Annual Report

2009-2010

Training Accreditation Council
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

To the Hon Peter Collier MLC

MINISTER FOR ENERGY; TRAINING AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

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 2009 and ending 30 June 2010.

Ian C Hill
CHAIRMAN
TRAINING ACCREDITATION COUNCIL

14 September 2010

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CHAIR'S REPORT

I am pleased to present to you the Training Accreditation Council's 2009-2010 Annual Report.

During the 2009-2010 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 2009-10, the Council has risk assessed 726 applications, undertaken 386 audits of registered training organisations (RTOs), endorsed 121 initial and renewal of registration applications and accredited or re-accredited 120 courses.

Of major significance over the past 12 months was the amended Vocational Education and Training Act 1996, which came into effect on 10 June 2009. The amendments provided increased flexibility for the Council in managing the business of registration, and significant work was undertaken to ensure the legislative amendments were implemented and incorporated into the Council's policies and procedures.

In addition, there has been a national review of quality assurance arrangements and the development of the strengthened Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF). The new Framework will be implemented on 1 July 2010. The Training Accreditation Council has worked collaboratively with the Australian government and all State and Territory governments to develop these new arrangements and will continue working with them to ensure national consistency in application and monitoring of the AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Registration, and outcomes based auditing. A comprehensive communication strategy was implemented to ensure all RTOs are aware of the new requirements.

RTOs have collected data for the first reporting period under the recently introduced Quality Indicators for learner satisfaction and employee engagement, and have submitted for the second time Competency Completion data. This data is used by the Council Secretariat in assessing and responding to the risk of non-compliance.

To increase consumer protection, the Council implemented the Client Qualifications Register to collect and maintain records of student achievements for all nationally recognised training delivered by RTOs registered in WA.

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 one-on-one information sessions for all prospective applicants and continuing its case management model to support RTOs through their registration period.

The Council would also like to acknowledge the 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 strengthened AQTF, and over the next 12 months this will continue in the implementation of the new AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Registration. 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 strengthened AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Registration.

The Council would like to acknowledge the professionalism and dedication from officers of the Training Accreditation Council Secretariat of the Department of Education Services and the ongoing assistance provided in supporting the work of the Council.

On balance, the vocational education and training sector in Western Australia continues to mature. Given the commitment of RTOs to embrace the AQTF as a quality assurance system for improvement, the Council looks forward to building on the excellent progress already made in Western Australia.

Ian C Hill
CHAIRMAN
TRAINING ACCREDITATION COUNCIL

2009-10 HIGHLIGHTS

Major achievements for 2009-10

The Council:

- endorsed 121 initial and renewal of registration applications and 290 extension to scope applications;
- approved a total of 120 courses for accreditation and re-accreditation;
- undertook 386 audits, which included 102 initial and renewal registration audits; 73 accreditation reviews; 105 monitoring audits and 106 extension to scope audits;
- conducted 726 risk assessments of RTO applications. Of the 726, 524 (72%) did not require an audit and 202 applications (28%) required either a desk and/or site audit;
- continued its strong focus on engaging and involving stakeholders and peak bodies in matters related to quality assurance and recognition arrangements;
- conducted 89 information sessions related to the AQTF, with participants from across Western Australia attending. Each information session focuses on the requirements of becoming an RTO and industry requirements;
- continued to review risks associated with the closure of RTOs and developed strategies for managing identified risks;
- engaged with key industry regulatory bodies to ensure that they can be confident that the training and assessment practices of RTOs adequately address their regulatory requirements;
- the Council in conjunction with the Department of Education Services has played a leading role in the review of national quality arrangements and support in the development of the strengthened AQTF;
- undertook significant work to ensure the VET legislative amendments introduced in June 2009 were implemented and incorporated into the Council's policies and procedures; and
- sponsored the 2009 'Trainer of the Year Award' category of the Western Australian Training Awards, with support from the Department of Education Services.

Major focus for 2010-11

- Continue to review Council operations and implement changes as a result of the VET legislative amendments;
- Implement changes as a result of the review of national quality arrangements to strengthen the AQTF;
- Implement the AQTF Quality Indicators and review the ongoing implementation of the AQTF 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;
- maintain a leadership 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 Business Plan and Audit Strategy; and
- continue to engage and consult 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 Training and Workforce Development for the period 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2010.

The Council's Business Plan is prepared on a financial year basis. Where possible, data for the 2009-10 reporting period and both the 2008-09 and 2007-08 reporting periods have been provided to allow a comparative assessment of the activities and achievements of the Council.

The report is structured to include four (4) main sections (see below), which relate to the key outcome areas from the Council's business plan. Each section incorporates a range of indicators that the Council has developed that will be the focus of their work over the medium term. The indicators complement the four key outcomes identified below:

- the Council's legislative functions and responsibilities under the AQTF are carried out and managed effectively;

- the Council communicates effectively with clients and stakeholders;

- the Council effectively engages with relevant industry bodies; and

- the Council's clients are satisfied or very satisfied with the services provided by the Council.

INTRODUCTION

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 and 7A 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 training providers; and

- accredit courses.

In discharging its functions, the Council may also:

- inquire into training providers and courses;

- vary, suspend or cancel registration;

- vary, suspend or cancel accreditation; and/or

- cancel qualifications.

Provision for appeals against Council's decision is available through the State Training Board under section 58G of the Act.

MEMBERSHIP

The Training Accreditation Council has seven members who are appointed by the Minister for Training and Workforce Development in accordance with the Vocational Education and Training Act 1996. They are selected on the basis of their expertise, qualifications and experience relevant to the Council's functions.

In December 2009, Mr Mark Simpson tendered his resignation from the Council.

Ms Liz Harris
Challenger TAFE

Miss Janelle Dawson
Sterling Business College Pty Ltd

Ms Lorraine Carter
Consultant

Mr David Wood
Curriculum Council

Dr Irene Ioannakis
WesTrac Pty Ltd

Mr Iain McDougall
Hospitality Group Training

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 Body and Course Accrediting Body under the AQTF.

The AQTF is a set of nationally agreed quality assurance arrangements for training and assessment services delivered by training organisations. It also comprises of Standards for the accreditation of courses. The AQTF was initially implemented in 2002 and revised again in 2005 and 2007. The AQTF has also been reviewed in 2010 with the strengthened AQTF due for implementation on 1 July 2010.

The AQTF comprises:

a) AQTF Essential Standards for Registration;

b) AQTF Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies;

c) AQTF Excellence Criteria;

d) AQTF Standards for Accredited Courses; and

e) AQTF Standards for State and Territory Course Accrediting Bodies.

The Council is responsible for ensuring compliance with the relevant standards and for complying with both the Standards for Registering Bodies 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. The Training Accreditation Council Secretariat also provides substantial support to the work of the Council on policy issues.

The Council formally met 23 times over the twelve months to 30 June 2010, which consisted of 9 full Council meetings and 14 Executive Committee meetings. The Council holds full meetings on a 6 weekly basis to consider applications from organisations. Executive Committee meetings are held approximately every two (2) weeks to consider additional applications, resulting in Council considering applications within a relatively short period of time.

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 Business Plan for the Council that is prepared on a three year basis (from 1 July 2008 – 30 June 2011) 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 also reports on VET regulation related outcomes to the National Quality Council 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 2008-11. 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 and operational plans.

The Council has developed four (4) Key Outcomes that will be the focus of its work over the medium term. Sitting underneath the Key Outcomes are a range of indicators that the Council uses to meet and measure, and report against annually. In addition, the 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 – The Council's legislative functions and responsibilities under the AQTF are carried out and managed effectively

Outcome Indicators

The Training Accreditation Council's success in achieving Outcome 1 is demonstrated by the extent to which the following indicators have been achieved:

- Council's membership is maintained in accordance with the Vocational Education and Training Act 1996 (the Act);

- Council meetings are conducted in accordance with the Act and the Council's Code of Conduct;

- Council's policies and processes are reviewed regularly;

- The TAC Secretariat's quality system, which provides the framework for Council to carry out its functions and responsibilities, is reviewed regularly;

- Internal audits are conducted regularly to ensure that Council's policies and processes are being implemented;

- Compliance is maintained with the AQTF Registering Body Standards and Course Accrediting Body Standards; and

- Council's annual reporting requirements are met.

Work undertaken by the Council to progress these priorities and to achieve Outcome 1 is detailed as follows.

AMENDMENTS TO LEGISLATION

On 10 June 2009, amendments to the Act and the Vocational Education and Training regulations (General) 2009 (the Regulations) came into effect. The amendments to the Act and the associated Regulations have impacted on the functions of the Council, the requirements to be met by RTOs and impacted on the operations of the Apprenticeship system in Western Australia.

Many of the changes included in the Act and Regulations were already familiar to RTOs as they had been incorporated into the Ministerial Guidelines. The Regulations have now replaced the Guidelines.

The changes that have impacted on the operation of the Council include:

- **Classification of qualifications** – introduction of a new classifications system that prescribes the qualifications that can only be delivered through a training contract and the qualifications that can be delivered through a training contract.

The new classification system impacts on RTOs delivering qualifications through apprenticeship pathways and those delivering traditional apprenticeship qualifications to international students through institutional delivery.

- **Skills Recognition** – the Council's role in providing skills recognition services for trade qualifications ceased, with the amendments enabling RTOs to offer skills recognition for trade qualifications.

- **Return of information to the Council** – the Regulations require RTOs to provide a return to the Council on a six (6) monthly basis containing the details of the qualifications and units of competency that have been achieved by individual students. This information has been collected on two (2) occasions during this reporting period.

REGISTRATION OF TRAINING ORGANISATIONS

There were 1728 training organisations registered to deliver training in Western Australia on 30 June 2010. A total of 547 were organisations registered with the Council, with the remaining 1181 registered to deliver in Western Australia under national recognition arrangements. In addition, 66 of the 547 organisations registered with the Council were also delivering vocational education and training under the AQTF in countries other than Australia.

During the reporting period the overall number of organisations registered with the Council has decreased since the last reporting period from 1,181 in 2008-09 to 1,155 in 2009-10. The total number of Western Australian RTOs also remained fairly steady with a 7% increase from 508 in 2008-09 to 547 in 2009-10.

It is worthy of note that Western Australia implemented the necessary delegation to enable the National Audit and Registration Agency (NARA) to manage registration and audits on behalf of the Council. However, none of the Western Australian registered training providers have chosen to have their registration managed by NARA.

During the 2009-10 year, the Council endorsed the following applications:

- 68 initial registrations;

- 53 renewal of registrations;

- 290 extensions to scope; and

- 714 notifications received from RTOs adding courses/qualifications within their current scope.

During the reporting period one RTO had its registration cancelled by the Council.

Graph 1 reports on registration activity that has occurred in 2009-10 and provides comparisons with the 2007-08 and 2008-09 reporting periods.

Graph 1: Registration Activity July 2009 – June 2010

Applications Endorsed by the Training Accreditation Council

	Initial Registration	Renewal of Registration	Extension to Scope	Addition Within
Jul 09 - Jun 10	68	53	290	714
Jul 08 - Jun 09	75	106	285	476
Jul 07 - Jun 08	51	114	214	421
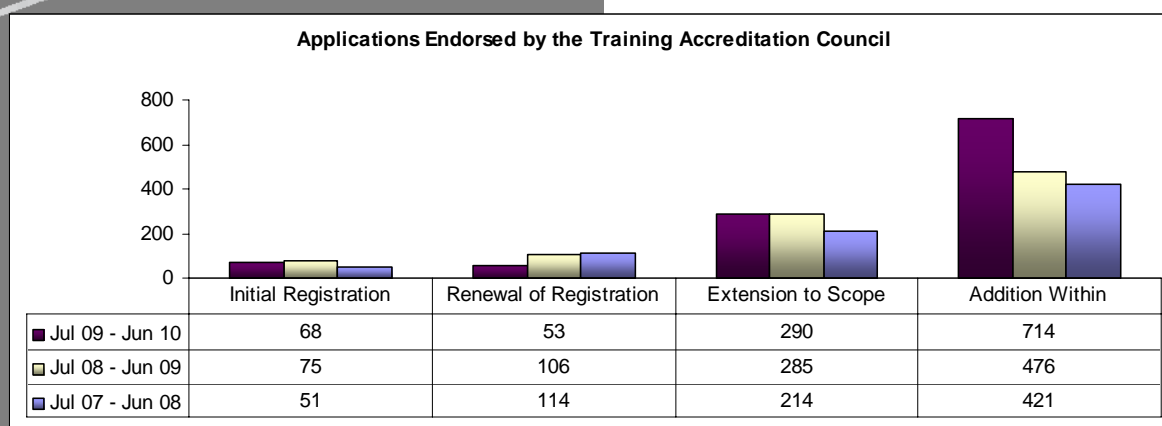
There was a significant drop in renewals of registration in this reporting period (53) compared with 2008-09 (106), a 50% decrease. This is an expected outcome due to the cyclic nature of the re-registration period.   Also noteworthy is the increase in Addition Within applications, which rose by more than 30%, as providers move to new training packages.

NATIONAL RECOGNITION

In addition to the training organisations registered by the Council as at 30 June 2010, there were 1181 interstate RTOs which operate, or plan to operate within Western Australia.

The number of organisations delivering under national recognition does not reflect actual delivery by interstate registered training organisations in Western Australia. Many organisations register with their primary Registering Body their intent to deliver, however, for a variety of reasons do not proceed to actual delivery. Graph 2 shows RTOs, by State of registration, or National Registering Body, operating in Western Australia.

Graph 2: Interstate RTOs registered to deliver in Western Australia as at 30 June 2010

Number of RTOs registered to operate in Western Australia under National Recognition

	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	TAS	ACT	NT	NARA
Jun-10	408	284	242	94	19	65	16	53
Jun-09	405	326	212	92	22	61	15	22
Jun-08	348	323	151	83	18	51	12	0
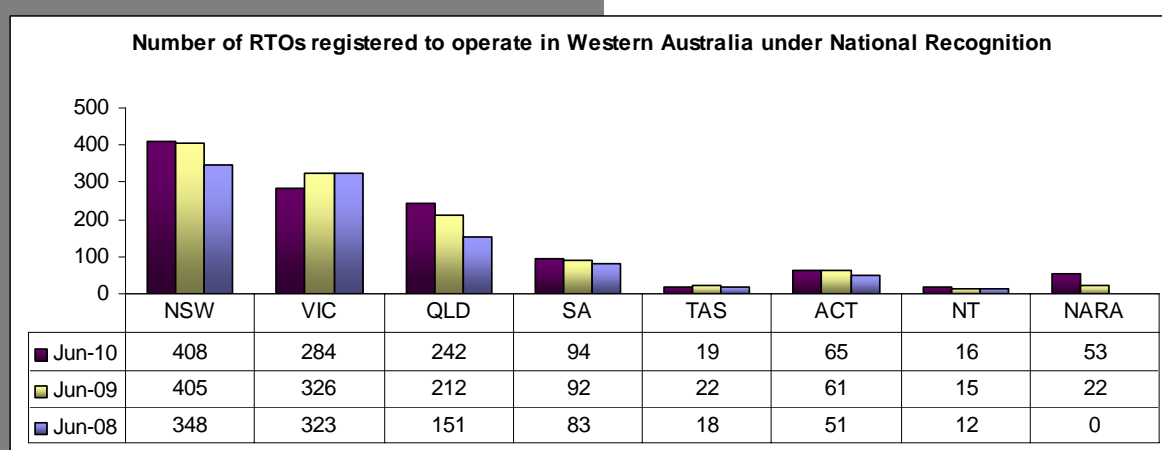
THE TRAINING ACCREDITATION COUNCIL AUDIT STRATEGY

The Council, as part of its ongoing improvement process, implements a continuous audit strategy. This ensures a more flexible and fluid audit strategy, with the ability to address identified issues as they arise to complement the national approach to risk management and enable monitoring on an ongoing basis. The audit strategy includes regulatory audits such as registration audits, follow up audits and audits in response to complaints.

Audits conducted by the Council were in accordance with the AQTF Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies and the Audit Handbook (a reference guide for conducting audits of training organisations against the AQTF Essential Standards for Registration). Non compliances identified at audit were processed in accordance with the National Guideline for Managing Non-Compliance.

Applications to the Council from training organisations are risk assessed in line with the National Guideline for Risk Management. Risk indicators which focus on the performance of the RTO delivering quality skills outcomes and supplementary indicators which apply to the operational context of the RTO, determine the type, scale and scope of an audit.

SUPPLEMENTARY RISK INDICATORS FOR WESTERN AUSTRALIA

In August 2008, the Council agreed to incorporate specific Western Australian risk indicators in addition to the existing supplementary risk indicators. The additional State risk indicators have been developed to enhance the national risk assessment process and address specific concerns within Western Australia.

Additional indicators endorsed by Council include for example: applications for qualifications from the TAA04 Training and Assessment Training Package; delivery of training through an apprenticeship or traineeship pathway; significant increase in levels of qualifications; overseas delivery; additional compliance and policy requirements imposed by other government agencies; and change of key staff within the organisation.

MANAGEMENT OF THE ANNUAL AUDIT SCHEDULE

The Council is responsible for undertaking audits of RTOs against the three essential standards for registration specified in the AQTF. The Council also undertakes accreditation reviews against the Standards as specified in the AQTF Standards for Accredited Courses.

The Council, in line with the National Guideline for Risk Management, has implemented a risk managed approach to audits with risk assessments undertaken for all applications. An RTO's risk rating, which is determined by evaluating relevant information, may result in an RTO not requiring an audit.
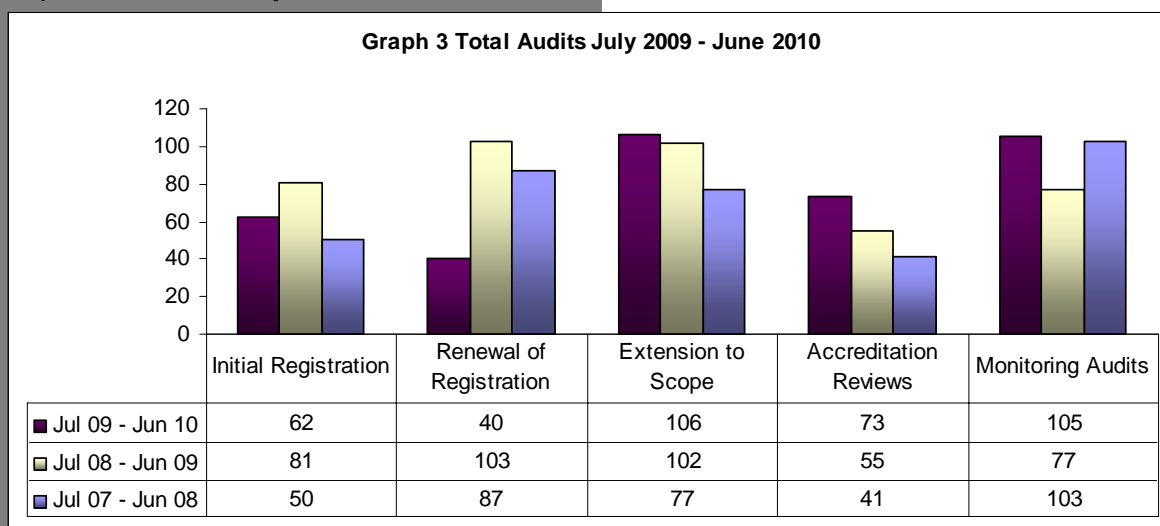
During the 2009-10 reporting period, a total of 726 RTO risk assessments were undertaken by the Council. This represents an increase of over 16% when compared with the 2008-09 reporting period total of 604.

Of the 726 risk assessments undertaken in 2009-10, 524 applications (72%) did not require an audit, while an external desk and/or site visit audit was conducted for the remaining 202 applications (28%).

The Council's 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 Training and Workforce Development's Delivery and Performance Agreement held with private RTOs in receipt of public funds.

The Council's integrated approach to auditing helps minimise disruption to RTOs. Graph 3 provides information on the type and number of audits conducted in the reporting period.

Graph 3: Total audits July 2009 – June 2010

Graph 3 Total Audits July 2009 - June 2010

	Initial Registration	Renewal of Registration	Extension to Scope	Accreditation Reviews	Monitoring Audits
Jul 09 - Jun 10	62	40	106	73	105
Jul 08 - Jun 09	81	103	102	55	77
Jul 07 - Jun 08	50	87	77	41	103

A total of 386 audits were undertaken in the twelve (12) month period ending 30 June 2010. This represents a decrease of 7% from the 2008-09. There was a significant decrease (61%) in renewal of registration audits, as a result of the number of registrations expiring in this period compared with 2008-09.

Most notable during the reporting period is the increase in monitoring audits. This is due to the inclusion of the Strategic Audits which added another 24 audits to the usual audit activity.

Audits were undertaken in line with the Training Accreditation Council's audit strategy, which 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 as follows:

Security Industry Audit

In March 2010, the Training Accreditation Council commenced a strategic industry audit of security training in Western Australia and will be completed in the next reporting period. The request for the Council to conduct a strategic audit of RTOs stems from concerns raised at both the national and State level regarding the quality of training in the security industry.

A reference group has been established comprising of representatives from the WA security industry, Police licensing and the Council's Secretariat. The strategic audit focuses on the following areas:

- CPP20207 Certificate II in Security Operations (qualification and/or units);
- CPP30407 Certificate III in Security Operations (qualification and/or units); and
- relevant qualifications (or units) from the PRS03 Asset Security Training Package.

The purpose of the strategic audit is to quality assure the training provided in the security industry and to:

- determine the level of compliance with the *AQTF Essential Standards for Registration* by individual RTOs;
- identify and analyse key areas of compliance and non-compliance with the *AQTF Essential Standards for Registration;*
- identify key issues impacting on training and assessment outcomes and good training and assessment practice;
- provide comment on whether systemic challenges impact on the delivery of training within the security industry; and
- recommend strategies to address key issues and to strengthen the quality of training and assessment.

A final report will be prepared and will present the findings of the strategic audit for the consideration by the Council, with the audit findings to be reported to the National Quality Council. The outcomes of the strategic will be reported in the 2010-11 reporting period.

Training and Assessment Audit

The Training Accreditation Council Secretariat was commissioned by the National Quality Council to coordinate a national strategic industry audit (NSIA) of the TAA 40104 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. The objectives of the audit were to assess trends in the implementation of the TAA, identify and analyse key areas of compliance and non-compliance and recommend strategies to strengthen the quality of training and assessment for the qualification.

A steering committee comprising state and territory registering body representatives was established to oversee the project and a national project manager was appointed to coordinate the audits and prepare the national report.

The audits involved a preliminary survey of all RTOs with the qualification on their scope of registration, an employer satisfaction survey, a student satisfaction survey and site visit audits of a sample of RTOs. The audit sample was based on nationally agreed criteria, which encompassed a diversity of RTO types, funding sources, locations, client groups, delivery methods and learning pathways.

Audits focussed on two units of competence, TAADEL404B Facilitate work based learning and TAAASS402C Assess competence and the assessment of RTO compliance with the Australian Qualification Training Framework Standard 1, Standard 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 and Standard 3.2.

112 Western Australian RTOs were identified with the TAA40104 on scope of registration. 93 RTOs responded to the online survey. Data from the survey indicated that 4,856 learners were enrolled in the full TAA40104 qualification; 2,776 were enrolled in skill sets or one or more units; 2,694 full qualifications and 2,359 statements of attainment were issued in 2009.

24 WA RTOs (21%) of the total of 112 were selected for site visit audits. The sample included a range of RTO types and sizes, funding sources, delivery locations and methods, client groups and number of enrolments. Other parameters included the date and outcome of the last audit.

Overall, the WA audits found a wide variation in the level of compliance. 50% of the RTOs audited were found to be compliant with the Standards audited. Of these, 33% were fully compliant and 17% were compliant with opportunities for improvement. The other 50% were found to be non-compliant in areas relating to inadequate learning and assessment strategies and tools, lack of evidence of consultation with industry, deficient record keeping systems and poor evidence of the systematic collection, analysis and action on information for improvement.

A report on the WA audit provides six (6) recommendations to address the findings.

Recommendations include transition and audit strategies for RTOs with TAA40104 on scope of registration who are adding the revised TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment to scope; tighter requirements to demonstrate business viability for RTOs applying to add the new qualification to scope for the first time; and support for the ongoing professional development of trainers and assessors. The WA report has been published and is on the TAC website.

COURSE ACCREDITATION

Accredited courses meet training needs not addressed by Training Packages. The Council does not accredit a course if a Training Package qualification exists that can meet the same training outcome through customisation.

At 30 June 2010, there were 297 accredited courses in Western Australia. The number of accredited courses continued to drop from 389 in 2007-08 and 345 in 2008-09, to 297 in this reporting period. During 2009-10 the Council approved a total of 120 courses for accreditation and re-accreditation, an increase of over 25% from the previous reporting period.

In 2009-10 the total number of courses accredited decreased slightly, while the total number of courses re-accredited by the Council increased significantly from 60 in 2008-09 to 97 in 2009-10, an increase of 62% during the reporting period.

During the reporting period, the Council considered 78 proposals to extend the accreditation period of courses which would have otherwise expired. The Council considers extensions to course accreditations 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 changeover time from one course to another.

Table 1 and Graph 4 summarise the accreditation activity undertaken in the reporting period.

Table 1: Accreditation Activity July 2009 – June 2010

Activity	Number of courses
Courses accredited	23
Courses re-accredited	97
Courses extended	78
Courses expired	161

Graph 4: Accreditation by AQF level July 2009 – June 2010

Accreditations by AQF level as at June 2010

	Course in	Cert I	Cert II	Cert III	Cert IV	Diploma	Advanced Diploma	Graduate Certificate	Graduate Diploma	Vocational Graduate Certificate	Vocational Graduate Diploma
Jun-10	49	20	19	25	63	62	41	1	3	4	10
Jun-09	76	24	20	35	68	63	35	3	5	5	11
Jun-08	84	23	26	38	80	68	47	3	7	4	9
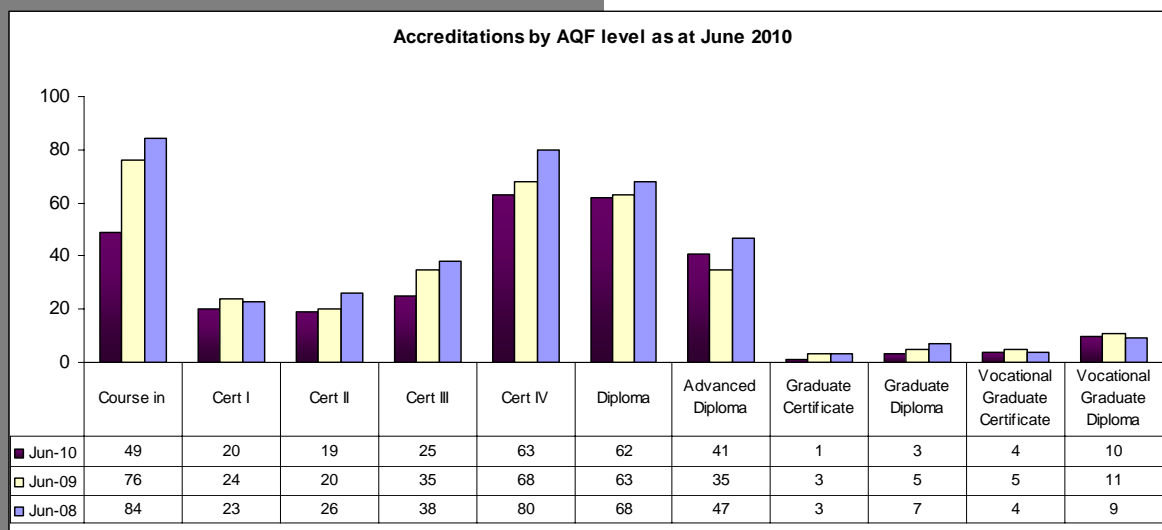
QUALITY ASSURANCE AND COMPLIANCE – REGISTERING AND COURSE ACCREDITING BODY REPORTING AND INTERNAL AUDIT

The *AQTF Standards for Registering Bodies* and the *AQTF Standards for Course Accrediting Bodies* both require that each registering body and course accrediting body report annually to the National Quality Council (NQC). As part of these arrangements the Training Accreditation Council reports on its performance using national agreed qualitative and quantitative data. These reports inform the national VET sector on quality issues and the management of risks to sustainable quality outcomes.

During 2009-10, work progressed at a national level on the development of effective quality indicators for registering bodies and course accrediting bodies.

The Council reported to the NQC in May 2010 on the operation of the AQTF in Western Australia and reported activity data and outcomes against the quality indicators for the 2009 calendar year. The report addressed ongoing implementation and monitoring of the AQTF and identified emerging trends and issues related to the performance of the Council's regulatory function in Western Australia.

The Council, as both a registering and course accrediting body, is also subject to ongoing monitoring and periodic independent audit of its performance against both sets of AQTF standards as determined by the NQC. The NQC deemed that an independent audit of State and Territory Registering and Course Accrediting Bodies was not required during the 2009-2010 reporting period given the requirement to report activity data and report against the quality indicators.

During September 2009, the Council conducted an internal audit of its compliance against the course accrediting body standards. The audit was undertaken by officers from the Education and Training Regulation Directorate of the Department of Education Services. The audit identified a number of opportunities for improvement across the accreditation area. All improvement opportunities were reviewed and incorporated as a matter of priority. A review of both the registration and accreditation areas will be conducted in the next reporting period.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR AUDITORS

The current panels of RTO Auditors and Accreditation Reviewers were appointed through a public tender process and commenced on 1 January 2007. The panel was appointed for a one year period with three one year extension options available.

The primary role of the auditors is to undertake audits of RTOs to determine compliance with the AQTF Standards for Essential Standards for Registration. Accreditation Reviewers assist the Council to evaluate submissions for accreditation to ensure that they reflect the requirements of the national standards. In addition, audits of RTOs may determine compliance with contracts associated with receipt of public funding for training. Auditors and Accreditations Reviewers appointed to the panel are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Panel of auditors and accreditation reviewers as at 30 June 2010

PANEL	AUDITOR	COMPANY
RTO Auditors	Mairead Dempsey	Assessment Training and Research Consultancy Services
	Russell Docking	Skills Resource Management Systems
	Cherrie Hawke	Torque Holdings Pty Ltd
	Julie Large	JAL Enterprises
	Helen McCarter	Helen McCarter Consultant
	Lourdes McCleary	Lourdes McCleary Consultant
	Steve Trice	Canington International Training
	Claire Werner	APPLIC8
Accreditation Reviewers	Russell Docking	Skills Resource Management Systems
	Cherrie Hawke	Torque Holdings Pty Ltd
	Lourdes McCleary	Lourdes McCleary Consultant
	Steve Trice	Canington International Training

The Department, on behalf of the Council, implements a performance management model for the panel of external auditors and accreditation reviewers. Under this model, the Department provides moderation activities to ensure consistency in the approach to RTO audits and reviews of accreditation applications. All contracted auditors and accreditation reviewers are required to attend these moderation forums.

During the reporting period four (4) auditor moderation forums and two (2) accreditation reviewers' forum were conducted. The forums provide auditors and reviewers with briefings and updates on state and national developments, moderation activities and the opportunity to network and develop an agreed approach for the conduct of audits and reviews.

FEES FOR REGISTRATION OF TRAINING PROVIDERS

Registration fees for training organisations were last updated in 2008. As a result, registration fees have been reviewed and an increase will apply in the next reporting period, based on a two year CPI adjustment.

Table 3: Registration fees as at 30 June 2010

Type	Current fees (as at 30 June 2010)
Application Fee	$465
Annual Fee	$465
Registration Fee	$1625 (up to 2 industry areas) $495 for each additional area
Extension to Scope of Registration Fees	$995 ($495 for each additional area)
Course Accreditation Fee	$1080 (from Certificate I above) $540 (short course)

OUTCOME 2 – The Council communicates effectively with clients and stakeholders

Outcome Indicators

The Training Accreditation Council's success in achieving Outcome 2 is demonstrated by the extent to which the following indicators have been achieved:

- Council's communication strategy is implemented;

- The Client Survey is reviewed to encourage clear and constructive feedback is gained from clients; and

- Council considers feedback from clients and implements strategies for continuous improvement.

Work undertaken by the Council to progress these priorities and to achieve Outcome 2 is detailed as follows.

TRAINING ACCREDITATION COUNCIL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The Council has continued to work on a continuous improvement model for its communication strategy and has been reviewing service provision and stakeholder engagement during the reporting period. Work on the Council's service standards and communication strategy will continue and be reported on in the next Annual Report.

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE 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 RTOs being audited; however, most of the complaints are resolved through discussion with the affected parties. The management of complaints is in accordance with the Council's established policy, which is published and available on the Council's website www.tac.wa.gov.au and the *National Guideline for Responding to Complaints about Vocational Education and Training Quality*.

During the 2009-10 reporting period 48 complaints were received by the Council, three (3) more than for the previous reporting period. Twelve (12) of these complaints remained open and under investigation as at 30 June 2010. A high percentage of the complaints were directly related to the issuance of incorrect qualifications and/or Statements of Attainment. A significant portion of the remaining complaints were related to Standard 1 and more specifically assessments conducted by registered training organisations.

Table 4 shows an overview of the complaints received during the reporting period by the AQTF Standards.

Table 4: Complaints by AQTF Standards

AQTF Standard	% of complaints received
Standard 1 – the RTO provides quality training and assessment across all of its operations	60%
Standard 2 – the RTO adheres to the principles of access and equity and maximises outcomes for its clients	42%
Standard 3 – management systems are responsive to the needs of clients, staff and stakeholders, and the environment in which the RTO operates	31%

Note: Complaints lodged can be against two (2) or more AQTF Standards and/or the Conditions of Registration.

MEETING OF CHAIRS FROM STATE AND TERRITORY REGISTERING BODIES

The Chairs of the State and Territory Registering Bodies met twice during the reporting period. The meetings were held in Melbourne on 4 November 2009 and Canberra on 26 March 2010.

Agenda items discussed includes:

- changes to the AQTF;
- progress towards the National VET Regulator;
- Quality Indicators for Registering Bodies and Course Accrediting Bodies; and
- education services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Review and Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency

These meetings provide States and Territories with the opportunity to discuss a range of matters relating to their functions and initiatives to ensure and promote national consistency.

PROVISION OF CONSUMER INFORMATION

The Council actively provides information to its clients and stakeholders, including material to promote and support the delivery of quality services in the sector.

PUBLICATIONS CD

Again this year, the Council Secretariat produced the popular CD which includes all the National and State specific information to assist training organisations, and other key stakeholders to quickly source relevant information. The information includes policies, templates and other tools to support the registration and monitoring process.

TAC NEWSLETTERS

The Council Secretariat continues to provide the regular newsletter, the TAC Update. The Update highlights key policy direction, changes and ongoing reminders to key stakeholders.

TAC WEBSITE

The Council's most frequently accessed electronic communication media is the TAC website. The website houses all Council Policy, AQTF documentation and other key information that is relevant to the sector. The website, the centre of the Council's communication strategy, has been regularly updated, with a major revision in June following the implementation of the new legislation.

WA TRAINING AWARDS

The Council continues to support the WA Training Awards. This year (as previously) the Council has sponsored the 'Trainer of the Year Award'. Given the Council's functions under the Vocational Education and Training Act, sponsorship of this award reinforces the Council's ongoing commitment to recognising quality training and assessment in the sector.

TRAINING FORUM

In May 2010, the Department of Education Services, on behalf of the Council provided an information booth at the Training Forum. This Forum is a key event for the sector, with representatives from a range of organisations attending, and seeking advice on VET matters. The information booth was again well attended, with the majority of questions around quality indicator reporting and the upcoming AQTF changes.

RTONET

RTONet is a web based database managed by the Department of Education Services, which provides RTOs with direct access to information linked to their registration.

RTOs can view their registration details with the Council including their contact details and scope of delivery. RTOs can submit applications for registration via RTONet and track the progress of their application. RTOs also use this system to apply for tenders as well as accessing information about traineeships and apprenticeships to which they are party.

RTONet is the mechanism through which the RTOs register statements of attainment and qualifications they have issued to their students (Client Qualifications Register) as well as the system where the Quality Indicator data for each organisation is recorded.

SUPPORT MATERIAL

A range of material is provided by the Department of Education Services to assist training providers that may be seeking registration or amending an existing registration, including guides and application forms. This information is generally provided electronically via the TAC website.

INFORMATION SESSIONS FOR RTOS

The Department of Education Services provides information sessions to assist and guide training organisations as they work within the national skills framework. Information provided covers national and state policies and guidelines, competency based training and assessment, training packages as well as accreditation and registration processes.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION SESSIONS

During the 2009-10 reporting period, the TAC Secretariat provided 89 free one-on-one information sessions to organisations or individuals that were considering becoming an RTO. These sessions are flexible and tailored to meet the requirements of the participants to ensure their opportunity is maximised.

Key areas that were discussed include:

- National Skills Framework;
- rights and responsibilities of RTOs;
- alternatives to registration;
- the Registration process;
    - Application processes
    - Audit processes
- course accreditation (where relevant); and
- the next steps in the registration process.

Feedback from the participants has indicated that these sessions are a positive contribution to the information provision of the Council.

OTHER RTO INFORMATION SESSIONS

The TAC Secretariat on behalf of the Council regularly attends meetings with peak industry bodies to provide information and answer questions from participants. The Secretariat will continue to engage with stakeholders through these forums with particular attention on the next reporting period with the new AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards to be implemented on 1 July 2010.

OTHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR TRAINING ORGANISATIONS

To assist the Council, the Department of Training and Workforce Development also provides professional development opportunities for training organisations and practitioners. These sessions provide information about the VET Sector, as well as workshops for practitioners around key concepts, such as Recognition of Prior Learning, Moderation of Assessment and self assessment against the AQTF.

OUTCOME 3 – The Council effectively engages with relevant bodies

Outcome Indicators

The Training Accreditation Council's success in achieving Outcome 3 is demonstrated by the extent to which the following indicators have been achieved:

- The Council engages with industry in the audit process; and

- The Council develops mutually beneficial working arrangements with other regulatory bodies.

Work undertaken by the Council to progress these priorities and to achieve Outcome 3 is detailed as follows.

CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

During 2009-10, the Council continued to actively consult with a range of stakeholders including government departments, training councils, RTOs, provider associations and industry bodies. Discussions focused on various training related issues and ensuring 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 focused on the revised AQTF to be implemented on 1 July 2010, RTO Quality Indicators, the Client Qualifications Register, assessment practice, training package related requirements, and negotiations regarding to the National VET Regulator.

The Council also focused on ensuring stakeholders were provided with relevant information on registration and accreditation requirements.

Organisations that the Council consulted with include: the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET), the Training and Development Association (TADA), all Western Australian Training Councils; Department of Commerce, Consumer Protection Branch, WA Police, TVET Australia; the Department of Training and Workforce Development, and the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

ENGAGEMENT WITH INDUSTRY REGULATORS

The engagement between industry regulators and registering bodies is a key component of the AQTF aimed at ensuring that training and assessment leading to a licensed outcome meets licensing and regulatory requirements.

During 2009-10, the Council focussed on the renewal and revitalisation of our engagement with licensing and regulatory bodies. The Secretariat wrote to licensing agencies with which collaborative arrangements were yet to be established inviting them to meet and explore formal or informal arrangements for collaboration.

A simplified Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) template was developed and new MOUs were established with Energy*Safety* WA (Department of Commerce), Marine Safety Business Unit (Department of Transport); Passenger Services Business Unit (Department of Transport); and the Multi-Combination Driver Standards Unit (Department of Transport).

Previously established relationships with WorkSafe, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority and the Australian Attorney-General's Department have been reinvigorated. Informal arrangements continue with the Builders Registration Board, the Plumbers Licensing Board and the Dangerous Goods Safety Branch (Department of Mines and Petroleum).

NATIONAL CONSISTENCY OF THE AUSTRALIAN QUALITY TRAINING FRAMEWORK

During 2009-10, the Training Accreditation Council continued to work collaboratively with the Australian government and State and Territory Governments in the regulation of the VET sector:

- **Regulation of VET sector and national consistency** – Since the implementation of the revised AQTF Standards in July 2007, the TAC Secretariat has been an active member of the National Consistency Action Group and its predecessor the National Registration and Accreditation Technical Committee. More recently, the Department through the TAC Secretariat provided State representation on the joint National Senior Officials Committee/National Quality Council Joint Working Group which provided advice on changes to the AQTF, due for implementation on 1 July 2010. In addition, the secretariat continued to provide key advice to national policy drivers through the National Consistency Action Group, a reporting committee of the National Quality Council, in relation to maintaining national consistency in VET regulation and audit practice.

- **National Accreditation standards and guidelines** – the Department is a member of the AQTF Course Accrediting Bodies Network. The network consists of representatives from all State and Territory accrediting bodies and met once (1) during the year to discuss consistency in the interpretation of the standards and accreditation issues impacting other jurisdiction

NEW REGULATORY ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE VET SECTOR

At its meeting held on 7 December 2009, the Council of Australian Governments endorsed the establishment of a national regulator for the VET sector. The national regulator will be established under Commonwealth legislation and will be responsible for the registration and audit of registered training providers and accreditation of courses.

A national standards council will also be established to provide advice to the Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment on national standards for regulation, including registration, quality assurance, performance monitoring, reporting, risk, audit, review and renewal of providers, and accreditation of VET qualifications.

Western Australia's approach

WA has adopted an approach that differs to that of other jurisdictions. Whilst WA is committed to ensuring effective national regulation of the VET sector and will participate in the national system, it will continue to regulate those providers who operate only in this State (the majority of providers in WA) through the Training Accreditation Council. The WA Government will enact legislation that will mirror the Commonwealth arrangements creating a nationally consistent regulatory environment.

The WA Government considers it important to maintain a balance between national consistency and State responsibility. The arrangement in WA will allow the State to be responsive to State based priorities and risks, and to receive ongoing reports on the health of VET providers operating in WA. It also allows intervention in line with public expectations and within a timely manner on matters relating to sub standard performance of providers.

As the State and Commonwealth arrangements will be identical, minimal disruption is anticipated. The details of these arrangements will be further developed in the second half of 2010, during which the State Government is committed to keeping the VET sector informed.

WA has always maintained excellent quality assurance of vocational education and training and this will continue under the new arrangements.

Under the new arrangements, students will retain the high level of flexibility and mobility that the national training system offers. Qualifications will continue to be transportable and fully recognised in any part of Australia. Under the new arrangements students can be assured that the quality of providers delivering in WA is consistent with providers located anywhere in Australia.

No students will be disadvantaged under the new arrangements.

The WA Government is committed to ensuring that WA providers are not disadvantaged, and WA's participation in the national system will be as seamless as possible.

REVIEW OF AUSTRALIAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

In 2009 the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) Council commenced a major review of the AQF aimed at strengthening the Framework by:
- improving pathways between the schools, vocational education and training and higher education sectors;
- ensuring that Australian qualifications continue to be recognised and valued nationally and internationally; and
- creating a contemporary and flexible framework that supports quality and takes Australia's education system into the future.

The proposed new structure comprises:
- 10 levels of increasing complexity within which existing qualification types in all education and training sectors have been located; and
- Learning outcome-based descriptors for each qualification type based on:
  - a common taxonomy of knowledge and skills;
  - application of the knowledge and skills;
  - embedded generic skills; and
  - a specified notional duration for each qualification type.

A suite of policies have also been issued to support the Framework, including:
- guidelines for each qualification type;
- policies and protocols for issuing qualifications;
- guidelines on cross-sector linkages and national principles and operational guidelines for the recognition of prior learning; and
- requirements for the inclusion of AQF qualifications on the *AQF Register of Recognised Education Institutions and Authorised Accreditation Authorities in Australia.*

The Training Accreditation Council contributed to the review through written responses to each of the draft consultation papers on the architecture and the qualifications issuance policy. TAC Secretariat staff also attended an information session held in Perth by the AQF Council in July 2010 to inform stakeholders about the features of the revised AQF.

OUTCOME 4 – The Council's clients are satisfied or very satisfied with the services provided by the Council

Outcome Indicators

The Training Accreditation Council's success in achieving Outcome 4 is demonstrated by the extent to which the following indicators have been achieved:

- Feedback from clients through surveys, focus groups, workshops etc. reflect satisfaction with the Council's services; and

- Suggested improvements are acted on where relevant.

Work undertaken by the Council to achieve Outcome 4 is detailed as follows.

FEEDBACK FROM RTOs

The Council collects feedback from registered training organisations following completion of audits during the initial and renewal of registration process. The feedback is incorporated into the Council's continuous improvement processes and is reported on a biannual basis. In November 2008 the TAC Secretariat, as a result of client feedback and as part of its focus on review and improvement, implemented an on-line survey facility for training organisations. The on-line survey facility complements the existing survey process.

During the 2009-10 reporting period, the survey results showed that 89% of respondents found that the audit process added value to their business. This is a slight decrease from 2008-09. In addition, 92% of respondents indicated that the pre-audit information provided by the registering body met their needs.

Results from stakeholder feedback consists of a number of forms including that received from RTOs via the audit survey, through direct contact with the TAC secretariat, through the Council's complaints handling process, and auditor feedback. This feedback is incorporated within the Department's review and improvement process.

A focus for the next reporting period will be the development and implementation of an annual stakeholder satisfaction survey which will canvass stakeholder satisfaction levels across the range of Council functions and services.

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 *AQTF 2007 Standards for State and Territory 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.

Apprenticeship/traineeship means a structured training arrangement for a person employed under an apprenticeship/traineeship training contract. It usually involves the person receiving training and being assessed both on and off the job.

Assessment means a process of collecting evidence and making judgments 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 of a Training Package or by the learning outcomes of an accredited course.

Audit means a planned, systematic and documented process used to assess an RTO's compliance with the *AQTF 2007 Essential Standards for Registration*. State and Territory registering bodies conduct independent audits as a condition of registration. RTOs can conduct internal audits to assess their compliance with the standards and their own policies and procedures as part of their continuous improvement process.

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 and training in Australia. The AQF comprises titles and guidelines that define each qualification, as well as the principles and protocols covering cross-sectoral qualification links and the issuing of qualifications and statements of attainment.

Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) means a set of nationally agreed quality assurance arrangements for training and assessment services delivered by training organisations.

Complaints process means a process by which a client of an RTO, or other interested parties, may raise a concern about the RTO's policies, procedures, services or products with a view to having them changed and improved.

Course accrediting body means the authority responsible, under the VET legislation and decision-making framework of a particular State or Territory, for accrediting courses for delivery both inside and outside Australia.

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

National Quality Council (NQC) means a committee of the Ministerial Council for Vocational and Technical Education. The NQC has a role in:

(a)   providing the Ministerial Council with advice on the operation of the AQTF 2007 and any changes to it that are considered necessary.

(b)   providing the State and Territory registering and course-accrediting bodies with information and advice on implementation of the AQTF 2007.

(c)   providing the Ministerial Council with information and advice on the operation of the AQTF 2007 in each state and territory, including advice on their registration, audit and related processes, and on the Commonwealth processes that support the AQTF 2007.

National recognition applies nationally and means:

(a)   The recognition by an RTO of the AQF qualifications and statements of attainment issued by other RTOs, thereby enabling national recognition of the qualifications and statements of attainment issued to any person.

(b)   The recognition by each State and Territory's registering body of the training organisations registered by any other States or Territory's registering body and of its registration decisions.

(c)   The recognition by all state and territory course accrediting bodies and registering bodies of the courses accredited by each State or Territory's course-accrediting body and of its accreditation decisions.

National Skills Framework (NSF) means the system of VET that:

(a)   applies nationally.
(b)   is endorsed by the Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment.

National Training Information Service (NTIS) means the national register for recording information about RTOs, Training Packages and accredited courses. NTIS is part of the National Skills Framework.

Registering body means the authority responsible, under the VET legislation and decision-making framework of a particular State and Territory, and in accordance with the *AQTF 2007 Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies,* for registering training organisations, including all the processes relating to registration and the imposition of sanctions on RTOs.

Registration means the formal recognition by a State or Territory registering body, in accordance with the *AQTF 2007 Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies,* that a training organisation meets the requirements of the *AQTF 2007 Essential Standards for Registration*. A training organisation must be registered in order to deliver and assess nationally recognised training and issue nationally recognised qualifications.

Registered Training Organisation (RTO) means a training organisation registered by a State or Territory registering body in accordance with the *AQTF 2007 Essential Standards for Registration* within a defined scope of registration. A training organisation must be registered in

order to deliver and assess nationally recognised training and issue nationally recognised qualifications.

Scope of registration means the particular services and products an RTO is registered to provide. The RTO's scope defines the specific AQF qualifications, units of competency and accredited courses it is registered to provide, and whether it is registered to provide:

(a)   both training delivery and assessment services, and to issue the relevant AQF qualifications and statements of attainment, or

(b)   only assessment services, and to issue AQF qualifications and statements of attainment.

Statement of Attainment means a formal certification in the VET sector by an RTO that a person has achieved:

(a)   part of an AQF qualification, or

(b)   one or more units of competency from a nationally endorsed Training Package, or

(c)   all the units of competency or modules comprising an accredited short course (meaning an accredited course that does not meet the requirements for a full AQF qualification).

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 nationally endorsed, integrated set of competency standards, assessment guidelines and AQF qualifications for a specific industry, industry sector or enterprise.

Training products means Training Packages qualifications and accredited courses.

APPENDIX 2 – Acronyms

AQF   Australian Qualifications Framework

AQTF   Australian Quality Training Framework

AQTF   2007 Australian Quality Training Framework 2007

ITC   Industry Training Council

NQC   National Quality Council

NSF   National Skills Framework

RTO   Registered Training Organisation

TAC   Training Accreditation Council

VET   Vocational Education and Training