ANNUAL REPORT
2006-2007

Training Accreditation Council

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

To the Hon Mark McGowan MLA

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING; SOUTH WEST

In accordance with Section 30 of the *Vocational Education and Training Act 1996*, I submit for your information and presentation to Parliament, the Annual Report of the Training Accreditation Council for the period commencing 1 July 2006 and ending 30 June 2007.

Ian Hill
CHAIRMAN
Training Accreditation Council

29 August 2007

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CHAIR'S REPORT

I am pleased to present to you the Training Accreditation Council's 2006-07 Annual Report.

During the 2006-2007 reporting period, the Council continued to operate within a framework of continuous improvement to provide a range of services to manage the quality assurance of vocational education and training (VET) in Western Australia.

In executing its functions under the Act in 2006-07, the Council has undertaken 460 audits of registered training organisations, endorsed 92 initial and renewal of registration applications, accredited or re-accredited 119 courses, and issued 125 trade certificates.

Of major significance has been the national review of quality assurance arrangements and the development of the new Australian Quality Training Framework 2007 (AQTF 2007). The new Framework will be implemented progressively over the next twelve months commencing 1 July 2007. The Training Accreditation Council has worked collaboratively with the Australian government and all State, Territory governments to develop these new arrangements and to ensure national consistency in application and monitoring of the Standards and outcomes based auditing.

In particular, the Training Accreditation Council through the Department of Education Services assumed a lead role for a number of national projects to support the development and implementation of AQTF 2007. In addition, a comprehensive communication strategy was developed to ensure all registered training organisations (RTOs) were aware of the new requirements. An extensive array of information sessions, professional development workshops, updated publications, and support and guidance was provided by the Council to enable a smooth transition for RTOs to the new national standards.

The Council has continued to focus on delivering products and services to improve the quality of vocational education and training in Western Australia. This has included delivering information sessions and workshops on various aspects of the AQTF, and development of a comprehensive range of resources to assist RTOs in conducting their business.

The Council would like to extend its appreciation to the Training Accreditation Council Secretariat of the Department of Education Services for their ongoing professional conduct, commitment and contribution in supporting the work of the Council. The Council would also like to acknowledge the incredible commitment that Western Australian RTOs have made to meeting the requirements of the AQTF and ensuring that the quality of the Western Australian training system remains at the highest level.

Western Australia has played a leading role in the review of national quality arrangements and support in the development of the new AQTF 2007, and over the next twelve months this will continue in the implementation of the new standards. The outcomes based approach may provide many challenges for the VET sector in the near future, however, given the maturity of quality assurance arrangements and the commitment to continuous improvement by Western Australian RTOs, Western Australia is well positioned to implement the new AQTF 2007 standards.

Ian C Hill
Chairman
Training Accreditation Council

2006-07 Highlights

Major achievements for 2006-07
- Endorsed 92 initial and renewal of registration applications and 197 extension to scope applications.
- Approved a total of 119 courses for accreditation and re-accreditation.
- 460 audits were undertaken during 2006-07, including 94 initial and renewal registration audits; 70 accreditation reviews; 116 monitoring audits and 180 extension to scope audits.
- Issued 125 trade certificates via the established trade skills recognition process.
- The Council was deemed compliant with the national standards following an independent review of its operations.
- Maintained a strong focus on engaging and involving stakeholders in the development of the new AQTF 2007 standards.
- Conducted information sessions and 26 workshops related to the new AQTF 2007, with over 890 participants from metropolitan and regional Western Australia attending.
- Completed strategic industry audits in the areas of: outdoor recreation; offshore delivery; and conducted a trial overseas audit of a Western Australian training organisation.
- New panel of RTO Auditors and Accreditation Reviewers were appointed and commenced on 1 January 2007.
- Reviewed fees for registration of training organisations and the accreditation of courses, with revised fees for training organisations applicable from 1 July 2006 and new fees for the accreditation of courses introduced effective 1 December 2006.
- Sponsored the 2006 'Trainer of the Year Award' category of the Western Australian Training Excellence Awards.

Major initiatives for 2007-08
- Implement the new AQTF 2007 across the VET sector in Western Australia.
- Continue to develop and implement strategies for streamlining regulation through improved linkages between licensing bodies, other regulatory bodies and VET regulators.
- Continue to play a leading role in the national training framework, and the implementation and ongoing development of quality assurance arrangements within the VET sector.
- Ongoing implementation of the Council's Strategic Business Plan and Audit Strategy.
- Continue further initiatives to increase consultation with stakeholders within the VET sector.

About this report

This report fulfils the requirements of Section 30(1) of the *Vocational Education and Training Act 1996* by reporting the operations of the Training Accreditation Council to the Minister for Education and Training for the period 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007.

As the Council's strategic business plan is prepared on a calendar year basis and this report is prepared on a financial year basis, activities from both the 2006 and 2007 reporting periods have been included in the report.

The report is structured to include three main sections (see below) and incorporates 9 Key Goal Areas that the Council has developed that will be the focus of their work over the medium term. The Key Goal Areas complement the three high level outcomes identified below:
- Management of Council functions and legislative responsibilities
- Effective Working Relationships with Key Stakeholders and Clients
- Effective AQTF Support Services to Registered Training Organisations

Where possible, data for the 2006-2007 reporting period and both the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 reporting periods have been provided to allow a comparative assessment of the activities and achievements of the Council to be made.

VISION STATEMENT

The Training Accreditation Council is committed to:

- Assuring the quality and consistency of training delivery in the provision of vocational education and training.

- Being the national leader in the strategic management of the recognition of quality assurance of training, including associated policies, processes, services and standards in the vocational education and training sector.

- Providing practical, efficient and responsive support to Government, the State Training Board, industry, registered training organisations and the community.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Training Accreditation Council:

- Will be open, accountable and transparent;

- Is clear on its role as a regulatory body;

- Will embed an outcomes focus;

- Is fair and equitable; and

- Will maintain a culture of continuous improvement

FUNCTIONS OF THE COUNCIL

The Council's functions are detailed in Part 4, Section 27 of the *Vocational Education and Training Act 1996*. They focus on quality assurance and recognition in respect to vocational education and training in Western Australia.

Under the Act, the functions of the Council are to:

- register and de-register training providers;

- accredit and vary and cancel the accreditation of courses and skills training programs and the qualifications gained from such courses and skills training programs;

- recognise skills and qualifications obtained by individuals in this State or elsewhere, in industry, the workplace or educational institutions; and

- determine the minimum competency to be provided by accredited courses and skills training programs.

The Council is also required to provide advice to the State Training Board on matters relating to the functions specified above.

The Council has an established complaint procedure to support its functions. Provision for appeals against Council decisions is available through the State Training Board under Section 31 of the Act.

MEMBERSHIP

The Training Accreditation Council has seven members who are appointed by the Minister for Education and Training in accordance with the *Vocational Education and Training Act 1996*. They are selected on the basis of their expertise, qualifications and experience in accreditation, curriculum, training organisation registration or skills recognition.

In March 2007 Mr Michael Keep tendered his resignation from the Council.

Mr Michael Keep
Alcoa World Alumina Australia

Ms Lorraine Carter
Big W (WA) Pty Ltd

Dr Irene Ioannakis
Caterpillar Institute (WA) Pty Ltd

Mr David Wood
Curriculum Council

Mr Iain McDougall
Hospitality Group Training

Ms Liz Harris
Challenger TAFE

Mr Ian Hill
Chair

THE CONTEXT IN WHICH THE COUNCIL WORKS

The Training Accreditation Council is an independent statutory body that provides for quality assurance and recognition processes for vocational education and training in Western Australia. The Council operates within the National Skills Framework and is the Western Australian Registering and Course Accrediting Body under the Australian Quality Training Framework.

The Australian Quality Training Framework is comprised of two sets of standards - the Standards for Registered Training Organisations and the Standards for Registering and Course Accrediting Bodies.

The Council is responsible for ensuring compliance with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations and for complying with the Standards for Registering and Course Accrediting Bodies.

The Council is supported by the Department of Education Services through the services of the Training Accreditation Council Secretariat located in Osborne Park. One of the Secretariat's key roles is to process applications for registration of training organisations and accreditation of courses and skills training programs. The Training Accreditation Council Secretariat also provides substantial support to the work of the Council on policy issues.

The Council formally met 25 times over the twelve months to 30 June 2007.

The Council holds full meetings on a monthly basis to consider applications from organisations, however, in late 2006 the Council agreed to hold bi-monthly meetings in 2007 on a trial basis. Executive Committee meetings are held approximately every two weeks to consider additional applications. This results in a quick turn around time for applications submitted to the Council for consideration.

PLANNING AND REPORTING FRAMEWORK

In order to carry out its functions, the Council uses an outcomes based planning and reporting framework.

The framework consists of a strategic business plan for the Council that is prepared on a three year basis (from 1 January 2006 – 20 December 2008) and reviewed annually, a corresponding operational plan for the support services provided by the Department of Education Services and an Annual Report on the achievements of the Council. In addition, the Council prepares a Quality Training Report which is published in January each year.

In supporting the work of the Council, the Department of Education Services operational plan addresses the priorities outlined in the Council's business plan 2006-08. The TAC Secretariat reports progress to the Council.

This approach ensures comprehensive monitoring and reporting of the Council's achievements against the planned outcomes and provides a sound methodology for monitoring progress against the respective business/operational plans.

The Council has developed nine Key Goal Areas that will be the focus of their work over the medium term.

KEY GOAL AREAS

- Role Clarity – To clarify the role of the Council and its relationship to other agencies
- Communication, Advocacy, Feedback – To improve communication and the public face of TAC
- One VET – To achieve a one VET approach for all providers

- Championing Self Improvement & Good Practice Examples – To achieve improved quality through Good Practice Examples
- A learning outcomes focus – To enhance audit processes to include the outcomes of training
- Audit Processes – To develop audit processes so the performance of Registered Training Organisations and the VET system is improved
- Skills Recognition – To improve access to skills recognition through the Training Accreditation Council
- Accreditation – To strengthen the integrity of Course Accreditation
- National Consistency – To improve national consistency in the application of the AQTF.

Sitting underneath the Key Goal Areas are annual Strategies and Measures of Progress that the Council uses to meet and measure their goals. In addition, Guiding Principles have been developed that communicate to the Council's stakeholders the way in which the Council intends to undertake its business.

OUTCOME 1 - Management of Council functions and legislative responsibilities

Outcome Description

The Training Accreditation Council's success in achieving outcome one is demonstrated by the extent to which:

- Council functions are carried out in an appropriate and timely manner through deployment of clear and transparent policies and processes; and
- legislative requirements are met.

Key Goal Areas

- One VET – To achieve a one VET approach for all providers
- A learning outcomes focus – To enhance audit processes to include the outcomes of training
- Audit Processes – To develop audit processes so the performance of Registered Training Organisations and the VET system is improved
- Skills Recognition – To improve access to skills recognition through the Training Accreditation Council
- Accreditation – To strengthen the integrity of Course Accreditation
- National Consistency – To improve national consistency in the application of the AQTF.

REGISTRATION OF TRAINING ORGANISATIONS

There were 1363 training organisations registered to deliver training in Western Australia on 30 June 2007. A total of 440 of these organisations were registered with the Council and a further 923 were registered to deliver in Western Australia under mutual recognition arrangements. Although the number of organisations registered with the Council has increased only slightly there has been an increase of over 30% in the number of initial registrations endorsed by the Council over the previous reporting period.

The number of registered training organisations delivering in this State under mutual recognition has also increased over the last twelve months.

During the 2006-07 year, the Council endorsed the following applications:

- 57 initial registrations;
- 35 renewal of registrations;
- 197 extension to scope; and
- 523 notifications received from registered training organisations adding courses/qualifications within their current scope.

The Council De-Registered five (5) RTOs within the reporting period.

Graph 1: Registration activity July 2006 – June 2007

Applications Endorsed by the Training Accreditation Council

	Initial Registration	Renewal of Registration	Extension to Scope of Registration	Addition within Scope RTO
■ Jul -06 to Jun 07	57	35	197	523
□ Jul 05 to Jun 06	43	0	155	444
■ Jul 04 to Jun 05	19	28	139	393
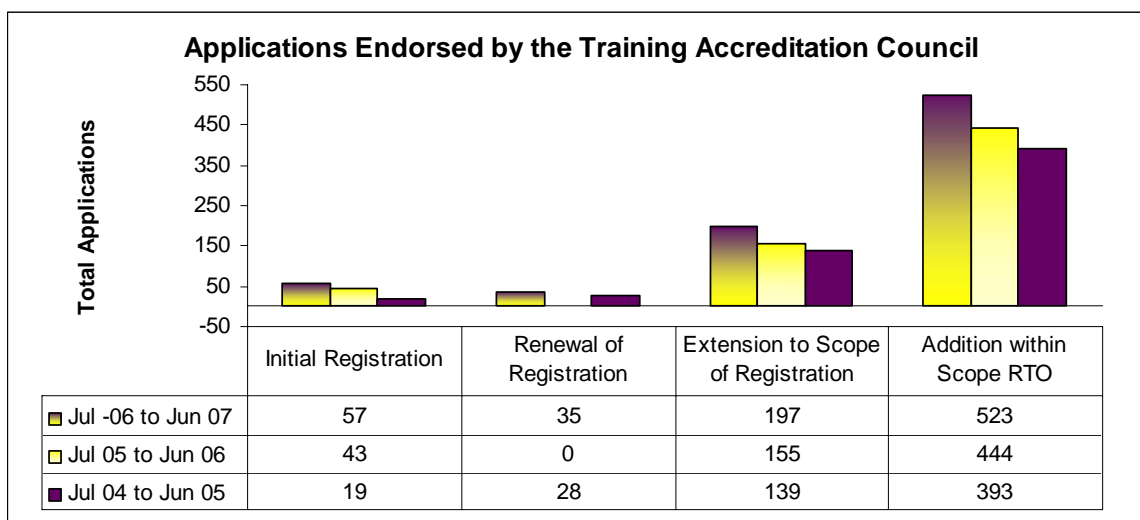
There were 35 renewal of registrations endorsed by the Council during the reporting period. The increase in renewal of registration reflects completion of the transition from the Australian Recognition Framework (ARF) with a registration period of three (3) years to the AQTF with a registration period of five (5) years.

MUTUAL RECOGNITION

In addition to training organisations registered by the Council, there were 923 interstate registered training organisations who operate, or planned to operate within Western Australia on 30 June 2007.

It should be noted that the number of organisations delivering under mutual recognition does not reflect actual delivery by interstate registered training organisations. Many organisations register with their primary recognition authority their intent to deliver in Western Australia, however, for a variety of reasons fail to follow through with actual delivery.

Graph 2 shows registered training organisations by State of registration operating in Western Australia.

Graph 2: Interstate RTOs registered to operate in Western Australia as at 30 June 2007.

Number of RTOs Registered to Operate in Western Australian under National Recognition

	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	TAS	ACT	NT
■ Jun-07	333	306	125	87	18	45	9
□ Jun-06	287	264	118	84	14	38	10
■ Jun-05	255	202	87	68	10	31	8
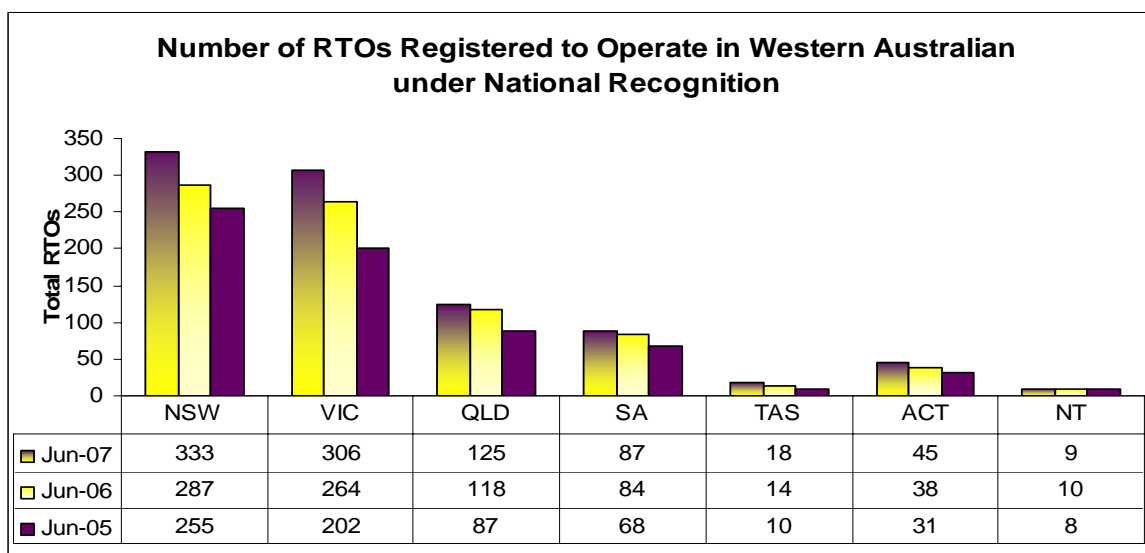
MANAGEMENT OF THE ANNUAL AUDIT SCHEDULE

The Council is responsible for undertaking audits of registered training organisations against the 12 standards specified in the Australian Quality Training Framework. The Council's annual audit strategy incorporates registration audits as well as strategic industry audits on the basis of identified risks. Wherever possible, these audits are integrated with audits for compliance with the Department of Education and Training's Delivery and Performance Agreement held with private registered training organisations in receipt of public funds.

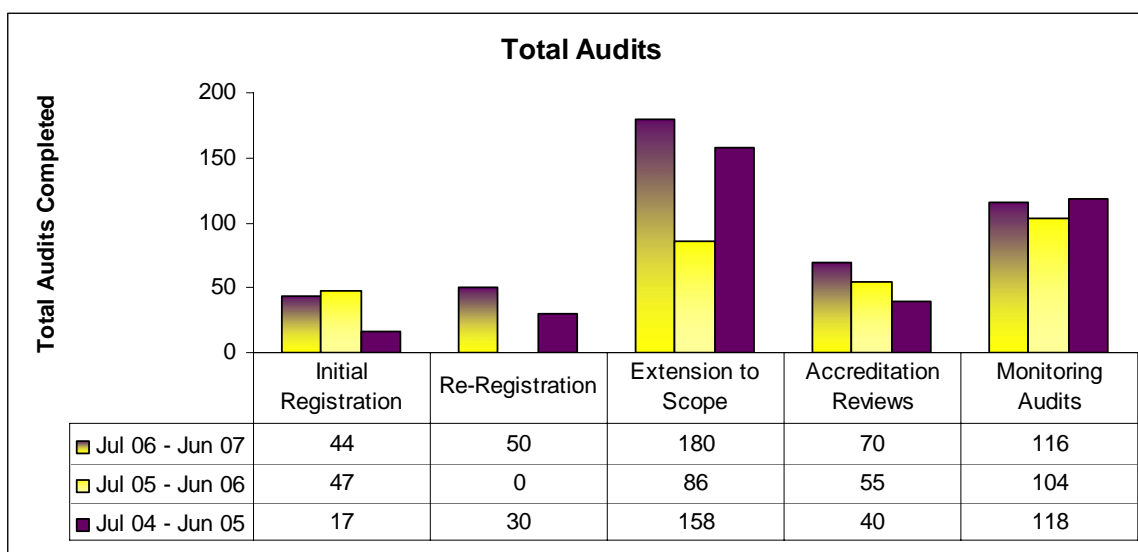The Council's integrated approach to auditing minimises disruption to registered training organisations. Graph 3 provides information on the type and number of audits conducted in the reporting period.

Graph 3: Total audits July 2006 – June 2007

Total Audits

Total Audits Completed	Initial Registration	Re-Registration	Extension to Scope	Accreditation Reviews	Monitoring Audits
Jul 06 - Jun 07	44	50	180	70	116
Jul 05 - Jun 06	47	0	86	55	104
Jul 04 - Jun 05	17	30	158	40	118

A total of 460 audits were undertaken in the 12 months ending 30 June 2007, this represents an increase of over 55% from the 2005-06 reporting period. The increase in re-registration audits reflects those organsiations whose initial five (5) year registration under the AQTF had expired. Although the number of Extension to Scope audits has increased significantly, it is difficult to provide a specific reason for the overall increase. Audits were undertaken in line with the 2006 and 2007 audit strategies. Audits were coordinated by the TAC Secretariat, Department of Education Services and undertaken by the Council's external panel of auditors.

THE 2006 - 2007 AUDIT STRATEGY

The Council's annual Audit Strategy is endorsed on a calendar year basis. This report contains details on audits endorsed from both the 2006 and 2007 Audit Strategy. The Audit Strategy includes regulatory audits such as registration audits, follow up audits and audits in response to complaints. Also included are strategic audits and identified risk audits.

The strategic industry audits and the identified risk audits contained in the strategy are:
- Registered training organisations who have not been audited in three years;
- Outdoor Recreation;
- Offshore Delivery;
- Transnational Quality Strategy – Trial Overseas Audit; and
- Delivery of Apprenticeships and Traineeships.

The proposed Firearms Training strategic industry audit has been postponed pending further advice from the relevant regulatory body.

DELIVERY OF APPRENTICESHIPS AND TRAINEESHIPS

Based on the recommendations from the State Training Board's Skills Formation Taskforce a strategic audit of the delivery of apprenticeships and traineeships will be conducted with a focus on the involvement of employers and apprentices and trainees in the development of the Training Plan Outline; and how the full range of competencies in Training Plan Outlines were being delivered and assessed.

The strategic audit commenced in 2007 and will focus on the metals and engineering, building and construction and automotive industry areas. The audit methodology will include a survey to apprentices, trainees and employers and the strategic audit is expected to be completed in the next reporting period.

OFFSHORE DELIVERY

In response to the growing interest and participation by RTOs in overseas delivery; the identification of partnering and brokering as a national key risk area and the work undertaken at a national level to develop a Transnational Quality Strategy, the Training Accreditation Council endorsed a strategic industry audit of the overseas delivery of AQF qualifications as part of the 2005-06 Strategic Industry Audit Schedule.

A three phase approach to conducting the audit was undertaken, involving a survey of all Western Australian RTOs to determine the current level of delivery overseas, a desktop audit of those RTOs who were identified as conducting overseas delivery and on site audits as required. The audit focused on 16 RTOs who were identified as providing delivery and assessment overseas.

Overall, the findings of the desktop audits indicate that the majority of Western Australian RTOs who have undertaken overseas delivery have endeavoured to provide a high quality of delivery and assessment catering specifically to the needs of their clients. In many cases, the non compliances identified resulted from the level of customisation of delivery and support services to reflect the requirements of international clients.

A large number of RTOs cited cultural issues associated with delivering overseas and the lack of understanding of a competency based assessment system within the international market place as key obstacles to developing their overseas capacity.

It should be recognised that all RTOs considered non compliant were required to address all identified issues and will be subjected to a review to ensure AQTF compliance.

Four management actions were recommended to improve the quality and consistency of training and delivery being undertaken overseas. These included the communication to RTOs on AQTF requirements in relation to overseas operations; development of nationally consistent guidelines for RTOs delivering AQF qualifications overseas; the conduct of follow up audits within twelve months; and the findings to be forwarded to the Australian Education Systems Officials Committee (AESOC) Transnational Quality Working Group.

TRANSNATIONAL QUALITY STRATEGY (TQS) TRAIL ASSESSMENT PROJECT

In November 2005, State and Territory Ministers of Education and Training agreed to the TQS Framework to protect and promote the quality of Australian education and training delivered in other countries. As a result of this agreement and the Council's Strategic Audit of Offshore Delivery, Western Australia participated in a nationally funded project to undertake a trial audit of an RTO delivering overseas. The trial audit of the Western Australian RTO was conducted over a five (5) day period in mid January 2007 both in Perth and Malaysia. The audit team comprised of a lead auditor from the Western Australia RTO Auditor Panel, and an auditor from the Queensland Department of Education, Training and the Arts in the role of observer.

The site audit, conducted as part of the trial assessment, focused on the deployment of the policies and processes of the RTO and allowed more in-depth consideration of how the AQTF had been used to create a quality system for continuous improvement and the assurance of quality training and assessment.

Based on the findings from the trial audit and advice provided by the audit team, four (4) recommendations have been made for consideration by the AESOC Transnational Quality Strategy Working Group. Recommendations included: (1) consider the outcomes of other national work currently in development for the implementation of AQTF 2007; (2) ensure that the auditing of RTO offshore operations is conducted holistically; (3) that auditing activities maximise the resources of registering bodies and RTOs; and (4) that the Working Group considers the findings of the Western Australia Strategic Audit of Offshore Delivery to inform the development of future offshore audit methodology.

Western Australia presented the report and its recommendations to the April 2007 meeting of the Working Group.

OUTDOOR RECREATION

In 2005, the Training Accreditation Council received advice from the Arts, Sport and Recreation Industry Training Council on the high level of risk in terms of safety, injury and loss of life within the industry area of Outdoor Recreation. A number of high risk activities are captured within the industry area of Outdoor Recreation including four wheel driving, abseiling and scuba diving. These activities are covered by the Sport and Recreation Training Package (SRO03).

In response to this advice, the Training Accreditation Council identified outdoor recreation training as a key risk area to be included in the 2005-06 strategic industry audit schedule.

The audit focused on twelve (12) RTOs delivering qualifications from the Certificate II – Diploma level in Outdoor Recreation from the SRO03 Training Package. The audit included three interstate RTOs delivering training in Western Australia.

The findings of the audit highlighted risks associated with the quality of delivery within the Outdoor Recreation Industry with a high level of non-compliance against standards 7 – Competence of RTO staff, standard 8 – RTO assessments and Standards; and standard 9 Learning and Assessment Strategies.

In response to the findings of the audit, a range of management actions have been developed that focus on assuring quality of delivery in the Outdoor Recreation area. These include promotion of professional development opportunities to RTO staff in the areas of delivery, assessment and validation; the conduct of follow up audits of high risk RTOs and the development of validation mechanisms for use by Outdoor Recreation providers.

The Council endorsed the audit report in December 2006 and the management actions will be implemented in 2007.

RECOGNITION OF SKILLS AND TRADE CERTIFICATES

Following a review of the existing skills recognition process in 2005 a new Trade Skills Recognition Policy was introduced by the Council in early 2006, resulting in the process being updated to include RTOs already delivering apprenticeships and traineeships.

The review identified the need to redesign the Council's policy with a view to ensuring parity between all trade certificates (whichever way they were achieved), increasing utilisation of existing infrastructure and improving the quality assurance of the process itself. The implementation of the AQTF has increased the need to provide a process with greater flexibility and quality assurance.

During the 2006-07 reporting period the Council recognised skills and issued trade certificates through the established process in conjunction with selected Industry Training Councils (ITCs) and RTOs. Under this arrangement selected ITCs and RTOs provide skills assessment services for trade qualification purposes.

Up to 30 June 2007, six industry training councils and two RTOs had been endorsed by the Council to offer trade skills recognition services as an agent of the Council. These were:

- Hospitality and Tourism ITC;
- Light Manufacturing ITC;
- Metals, Manufacturing and Services ITC;
- Wholesale Retail and Personal Services ITC;
- Western Australian Food and Beverage ITC;
- Building and Construction ITC;
- Challenger TAFE; and
- Australian School of Tourism and Hotel Management.

From July 2006 to June 2007 there were 125 trade certificates approved for issuance by the Council to individuals assessed as competent in a range of trade areas via the trade skills recognition process. This represents a significant increase over the previous reporting period where a total of 43 trade certificates had been issued. The increase in demand reflects the focus on skills shortages and the importance of recognising skills that people have achieved as a strategy to address skills shortages.

Graph 4 provides a breakdown of the trade certificates issued by the Council during the reporting period.

Graph 4: Trade certificates issued July 2006 – June 2007

Graph 4: Trade certificates issued July 2006 to June 2007
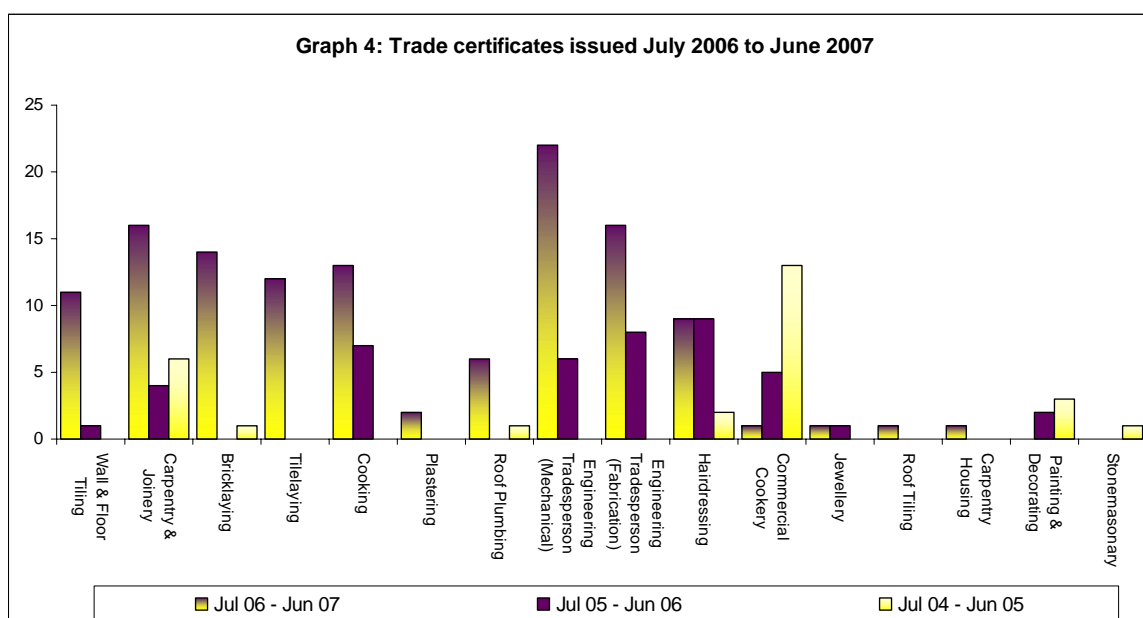
COURSE ACCREDITATION

At 30 June 2007, there were 394 accredited courses in Western Australia. During 2006-07 the Council approved a total of 119 courses for accreditation and re-accreditation.

Accredited courses meet the training needs not addressed by Training Packages. In 2006-07 the total number of courses accredited decreased from 93 in 2005-06 to 48 in 2006-07. While the total number of courses re-accredited by the Council increased by 38 or over 115% from

the previous reporting period. This increase is not seen as a significant and is considered representative of the trend to re-accredit existing course that are not covered through Training Packages.

During the period, the Council considered 89 proposals to extend the accreditation period of courses which would have otherwise expired. The Council considers extensions to courses for a range of reasons including expectation that a Training Package qualification may replace the course in the near future or to permit an RTO reasonable change over time from one course to another.
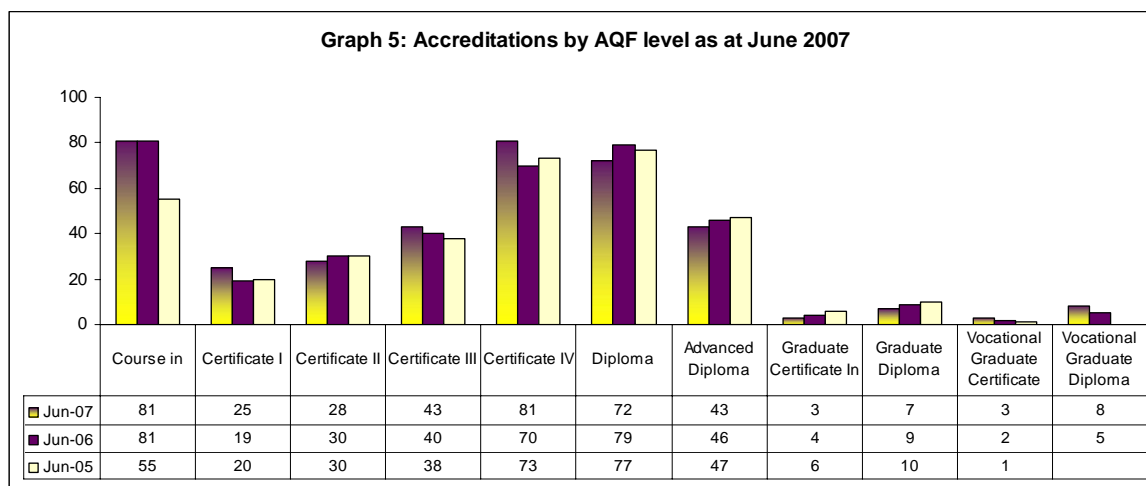
Table 1 and Graph 5 summarise the accreditation activity undertaken in the reporting period.

Table 1: Accreditation Activity July 2006 – June 2007

Activity	Number of Courses
Courses accredited	48
Courses re-accredited	71
Courses extended	89
Courses expired	142

Graph 5 shows the number of accreditations by AQF qualification level has remained relatively unchanged compared with the previous reporting period.

Graph 5: Accreditation by AQF level July 2006 – June 2007

Graph 5: Accreditations by AQF level as at June 2007

	Course in	Certificate I	Certificate II	Certificate III	Certificate IV	Diploma	Advanced Diploma	Graduate Certificate In	Graduate Diploma	Vocational Graduate Certificate	Vocational Graduate Diploma
Jun-07	81	25	28	43	81	72	43	3	7	3	8
Jun-06	81	19	30	40	70	79	46	4	9	2	5
Jun-05	55	20	30	38	73	77	47	6	10	1	

QUALITY ASSURANCE - RCAB EXTERNAL AUDITING

Standard 1.4 of the *AQTF Standards for Registering/Course Accrediting Bodies* requires that the registering/course accrediting body arrange for the provision of independent advice to the National Training Quality Council (now through the Department of Education, Science and Training to the National Quality Council) on registration, audit and related processes. This advice is required so that the operation of the AQTF across Australia can be assessed.

Due to the national review of quality arrangements for the VET Sector, it was deemed by the National Quality Council that an independent review of State and Territory Registering Bodies compliance against the Australian Quality Training Framework Standards for Registering and Course Accrediting Bodies was not required for the 2006 period. The last independent audit conducted by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) in late 2005, found the Department and Council fully compliant with the AQTF standards for registering/course accrediting bodies, with a number of areas of good practice identified.

However, in November 2006, the Department and Council as part of its commitment to continuous improvement engaged an independent auditor to undertake an internal audit for compliance against the AQTF and comparison with the ISO quality management standards.

The independent audit found the Department and Council to be fully compliant with the AQTF standards for registering/course accrediting bodies and selected ISO quality management standards. The report also identified some opportunities for improvement which will be addressed through strategies to be implemented as part of the national review of quality arrangements for the VET Sector.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR AUDITORS

In October 2006, a new panel of RTO Auditors and Accreditation Reviewers was appointed through a public tender process. The panel was appointed for a one year period with three one year extension options available, and commenced on 1 January 2007.

The primary role of the auditors is to undertake audits of registered training organisations to determine compliance with the *Australian Quality Training Framework Standards for Registered Training Organisations.* In addition, audits of registered training organisations may determine compliance with contracts associated with receipt of public funding for training. Auditors appointed to the panel are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Panel of auditors and accreditation reviewers as at 30 June 2007

	Auditor	Company
RTO Auditors	Mr Steve Trice	Canington International Training
	Heli Donaldson	Heli Donaldson
	Julie Large	JAL Enterprises
	Russell Docking	Skills Resource Management Systems
	Claire Werner	Applic8
	Mairead Dempsey	Training Assessment and Research Services
	Helen McCarter	Helen McCarter Consultant
Accreditation Reviewers	Steve Trice	Canington International Training
	Russell Docking	Skills Resource Management Systems
	Mairead Dempsey	Training assessment and Research Services

The Department implements a best practice performance management model for the panel of external auditors. Under this model, the Department provides moderation activities to ensure consistency in the approach to auditing. All contracted auditors are required to attend these moderation forums. During the reporting period four auditor moderation forums have been conducted by the Department.

In 2006-07 the Training Accreditation Council also provided support and professional development specific to the AQTF 2007 for its panel of auditors. During April and May 2007 national professional development workshops were held in Adelaide, Brisbane and Sydney. All auditors attended workshops which provided auditor briefings, moderation activities and the opportunity to network and develop an agreed approach for the conduct of AQTF 2007 audits.

FEES REVIEW

In July 2005, a Review Committee was established to consider fees for registration of training organisations and the accreditation of courses in Western Australia. The Review Committee comprised of representatives from the then Office of the Training Accreditation Council and the Department of Education and Training. Under the existing *Vocational Education and Training Act 1996*, the Council has responsibility for the registration and accreditation functions, however, under the current arrangements it was unable to charge fees for the accreditation of courses due to legislative issues. All States and Territories, except Western Australia charge fees for the accreditation of courses.

The Minister endorsed the Review Committee's findings and recommendations in March 2006, with fees for registration of training organisations increased effective from 1 July 2006. Following amendments to the existing legislation, fees for the accreditation of courses were introduced effective 1 December 2006.

Fees for the Accreditation of Courses

The following fees structure applies to applications for the accreditation of courses in Western Australia:

Type of fee - Application for accreditation of :	Current fees (as at 1 Dec 2006)
(a) a qualification course – means a course or skills training programme successful completion of which leads to qualifications ranging from Certificate 1 to Vocational Graduate Diploma (within the meaning of the AQF Implementation Handbook)	**$1,000**
(b) a course or skills training programme other than a qualification course	**$500**

Fees for Registration of Training Providers

Western Australia currently has one of the lowest fee structures for registration. The current fees structure is as follows:

Type	Current fees (as at 1 July 2006)
Application fee	**$430**
Annual fee	**$430**
Registration fee	**$1500** (up to 2 industry areas) **$460** for each additional area
Extension to scope of registration fees	**$920** (**$460** for each additional area)

NEW QUALITY ARRANGEMENTS – AUSTRALIAN QUALITY TRAINING FRAMEWORK 2007 (AQTF 2007)

At its meeting on 17 November 2006, the Ministerial Council for Vocational and Technical Education (MCVTE) endorsed revised quality arrangements for the national VET sector to be known as AQTF 2007. In June 2007 MCVTE approved the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration* and AQTF 2007 *Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies* for publication and distribution.

During 2006-07 significant progress was made in the development of the new *AQTF 2007 Standards for Accredited Courses* and the *AQTF 2007 Standards for State and Territory Course Accrediting Bodies*. It is expected that the new standards will be approved by MCVTE during the next reporting period.

The Training Accreditation Council has worked collaboratively with the Australian government and all State, Territory governments to develop these new arrangements and to ensure national consistency in application and monitoring of the Standards and outcomes based auditing.

In particular, the Training Accreditation Council through the Department of Education Services assumed a lead role for a number of national projects to support the development and implementation of AQTF 2007. These included:
- the development of an Audit Handbook including minimum audit team competencies and supporting audit resources;
- the development and facilitation of national auditor professional development and moderation workshops conducted April – May 2007; and
- the development of national RTO professional development workshops.

To promote transparent, nationally consistent and streamlined interpretation and implementation of the new quality arrangements including an outcomes focused audit model, a suite of national guidelines to be used by the registering bodies have been developed.

- **AQTF 2007 National Guideline for Industry Regulator Engagement**
  This Guideline has been developed to establish how regulators and registering bodies can collaborate in quality assurance arrangements for training and assessment in VET.

  The Training Accreditation Council has been engaging with key regulatory bodies to ensure that the quality assurance arrangements for VET lead to streamlined regulation, by building the confidence of industry regulators that the training and assessment practices of RTOs adequately address their regulatory requirements.

  Consultation on the Guidelines has been undertaken by the Department of Education Services with key regulatory bodies in WA including WorkSafe; Office of Energy; Commercial Agents Squad; Maritime Safety Authority; and the Plumbers Registration Board.

- **AQTF 2007 National Guideline for Risk Management**
  This guideline describes the nationally consistent risk-management approach to be used by all state and territory registering bodies in determining arrangements for the assessment of all registration applications, including applications for initial registration, renewal of registration and extensions to scope of registration.

  The Training Accreditation Council has been working to ensure that when assessing the risk of an RTO at a given point in time, it will take into account all the relevant information about a training organisation's current performance and operating context.

- **AQTF 2007 *Audit Handbook***
  The Training Accreditation Council through the Department of Education Services played a lead role in the development and implementation of this national guideline including audit resources to assist auditor understanding of an outcomes-focused approach to auditing the quality of training and assessment and client service outcomes of RTOs against the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration*. It guides registering bodies and auditors in the planning, conduct and reporting of audits of RTOs when they occur.

To support the implementation of AQTF 2007 and the professional development of the VET sector in Western Australia, the Training Accreditation Council conducted information sessions in March 2007. Three hundred and twenty nine (329) representatives from registered training organisations and other VET stakeholders attended these sessions.

During May and June 2007, as part of the national implementation and transition strategy for AQTF 2007, the Training Accreditation Council conducted a series of professional development workshops for registered training organisations across the state. As at 30 June 2007, 565 RTO representatives had attended 26 workshops, with a total of 13 workshops conducted in regional and remote locations across Western Australia. The professional development program for RTOs will be completed during July and August 2007, with a number of ad hoc workshops to be conducted for other VET stakeholder networks and associations.

OUTCOME 2 – Effective Working Relationships with Key Stakeholders and Clients

Outcome Description
The Training Accreditation Council's success in achieving outcome two is demonstrated by the extent to which:

- stakeholders and clients are aware of Council requirements and priorities; and
- Council requirements are deployed by stakeholders and clients.

Key Goal Areas

- Role Clarity – To clarify the role of the Council and its relationship to other agencies
- Communication, Advocacy, Feedback – To improve communication and the public face of TAC
- Championing Self Improvement & Good Practice Examples – To achieve improved quality through Good Practice Examples
- National Consistency – To improve national consistency in the application of the AQTF.
- One VET – To achieve a one VET approach for all providers

Work undertaken by the Council to progress these priorities and to achieve outcome two is detailed in the following sections.

CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

During 2006-07 the Council actively consulted with a range of stakeholders including industry training councils, registered training organisations and TAFEWA Managing Directors to ensure stakeholders were aware of the Council's requirements and priorities with respect to the quality assurance and recognition of vocational education and training in Western Australia.

This year the Council's consultative processes focussed on the development and implementation of the new AQTF 2007. As a result the Council focussed on ensuring stakeholders were provided with relevant information on the new standards, and were provided with an opportunity to input into the development process.

In late 2005, a review was undertaken of the functions of the Council and involved consultations with a range of stakeholders and constituents. Most stakeholders held positive perceptions of the work of the Council, however, it was clear from the consultations that there was a lack of understanding of the role of the Council.

As a result of the review the Council undertook to consider its communication strategy in response to this feedback to ensure greater understanding of its role. During 2006-07 an external consultant had been contracted to review the Council's communication with its clients and stakeholders. The outcome of the review will be provided during the next reporting period.

The Council also collects feedback from registered training organisations following completion of the audit process. The feedback is incorporated into the Council's continuous improvement processes and is reported on a biannual basis. The survey results for the January to June 2007 period showed that 88% of respondents found that the audit process added value to their business.

EFFECTIVENESS OF COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCESS

One of the important functions provided by the Department of Education Services on behalf of the Training Accreditation Council is the investigation of complaints made by sector stakeholders. Complaints may result in registered training organisations being audited but are often resolved through discussion with the affected parties.

Thirty eight (38) complaints were received during the 2006-07 reporting period, seven (7) less than for the previous reporting period. Of the 38 complaints received, three (3) complaints were lodged against registered training organisations from other jurisdictions and subsequently forwarded to the appropriate registering body. Seven (7) complaints were lodged by interstate organisations or individuals against Western Australian registered training organisations. Ten (10) of these complaints remained open and were under investigation as at 30 June 2007.

Table 3 shows a breakdown of the type of complaints that were investigated by the Department on behalf of the Training Accreditation Council during the period.

Table 3: Complaint categories

Type of Complaints
Systems for quality training and assessment
Issuance of Statements of Attainment and Qualifications
Use of national and State and Territory Logos
Ethical Marketing
Access and Equity and Client Service
Legislation, administration and financial management
Assessor competence, assessment judgements and issuance

RCAB CHAIRS MEETINGS

Two meetings of the Chairs of State and Territory Registering and Course Accrediting Bodies (RCABS) were held during the reporting period. The meetings were held in Adelaide on the 16 November 2006 and 19 June 2007. Agenda items discussed included:

- New National Quality Arrangements for VET;
- AQTF 2007 – implementation; and
- National auditing and registration arrangements.

These meetings provide RCABs with the opportunity to discuss issues relating to the functions of the RCABs and initiatives to ensure and promote national consistency.

PROVISION OF CONSUMER INFORMATION

The Council actively undertakes information provision including the development of support materials to promote and ensure the quality of vocational education and training in Western Australia. It is important that clients and stakeholders are fully aware of quality assurance and recognition arrangements.

A range of activities were undertaken during the reporting period to provide information to stakeholders. These included:

PUBLICATION OF ALL DOCUMENTS ON ONE CONVENIENT CD

All documents listed on the Council's website were published to one convenient CD and distributed to existing and prospective RTOs. This information also included templates and forms to assist with the registration and accreditation process undertaken by the TAC Secretariat on behalf of the Council.

PUBLICATION OF COUNCIL NEWSLETTERS

The Council electronically publishes the *TAC Update* newsletter. The newsletter provides relevant, up-to-date information and advice on all aspects of the vocational education and training system related to the Council's functions.

COUNCIL WEBSITE

The website is the Council's main communication tool and as such the content for the website is regularly reviewed and refined. The content of the website focuses on the Council's core business and provides links to other organisations that provide relevant related information for its clients and stakeholders.

PARTICIPATION IN THE TRAINING EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Each year, Council members either Chair or participate on judging panels for the Training Excellence Awards. In 2006, the Council agreed to sponsor the 'Trainer of the Year Award' category of the Training Excellence Awards.

The Training Excellence Awards showcase the best in Western Australian vocational and education and training. The Awards recognise the outstanding endeavours of apprentices, trainees and vocational students, and the contribution to training made by trainers, training organisations and employers.

PARTICIPATION IN TRAINING FORUMS

The Council provided an information stand at two (2) Training Forums conducted by the Department of Education and Training in November 2006 and May 2007.

RTONET

RTONet is a direct link to appropriate electronic systems within the Department of Education and Training through one gateway that shows all its activities.

Registered training organisations can view their registration details with the Council including their contact details, scope of registration and delivery profile. They can also view qualifications/course details and the Training Records System on traineeships and apprenticeships. *RTONet* has proved a successful resource for registered training organisations in monitoring their registration activities.

SUPPORT PRODUCTS

A range of material is available to assist applicants seeking registration with the Council, including guides for applicants and application templates. A significant amount of this material is available on the Council's website.

OUTCOME 3 – Effective AQTF Support Services to Registered Training Organisations

Outcome Description

The Training Accreditation Council's success in achieving outcome three is demonstrated by the extent to which:

- Registered training organisations are aware of the requirements of the Australian Quality Training Framework Standards for Registered Training Organisations; and
- Registered training organisations implement the Australian Quality Training Framework requirements for RTOs.

Key Goal Areas

- One VET – To achieve a one VET approach for all providers
- Communication, Advocacy, Feedback – To improve communication and the public face of TAC
- National Consistency – To improve national consistency in the application of the AQTF.
- Championing Self Improvement & Good Practice Examples – To achieve improved quality through Good Practice Examples

Work undertaken by the Council to progress these priorities and to achieve outcome three is detailed in the following sections.

WORKSHOPS FOR RTOS

Workshops have been provided to promote knowledge and understanding of national and State policies, including the concept of training packages, competency based assessment and processes for registration and accreditation. Specific workshops include:

REGISTRATION INFORMATION SESSIONS

The TAC Secretariat provided free one on one information sessions to organisations and individuals considering becoming Registered Training Organisations. These sessions provided an overview of the opportunities and responsibilities under the AQTF associated with being a Registered Training Organisation and the process for registration. It is expected that these sessions will help organisations make a decision whether to proceed or seek other options in relation to becoming a RTO.

The structure of the sessions was largely participant driven, with information based on the requirements of the organisation or individual. The sessions were flexible and aimed to provide the participant with the information required to continue on their chosen path. Key areas discussed include:

- National Skills Framework
- Rights and Responsibilities of RTOs
- Alternatives to Registration
- The Registration Process
  - o The application process (incl. Self Assessment)
  - o The Audit Process
- Course Accreditation (where appropriate)
- Where to from Here?

REGISTRATION STANDARDS WORKSHOPS

A full day workshop designed for training organisations that have decided to become a registered training organisation and existing registered training organisations going through renewal of registration. The workshops were conducted by members of the Council's external panel of auditors and provide an understanding of the registration process, assistance in interpreting the registration standards and understanding the role of evidence in the submission process.

HELP – THE AQTF AUDITOR IS COMING! WORKSHOP

The Council has implemented workshops that assist registered training organisations understand the audit process by describing what to expect from an audit and providing useful strategies to help them through the audit process.

The Council provided 70 workshops and information sessions to registered training organisations during the reporting period. A breakdown of the type and number of workshops conducted is provided in Table 3.

Table 3: Workshops delivered to RTOs July 2006 - June 2007

Type of Workshop / Session	Number of Workshops / Sessions conducted	Total number of Participants
AQTF Registration Standards	5	54
Help – the AQTF Auditor is Coming	5	55
Information Sessions	60	101

In addition to delivering the workshops, the TAC Secretariat regularly reviews the content and delivery style of the workshops to ensure that the information provided is accurate and being delivered through the most appropriate medium.

OTHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR TRAINING ORGANISATIONS

To assist the Council, the Department of Education and Training provides a range of professional development opportunities for practitioners within the VET sector. The development opportunities available include a variety of information sessions and workshops including for example internal audit, which is designed to provide guidance to RTOs on internal audit. The workshops also assist RTOs to develop a risk management plan that will support compliance with Standard 1.8.

PROVISION OF INFORMATION ON THE COUNCIL'S WEBSITE

The website is the public face of the Training Accreditation Council, its policies, processes and functions; and the operations of the TAC Secretariat. The website is a source of reference for issues relating to registration of training organisations; the AQTF; accreditation of courses; the audit process; and a point of reference for other VET related issues.

The website is now the centre of the Council's communication strategy and provides the most up to date information about the operation of the Council.

The main users of the website are people from training organisations or prospective training organisations and as such, the website provides content that best suites their needs.

The Council's website has received positive feedback from a range of stakeholders who have confirmed that the interface provides them with the information they want when they need it.

APPENDIX 1 - Glossary of Terms

Accreditation means the formal recognition of a course by the State or Territory course accrediting body in line with the *Standards for State and Territory Registering/Course Accrediting Bodies*.

Accredited course means a structured sequence of vocational education and training that has been accredited and leads to an Australian Qualifications Framework qualification or Statement of Attainment.

Assessment means a process of collecting evidence and making judgements on whether competency has been achieved to confirm that an individual can perform to the standard expected in the workplace, as expressed in the relevant endorsed industry/enterprise competency standards or the learning outcomes of an accredited course.

Audit means a systematic, independent and documented process for obtaining evidence to determine whether the activities and related outcomes of a training organisation comply or continue to comply with the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations*.

Auditor means an independent person recognised by the Training Accreditation Council to ensure that the AQTF standards for registration/accreditation have been adequately addressed by an RTO.

Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) means the policy framework that defines all qualifications recognised in post-compulsory education, vocational education and training and higher education within Australia. The AQF comprises titles and guidelines, which define each qualification, together with principles and protocols covering articulation and certification.

Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) means the nationally agreed quality arrangements for the vocational education and training system agreed to by the Ministerial Council.

Internal audit means audits conducted by, or on behalf of, the organisation itself for internal purposes.

Mutual recognition applies nationally and means:

1   The acceptance of the decisions of the registering body that has registered a training organisation, or the course accrediting body that has accredited a course, by another registering/course accrediting body, without there being any further requirement, including:

   (a) the recognition by each registering body of the decisions of registering bodies in other States and Territories in relation to the registration of training organisations and the imposition of sanctions including cancellation of registration; and

   (b) the recognition by each course accrediting body of the decisions of course accrediting bodies in other States and Territories in relation to the accreditation of courses.

2   The recognition by all State and Territory registering/course accrediting bodies of the national endorsement of Training Packages as notified on the National Training Information Service.

3 The recognition and acceptance by an registered traning organisaiton of Australian Qualifications Framework qualifications and Statements of Attainment issued by other registered training organisations, enabling individuals to receive national recognition of their achievements.

National Training Framework (NTF) means the system of vocational education and training that:

a applies nationally;
b is endorsed by the ANTA Ministerial Council;
c is made up of the AQTF and nationally endorsed Training Packages.

Nationally Recognised Training - means training and assessment, delivered by a RTO, which meets the requirements specified in national industry/enterprise Training Packages or in accredited courses.

National Training Information Service (NTIS) means the National Register for recording information about registered training organisaitons, training packages and accredited courses.

Non-compliance means failure to comply with one or more of the Australian Quality Training Framework standards.

Period of registration means the period for which a registered training organisation is registered. The period of registration is up to five years (unless cancelled or suspended).

Registered Training Organisation (RTO) means a training organisation registered by State/Territory Recogntion Authorities as Nationally recognised, for the provision of training products and services.

Scope (of registration) means the range of training products and services, within one or more defined industry areas, that a training organisation is registered to deliver.

Statement of Attainment means a record of recognised learning which, although falling short of an Australian Qualifications Framework qualification, may contribute towards a qualification outcome, either as attainment of competencies within a Training Package, partial completion of a course leading to a qualification, or completion of a nationally accredited short course which may accumulate towards a qualification through Recognition of Prior Learning processes.

Strategic Industry Audit means the audit of RTOs operating in a specific industry or industry sector targeted on the basis of identified risks relating to that industry or sector.

Training package means a set of national training resources consisting of national competency standards, assessment guidelines and national qualifications. These components will be endorsed by the National Training Framework Committee and approved by Ministers. The package can also include non-endorsed components, namely: assessment materials, learning strategies and professional development materials.

Training products means Training Packages qualifications and accredited courses.

Training Provider School means a school registered with the Council under the Joint Ministerial Policy Statement.

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APPENDIX 2 - Acronyms

AQF　　　　　Australian Qualifications Framework
AQTF　　　　Australian Quality Training Framework
AQTF 2007　　Australian Quality Training Framework 2007
ITC　　　　　Industry Training Council
NTF　　　　　National Training Framework
RCAB　　　　Registering and Course Accrediting Body
RTO　　　　　Registered Training Organisation
TAC　　　　　Training Accreditation Council
VET　　　　　Vocational Education and Training