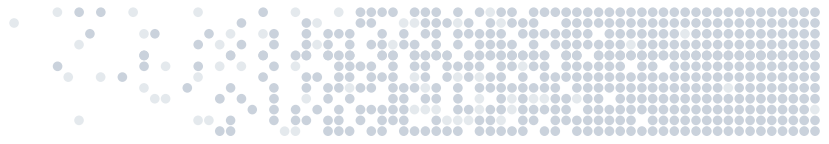


MINUTES– ASQA Meeting with Adult Education Australia

29	September	2015	Meeting No	15 - 2
Venue	ASQA Melbourne Office, Level 6, 595 Collins Street, Melbourne ASQA Sydney Office – Level 10, 255 Elizabeth Street – V/C 1		9.30am – 11am	

	AGENDA ITEM
1.	<p><u>Welcome and Introductions</u></p> <p>Present:</p> <p>Chris Robinson, Chief Commissioner, ASQA Steven Morrissey, A/Regulatory Operations Manager, Victoria Julie Northridge, Executive Officer</p> <p>ALA representatives:</p> <p>Stephen Dunn - CEO Adult Learning Australia Christine McCall - Manager, Yarraville Community Centre Vic Leanne Fitzgerald - Manager, Coonara House Upper Ferntree Gully Vic Frank Krasovec - Training and Administration Manager, Jesuit Community College Collingwood Vic Michelle Simpson - Executive Officer, Tamworth Community College NSW (Teleconference via Tamworth) Bronwyn Clinch - Executive Officer, Northern Inland Community College NSW (Teleconference via Tamworth)</p>
2.	<p>ASQA Update</p> <p>a) Implementation of risk-based approach to regulation</p> <p>Commissioner Robinson provided an overview of ASQA's risk-based that included the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">ASQA is moving from a permission based regulator to one that scrutinises RTOs when issues are raised in the media, in student complaints, by industry.The approach to regulation has moved beyond a focus on individual providers to a focus on systemic risks to quality VET outcomes.Risk based regulation means that ASQA do not audit all RTOs all the time.ASQA uses the risk profiles of RTOs to determine if regulatory action is required.A risk rating is applied to scrutinising new applications for registration.85% of ASQA audits are site audits - for initial applications RTOs and 12 months later (post initial).Renewal of registration audits are conducted on a risk basis.Desk audits are conducted where the review of evidence of rectification of identified non-compliance. <p>He also referred to the pending changes to the ESOS Act and recent change to legislation that provides for RTO registration for a period of up to seven years.</p> <p>In response to questions raised, Commissioner Robinson provided the follow information.</p> <p><u>Financial Viability Assessments</u></p> <p>Financial viability assessments are no longer required for renewals of registration, largely as a result of the Government's commitment to reducing red tape for industry. The assessments were a costly requirement that had little regulatory value for ASQA. Of the 1200 FVAs conducted there were only a few cases where it contributed value to ASQA's assessments of compliance. However, ASQA does have financial requirements</p>



for new applications for RTO registration.

He commented that most RTOs do not require large capital investment but they do require cash flows. ASQA's interest is in protection of students through the limit of \$1500 for fees paid in advance (specified in the Standards for RTOs)..

Victoria

On 1 July 2011 ASQA regulated 45% of Victorian RTOs – now it regulates about 70% of Victorian RTOs.

Minister Herbert has indicated his interest in referring powers to ASQA for the regulation of RTOs and discussions are in progress.

VRQA currently requires RTOs to comply with the AQTF Standards.

ASQA Fees

There was COAG agreement that ASQA would be established on the basis of full cost recovery. However since that time there have been additional allocations of funding from the Commonwealth to avoid fee increases. AS a result ASQA is now on a 50% cost recovery path.

ASQA's review of its fees that is currently in progress is aware of the impact of the current fee structure on RTOs with large scopes but low numbers of students – like many community education providers.

Contracts with State VET funding agencies – issue of duplication in audits

ASQA exchanges information with the VET funding agencies in all jurisdictions.

ASQA monitors compliance with the Standards for RTOs while the State funding agencies monitor performance against their funding contracts. So RTOs that accept that funding need to be prepared to demonstrate their performance against their funding contracts.

Bronwyn Clinch indicated that there was duplication in some areas of ASQA audits and those of the NSW VET funding agency. ASQA will follow up this issue with NSW.

b) 2015 Strategic industry reviews – update on progress

Commissioner Robinson provided an overview of the strategic reviews that included the following points:

- The Aged Care review and the Child Care review had similar results.
- Many providers are struggling with assessment – this is a systemic issue across the VET sector.
- 90% of RTOs audited achieved compliance by end of audit process.
- The problem of short course durations was examined, with only 30% of the RTOs samples delivering the courses with durations above the relevant AQF benchmark. Short course durations result in a lack of time for competence to be developed. ASQA has argued for the re-introduction of 'time' to the system.

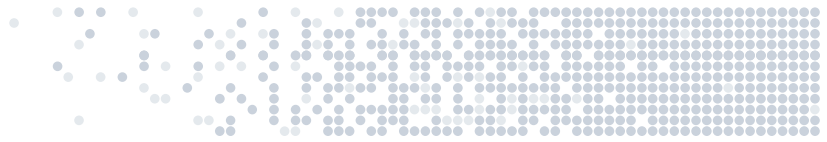
The following strategic review reports are about to be released:

- Training for the Equine Industry in Australia
- Training for the Security Industry in Australia

c) Stakeholder Briefings

Commissioner Robinson provided an overview of the eight briefings for key stakeholders conducted by ASQA in August 2015. More than 400 stakeholders from peak business and employer organisations, peak training industry groups, industry regulators and government representatives attended.

The PowerPoint presentation used by the Commissioners at the briefings is available for download from the ASQA website www.asqa.gov.au



d) VET Fee Help

Commissioner Robinson indicated that the Department of Education and Training is responsible for administering the VET Fee Help program. ACE members with complaints related to VET Fee Help funded providers should provide that information to the Department of Education and Training. The information can also be copied to Stephen Dunn, for forwarding to ASQA for information purposes.

ASQA has been scrutinising RTOs for which in 2014 it received multiple complaints related to VET Fee Help. During 2015 more RTOS have been identified for regulatory scrutiny as a result of complaints lodged with ASQA related to VET Fee Help.

3. ALA Items for Discussion

a) ASQA response times to complaints submitted via ASQA website

Commissioner Robinson noted that the response times to audits was affected by a number of factors, including whether the complaint within the remit of the legislation and Standards for RTOs, it was anonymous, whether evidence could be obtained, whether an investigation is required or legal actions including court action etc. However, for the period July 2014 to June 2015, around 65% of complaints were finalised in less than 180 days, 27% of which were finalised in less than 30 days.

b) VET Fee Help – marketing and sales impact on ACE provides and clarification of VFH complaints guidelines

Commissioner Robinson acknowledged the impact of the Vet Fee Help program on the VET sector and its impact on the sustainability of some providers. However responsibility for VET Fee Help lies with the Department of Education and Training, so issues related to the impact of the program should be raised directly with the Department.

c) ASQA 2013 report finding that 85% of RTOs were found non-compliant in their assessment requirements.

- **Has this improved since that report?** Commissioner Robinson reported that there has been an improvement in the compliance rates at audit. In 2014-15 under the new Standards, about a third of RTOs were fully compliant at audit, and 87% compliant following rectification.
- **Can ASQA provide comment to the ACE sector on the professional development of its trainers (who consist of a mix of volunteers and casual employees)?** Commissioner Robinson emphasised the need for all trainers and assessors to meet the requirements of the Standards.

d) ASQA comment on the audits of online delivery of the TAE qualification – cost and quality outcomes

Commissioner Robinson could not provide comment on this matter as ASQA has not had a specific focus on the TAE delivery via online.

e) ASQA representative availability for input into ACE sector RTO re: development in compliance and regulation feedback.

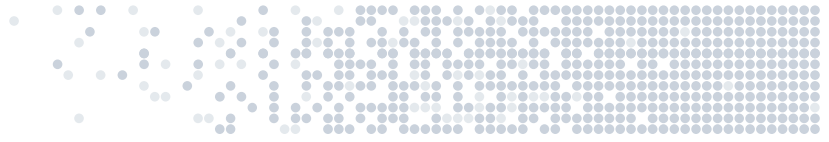
Commissioner Robinson informed the meeting that as ASQA is the national regulator it cannot put itself in the position of providing services that could later put it in a situation where it could be seen as having a conflict of interest. ASQA must operate in compliance with legislation.

f) Online training for RSA in NSW

The issue raised is relevant to the NSW State Training Services and is not within ASQA's remit.

g) Desk audits for existing RTOs that have not been site audited by ASQA

Commissioner Robinson referred to the information he had provided in Item 2a – risk based regulation.



	<p>h) The need for good news stories in the media</p> <p>Commissioner Robinson indicated that ASQA publishes information about its regulatory decisions on its website, specifically information about action it has taken to sanction RTOs. However VET sector industry associations and individual providers have the role of publicising 'good news' stories.</p> <p>i) Acknowledgment of the helpfulness and clarity of the ASQA Fact Sheets</p> <p>Noted with thanks by Commissioner Robinson</p>
4.	<p>Next meeting: Late January / early February 2016</p>