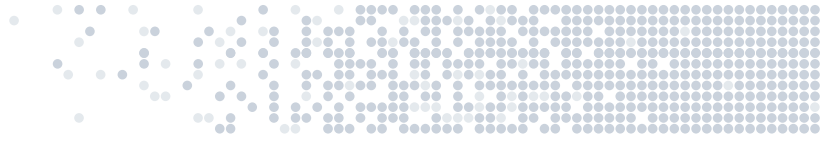
3. Question: *ASQA recommendation to COAG on the upgrade to the TAE. Can you provide an update on the progress?* (Frank Krasovec)

Answer: ASQA has been advocating the need for good quality provision of TAE qualifications and for a smaller core of quality providers in the TAE market. ASQA continues to be concerned about a number of issues, including short duration TAE courses and providers that only deliver TAE to their own staff.

ASQA's submission to the Industry Skills Council advocated for a strengthening of the assessment component of the TAE courses.

Frank Krasovec indicated that he participated in the IBSA review and reported that there was support for strengthening assessment throughout the review process.

The Industry Skills Council is still considering possible requirements for the existing TAE workforce.



4. *Request a review of the Increase in cost of re-accreditation for courses delivered in the not for profit and community education sector. eg Volunteer Community Adult Literacy Tutoring 2006 \$300, 2011 \$600, 2016 \$8900 (Merv Gardiner)*

Answer: State and territory governments previously subsidised their course accreditation fees. The Department of Education and Training is currently reviewing the *Standards for VET Accredited Courses*. VET accredited courses must not duplicate the content/outcomes of training package courses.

5. *Question: What are the risks identified by ASQA with Australian RTOs delivering VET internationally e.g. China.*

Answer: Most offshore delivery is undertaken by large public providers. ASQA's focus is on how RTOs are meeting the standards, wherever the delivery is taking place – including with the use of third party providers.

The Chief Commissioner provided an overview of ASQA audits conducted in China in 2015 and the growth of vocational training in China in recent years.

In relation to international students studying in Australia, there is a risk that students are here for the purpose of building a case for their future immigration, not primarily for study purposes. Some providers have targeted this market using brokers, many using nefarious practices to attract students.

ASQA has cancelled the registration of a number of CRICOS providers in Victoria and a joint operation was conducted in 2015 with the AFP.

6. *Question: Can ASQA please provide details of future targeted strategic audits? (Stephen Dunn)*  
This question was addressed under Item 2 – ASQA Update.

4. **Access to ASQA Information Services**

ALA members were reminded that there is a wide range of useful information available from ASQA website, particularly the publications, the FAQ's and the Users Guide to the Standards.

The ASQA Infoline 1300 701 801 is also an important point of contact for providers seeking information.

**Next Meeting: Date to be advised.**

[Previously agreed dates are being revised following resignation of Stephen Dunn.]