Training Accreditation Council

Annual Report

2011-2012

Hon Murray Cowper

MINISTER FOR 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 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012.

Dr Irene Ioannakis
PRESIDING MEMBER
TRAINING ACCREDITATION COUNCIL

17 September 2012

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report fulfils the requirements of Section 30(1) of the *Vocational Education and Training (VET) Act 1996* (the Act) by reporting on the operations of the Training Accreditation Council to the Minister for Training and Workforce Development for the period 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012.

The Annual Report aligns to the Council's Business Plan which is prepared on a financial year basis and reflects its regulatory responsibilities under the Act and the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF). Where possible, data for the 2011-2012 reporting period and both the 2010-2011 and 2009-2010 reporting periods have been provided to allow a comparative assessment of the activities and achievements of the Council.

The report comprises:

- **Executive Summary** – this report includes:
    - ➢ the Chairman's report - an overview of the operation of the Council,
    - ➢ major achievements and highlights for 2011-2012, and
    - ➢ significant issues including current/emerging issues that impact/may impact upon the Council's workload.

- **Introduction** - Council at a glance – an overview of the Council's guiding principles, functions, membership, planning and reporting framework, context in which the Council works and fees and charges.

- **Performance against Key Priority Areas** – an overview of the Council's performance from 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012. This section of the report relates to the key areas of priority from the Council's Business Plan 2011 to 2014 and its achievements against them. The four key priority areas of the Council are identified below:

    - legislation and compliance;
    - communication and evaluation;
    - collaboration and engagement; and
    - quality processes and services.

The Council has aligned its key priority areas and guiding principles to meet the State Government's goal **of results-based service delivery: greater focus on achieving results in key service delivery areas for the benefit of all Western Australians**. In doing this, the Council demonstrates its commitment to achieving the best opportunities for current and future generations in Western Australia (WA).

1.2   CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I am pleased to present to you the Training Accreditation Council's (the Council) 2011-2012 Annual Report. During the 2011-2012 reporting period, the Council continued to provide a range of services to manage the quality assurance of VET in Western Australia.

In executing its functions, the Council has risk assessed 421 applications and undertaken 319 audits of Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), endorsed 58 initial and renewal of registration applications and accredited or re-accredited 73 courses. During 2011-12, the Council continued to focus on delivering products and services to manage and improve the quality of VET in Western Australia. This has included delivering information sessions for prospective applicants and continuing its case management model to support RTOs through the registration process.

Of major significance have been the establishment of the new national VET regulatory arrangements and the commencement of the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) effective from 1 July 2011. Under the new national arrangements the Council will continue to regulate providers operating only in Western Australia and Victoria. Providers delivering to international students and undertaking multi-jurisdictional delivery being regulated by ASQA.

Western Australia is committed to ensuring effective national regulation of the VET sector and has committed to enacting legislation that will mirror the Commonwealth arrangements creating a nationally consistent regulatory environment. The Council is committed to working collaboratively with ASQA to ensure the quality of training in WA is managed and regulated effectively.

The work of the Council in 2011-2012 has focused on the key areas of:

- strengthening requirements for Accredited Courses;
- strengthening its relationship with industry stakeholders;
- identifying risk in specific industry areas; and
- ongoing implementation of the strengthened standards for VET regulation.

A key focus for the Council has been the strengthening of its relationship with key industry and regulatory stakeholders in WA to improve rigour and quality assurance outcomes. To help facilitate this, Council has established a number of formal collaborative arrangements with industry regulators. In addition, in May 2012 Council held an industry forum with Training Council's to help strengthen existing relationships, identify industry specific issues and explore strategies to help improve the quality of training and assessment practices in WA.

An outcome of this work has been the identification of key areas where industry has raised concern with the quality of training. During 2011- 2012, the Council endorsed two Strategic Industry Audits (SIA), with both commencing during the reporting period. The two (2) audits focus on the qualifications required for work in

the Aged Care and Home & Community Care industry and the qualifications required for licensing in the Electrical industry. The audits were endorsed following concerns raised by local industry stakeholders, relevant regulatory and licensing bodies. These audits will ensure that all providers are complying with the requirements under the Standards, including Standards which may have been introduced since the provider's last audit.

A major focus of the Council's work in improving quality in the sector has been the implementation of the strengthened AQTF requirements introduced in the previous reporting period. The Council has continued to implement the key changes to the Standards with particular focus on the requirements for financial viability, financial management, fee protection and governance.

While a number of changes have now been implemented, in May 2012 a significant review of the Standards for Regulation of VET was commenced by the National Skills Standards Council (NSSC). As the Council is now able to assess the impact of previous changes in Standards on the quality of outcomes, WA is well placed to provide input and contribute to enhancing the quality assurance approach for the VET sector in future years.

In addition to the work of the Council in the area of provider regulation, the Council has responsibility for course accreditation. In line with Council's commitment to ongoing improvement a comprehensive review of the WA Course Accreditation function was undertaken to ensure that the process was streamlined and that policies and processes were implemented that reflect good practice. This included the introduction of a preliminary notice of intent process and the implementation of revised policies and procedures.

The Council would like to acknowledge the commitment that WA RTOs have made in ensuring that the quality of the WA training system remains at the highest level. The Council is confident that WA is well positioned to continue to provide quality training and assessment outcomes. The Council will continue to ensure the quality of training in WA is managed and regulated effectively.

The Council would also like to extend its appreciation to the Training Accreditation Council Secretariat of the Department of Education Services (DES) for their dedication, assistance and on-going professional conduct provided in supporting the work of the Council.

Dr Irene Ioannakis
PRESIDING MEMBER
TRAINING ACCREDITATION COUNCIL

1.3   2011-2012 HIGHLIGHTS

Major achievements for 2011-2012

The Council:

- endorsed 58 initial and renewal of registration applications and 220 extension to scope applications;
- approved a total of 73 courses for accreditation and re-accreditation;
- undertook 319 audits, which included 67 initial and renewal registration audits; 45 accreditation reviews; 67 monitoring audits and 140 extension to scope audits;
- conducted 421 risk assessments of RTO applications. Of the 421, 171 (41%) did not require an audit and 250 applications (59%) required either a desk and/or site audit;
- continued its focus on engaging and involving stakeholders and peak bodies in matters related to quality assurance and recognition arrangements;
- in May 2012, held an industry forum with Training Council's to identify industry specific issues and explore strategies to help improve the quality of training and assessment practices in WA;
- conducted 28 information sessions related to the AQTF, with participants from across WA attending. Each information session focused on the requirements of becoming an RTO and industry requirements;
- 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; and
- sponsored the 2011 'Trainer of the Year Award' category of the WA Training Awards.

1.4   SIGNIFICANT ISSUES IMPACTING ON COUNCIL

A number of significant current and emerging issues exist that could impact on the Council's ability to achieve its key priorities in 2012-2013, issues identified include:

- **Review of VET regulation standards** – in May 2012, a significant review of the Standards for Regulation of VET was commenced by the NSSC. The review will encompass both RTO and Regulator standards. While the standards review is not expected to be completed until the end of 2013, this project is likely to impact on the Council's resources during 2012-2013.

- **Working relationship with the National VET Regulator (ASQA)** - following the establishment of the national VET Regulator, a key focus for the Council in 2012-2013 will be the strengthening of the existing collaborative working relationship, both at a state and national level. Of particular importance will be ensuring the quality of training in WA is managed and regulated effectively, with minimal impact for WA RTOs.

- **Proposed legislative amendments** – as a result of the commitment by WA to participate in the national regulatory system as a non-referring state, WA has agreed to enact legislation that will mirror the Commonwealth arrangements creating a nationally consistent regulatory environment. The review of the legislation including the fees and charges model will be a major focus for the Council during the next reporting period. The implementation of the outcomes from the review has the potential to impact on the regulation of the WA VET sector.

- **Strategic Industry Audits (SIA)** - during 2011- 2012, the Council endorsed two SIA's, with both commencing during the reporting period. The two audits focus on the qualifications required for work in the Aged Care and Home & Community Care industry and the qualifications required for licensing in the Electrical industry. A major focus for 2012-2013 will be the finalisation of the audits and implementation of the outcomes from the SIA and improving the quality of training and assessment in the relevant industries.

- **Compliance with requirements for Trainers and Assessors** - ongoing monitoring of regulatory compliance of providers with the (TAE 40110) Certificate IV in Training and Assessment on their scope has occurred throughout 2011-2012 and will continue in 2012-2013. The qualification remains a high risk qualification and a provider's delivery in this industry area is taken into account during the risk assessment process.

- **Continued implementation of the strengthened AQTF** – a key focus for 2012-2013 will be the ongoing review of the requirements related to AQTF Condition 5 (Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial and Continuing Registration) and in particular the requirements for financial viability and financial management. A review will be undertaken to ensure RTOs have a clear understanding of the information required to address AQTF Condition 5 and robust review mechanisms are implemented by the Council.

2. INTRODUCTION - the Council at a glance

The Council delivers a client-focussed regulatory service for the vocational education and training sector in WA through quality assured registration and accreditation services.

2.1 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Council has developed guiding principles that communicate to the Council's stakeholders the way in which the Council intends to undertake its business. The Council's guiding principles underpin the commitment of the Council to:

- be open, accountable and transparent;
- be clear on its role as a regulatory body;
- embed an outcomes focus;
- be fair and equitable;
- maintain a culture of continuous improvement; and
- communicate clearly and concisely.

2.2 MEMBERSHIP

The Council has seven (7) members who are appointed by the Minister for Training and Workforce Development in accordance with the *Vocational Education and Training Act 1996*. Members are selected on the basis of their expertise, qualifications and experience relevant to the Council's functions.

The members are:

Mr Ian Hill, Chairman,

Ms Liz Harris, Challenger Institute of Technology,

Miss Janelle Dawson, Sterling Business College Pty Ltd,

Ms Lorraine Carter, Consultant,

Mr Jeffrey Gunningham, Consultant,

Dr Irene Ioannakis, Ioannakis and Associates; and

Mr Iain McDougall, Hospitality Group Training (WA) Inc.

2.3   FUNCTIONS OF THE TRAINING ACCREDITATION 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 WA.

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.

2.4   THE CONTEXT IN WHICH THE COUNCIL WORKS

The Council is an independent statutory body that provides for quality assurance and recognition processes for vocational education and training in WA. The Council operates within the National Skills Framework and is the WA 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 and also comprises of Standards for the accreditation of courses.

The AQTF comprises:

a) *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration;*

b) *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration;*

c) *AQTF Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies;*

d) *AQTF Excellence Criteria;*

e) *AQTF Standards for Accredited Courses; and*

f) *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 AQTF Standards for State and Territory Registering and Course Accrediting Bodies.

2.5 VET REGULATORY ARRANGEMENTS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

From the 1 July 2011, two (2) VET Regulators operate in WA. The Training Accreditation Council and the national VET regulator (ASQA) both have responsibility for the regulation of providers. This situation results from a meeting held on 7 December 2009 where the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) endorsed the establishment of a national regulator for the VET sector through the referral of State powers to the Commonwealth.

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 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 allows the State to be responsive to State based priorities and risks and to receive on-going 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.

The WA Government has been committed to ensuring that WA providers are not disadvantaged and the Council have ensured that transition to the new arrangements have been as seamless as possible.

2.6 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 2011 – 2014) and reviewed annually. The framework also consists of a corresponding operational plan for the support services provided by the DES and an Annual Report on the achievements of the Council. In addition, the Council also reports on VET regulation related outcomes to the NSSC each year.

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

2.7   FEES AND CHARGES

In WA fees and charges apply for the registration of training organisations and accreditation of VET courses with the Council.   In line with State Government requirements fees and charges are reviewed annually. As a result, registration fees for training providers and course accreditation fees were increased during 2011-2012. The approved schedule of fees and charges is provided at Table 1.

Table 1: Registration and accreditation fees as at 30 June 2012

Type	Current fees (as at 30 June 2012)
Application Fee	$570
Annual Fee	$570
Registration Fee	$1,990 (up to 2 industry areas) $605 for each additional area
Amendment to Registration Fees Range of fees apply dependent on the type of application	From $315 to $1,220
Course Accreditation Fees	$1,240 (from Certificate I above) $620 (short course)

Note: all fees exclude GST

3. KEY PRIORITY 1 – LEGISLATION AND COMPLIANCE

Outcome Indicators

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

3.1	The Council's governance requirements are met.
3.2	Council regulates training providers in accordance with the AQTF, the *Vocational Education and Training Act 1996* and *Vocational Education and Training (General) Regulations 2009*.

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

3.1 THE COUNCIL'S GOVERNANCE REQUIREMENTS ARE MET

3.1.1 Council Membership for 2011-2012

Membership of the Council continued to comply with the requirements of the VET Act during the reporting period. In June 2011, Mr David Wood completed his term of appointment and Mr Jeffrey Gunningham was appointed to the Council by the Minister.

3.1.2 Operation of the Council

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

The Council formally met 27 times over the twelve months to 30 June 2012, which consisted of 16 full Council meetings and 11 Executive Committee meetings. The Council holds full meetings on a monthly basis to consider applications from organisations, with additional meetings held as required. Executive Committee meetings are held approximately every four (4) weeks to consider additional applications, resulting in Council considering applications as soon as possible following assessment of the application.

3.1.3 Compliance with the AQTF Standards for Registering and Course Accrediting Bodies

The AQTF Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies and the AQTF Standards for State and Territory Course Accrediting Bodies both require that each registering body and course accrediting body report annually to the NSSC. As part of these arrangements the 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 2011-2012, NSSC agreed to interim reporting arrangements for regulators to report on their 2011 operations. The decision from NSSC reflected the impact of the establishment of the National VET Regulator and the proposed review of previous reporting arrangements adopted by the National Quality Council. As a result the NSSC agreed as part of its 2011-12 Work Plan to develop, in collaboration with regulators, a reporting mechanism for use in 2012 and beyond.

The Council reported to the NSSC in March 2012 on the operation of the AQTF in WA which included activity data and outcomes for the 2011 calendar year.

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 NSSC. The NSSC decided that given the volume of associated work with the planning for and transition to the National VET Regulator that an independent audit of State and Territory Registering and Course Accrediting Bodies was not a priority for the 2011-2012 reporting period.

To assess the Council's compliance with its legislative requirements, national standards and guidelines, an independent internal audit of the Council's quality systems and regulatory practices was undertaken during 2011. Following a selection process, a WA organisation experienced in compliance and performance auditing was appointed to undertake the project.

The internal audit report was finalised in July 2011 and considered by the Council at its meeting in September 2011. The report made a number of recommendations in relation to the functions of the Council and the work of the TAC Secretariat and the outcomes of the internal audit will be used to inform the Council's continuous improvement approach.

3.2 OVERVIEW OF THE REGULATORY MARKET

3.2.1 Registration of Training Providers

As at the 30 June 2012 there were 2135 training organisations registered to deliver training in WA. A total of 381 were organisations registered with the Council, with the remaining 1754 registered to deliver in WA under national recognition arrangements. In addition, 22 of the 381 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 to deliver in WA has increased by 13% since the last reporting period from 1,856 in 2010-2011 to 2135 in 2011-2012. The decrease in total number of WA RTOs registered by the Council from 552 in 2010-2011 to 381 in 2011-2012 is directly related to the transfer of providers to ASQA on 1 July 2011.

During the 2011-2012 year, the Council endorsed the following applications:

- 33 initial registrations;
- 25 renewal of registrations;
- 220 extensions to scope; and
- 461 notifications received from RTOs adding courses/qualifications within their current scope.

During the reporting period three (3) RTOs had their registration cancelled by the Council. Two (2) RTOs had the sanction of suspension placed on their registration and one (1) had a condition placed on their registration.

Graph 1 reports on registration activity that has occurred in 2011-2012 and provides comparisons with the 2010-2011 and 2009-2010 reporting periods.

Graph 1: Registration Activity July 2011 – June 2012 – Applications endorsed

	Initial Registration	Renewal of Registration	Extension to Scope	Addition Within
Jul 11 - Jun 12	33	25	220	461
Jul 10 - Jun 11	42	33	369	379
Jul 09 - Jun 10	68	53	290	714
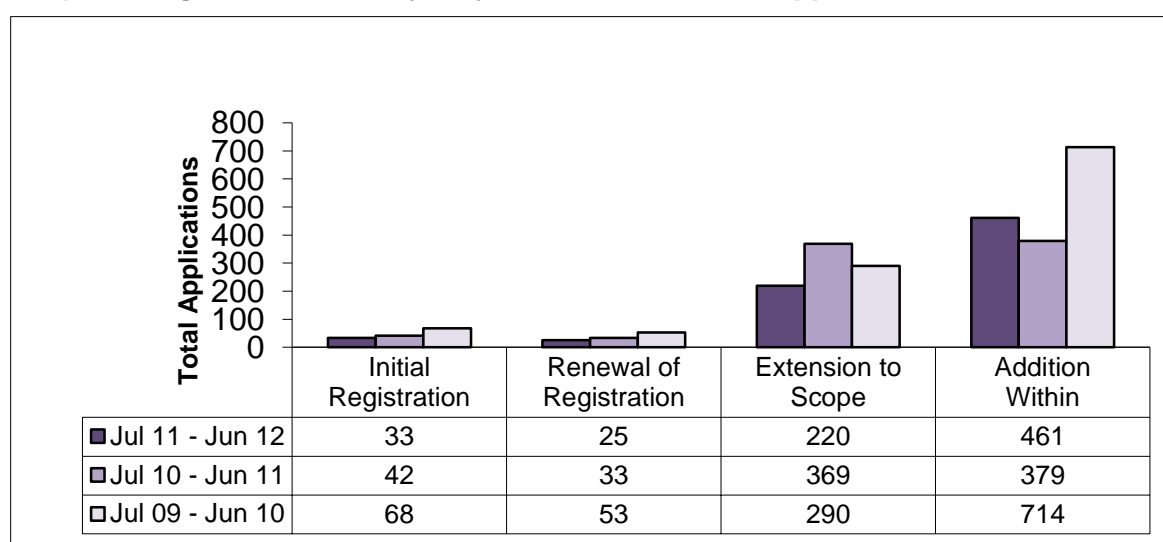
In this reporting period, there were decreases from 2010–2011 for initial registrations (21% decrease), renewal of registrations (24% decrease) and extension to scope applications (40% decrease). The decreases can be attributed to the establishment of ASQA and in regards to renewal of registrations the cyclic nature of the re-registration period. There was however an increase in applications for addition within scope of 22% from 2010-2011.

3.2.2   Demographics of RTOs

The following provides an overview of the WA VET market for the 2011-2012 reporting period.

3.2.2.1   WA RTOs by type of business

Of the 381 WA RTOs registered with the Council as at 30 June 2012 over 68% were private RTOs, with the remaining 122 spread across a range of business types including enterprise non-government, community based adult education and government schools.

Table 2: WA RTOs by type of business

Type of Business	30 June 2012	30 June 2011
State Training Providers	11	11
Professional Association	2	8
Industry Association	15	27
University Government	2	2
University Non Government	0	1
School Government	21	20
School Independent	2	2
School Catholic	1	1
Enterprise Non Government	24	36
Enterprise Government	13	13
Community Based Adult Education	20	29
Private RTO	259	391
Other not elsewhere classified	11	11

3.2.2.2   WA RTOs by location

Locations associated with WA RTOs is based on the location of the RTOs head office rather than delivery location. The decline in RTOs in the Perth region regulated by the Council can be directly attributed to the transition of providers to ASQA rather than any significant decline in actual numbers of RTOs operating in WA.

Of the 381 WA RTOs registered with the Council 77% or 294 were located in the Perth region, while 9% (33) were located in the South West region, with the remaining RTOs located across WA.

Table 3: WA RTOs by location

Location	30 June 2012	30 June 2011
Perth	294	440
Peel	13	17
South West	33	39
Great Southern	5	7
Goldfields/Esperance	5	7
Mid West	6	11
Wheatbelt	5	5
Gascoyne	0	1
Pilbara	8	9
Kimberley	9	10
Interstate	2	5
Overseas	1	1

3.2.2.3 RTOs registered to operate in WA under National recognition

In addition to the training organisations registered by the Council as at 30 June 2012, there were 1754 interstate RTOs which operate, or plan to operate, within WA. The establishment of the National VET regulator (ASQA) in July 2011 has significantly impacted on the breakdown of the RTOs compared with the previous reporting period, with over 77% (1363) of RTOs being registered with ASQA.

The number of organisations delivering under national recognition does not reflect actual delivery by interstate RTOs in WA. 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 WA.

Graph 2: RTOs registered to operate in WA under National Recognition as at 30 June 2012

	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	TAS	ACT	NT	NARA	ASQA
■ Jun-12	0	10	381	0	0	0	0	0	1363
■ Jun-11	460	270	319	100	18	69	16	52	0
■ Jun-10	408	284	242	94	19	65	16	53	0
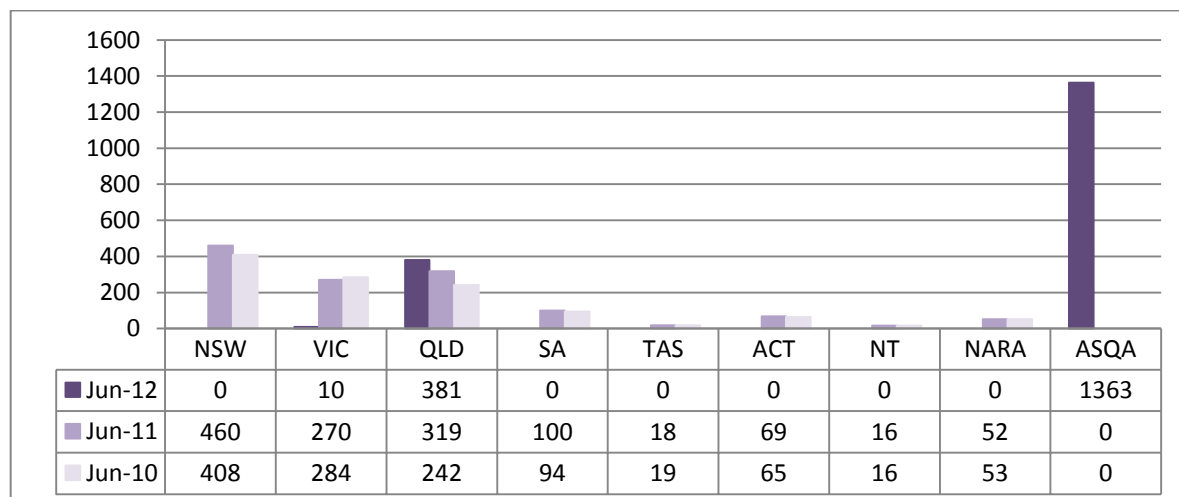
3.2.3 Audit Strategy

The Council, as part of its on-going 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 on-going 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).
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.

3.2.3.1   Risk Management of the Annual Audit Schedule

The Council is responsible for undertaking audits of training organisations and accreditation reviews against the requirements of the AQTF.

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.
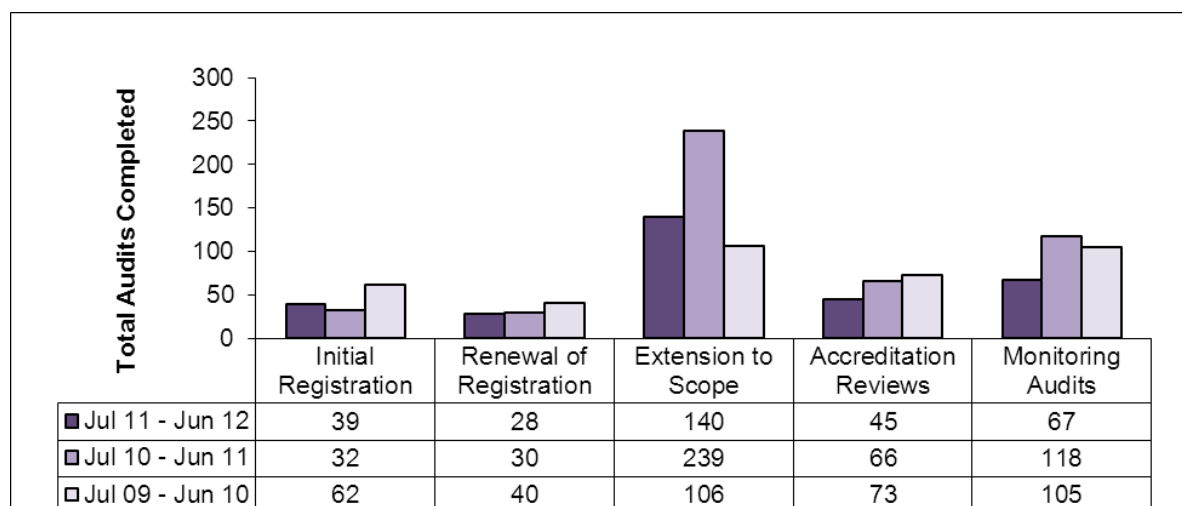
During the 2011-2012 reporting period, a total of 421 RTO risk assessments were undertaken by the Council. This represents a decrease of over 25% when compared with the 2010-2011 reporting period total of 568. The decrease in RTO risk assessments can be linked to the establishment of ASQA, with the current levels expected to be maintained or increased in future reporting periods.

Of the 421 risk assessments undertaken in 2011- 2012, 171 applications (41%) did not require an audit, while an external desk and/or site visit audit was required for the remaining 250 applications (59%).

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 2011 – June 2012

	Initial Registration	Renewal of Registration	Extension to Scope	Accreditation Reviews	Monitoring Audits
Jul 11 - Jun 12	39	28	140	45	67
Jul 10 - Jun 11	32	30	239	66	118
Jul 09 - Jun 10	62	40	106	73	105

A total of 319 audits were undertaken in the twelve (12) month period ending 30 June 2012.

Most notable during the reporting period was the increase from 2010-2011 of 22% in initial registration audits.

Audits were undertaken in line with the 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.

3.2.3.2   Strategic Industry Audits

The Council endorsed two (2) SIA's in 2011-2012, with both commencing during the reporting period. The two (2) audits focus on the qualifications required for work in the Aged Care and Home & Community Care industry and the qualifications required for licensing in the Electrical industry. The audits were endorsed following concerns raised by local industry stakeholders, relevant regulatory and licensing bodies, and in the case of Aged Care concerns, raised in the Productivity Commission Report on Aged Care Reform (June 2011).

Electrical

In September 2011, the Council endorsed a SIA into qualifications which lead to an electrical license in WA. The request to the Council followed concerns raised by the relevant Training Council, Electrical Licensing Board and EnergySafety (Department of Commerce). The concerns raised included:

- appropriateness of apprenticeship pathways;
- appropriateness of delivery strategies, particularly in areas with thin markets, where apprentices in both trades are being trained through the one delivery strategy, in the one class;
- processes RTOs use to gather evidence of the apprentice's workplace performance;
- validity of the Capstone assessments which is completed in the final three months of the apprenticeship; and
- RTOs potentially delivering without the required facilities to deliver the training.

The audit is supported by a reference group which includes industry, training councils and the regulator, EnergySafety. The SIA focuses on the following qualifications:

- UEE30807 Certificate III in Electrotechnology Electrician, and
- MEM30405 Certificate III in Engineering Tradesperson – Electrical/Electronic Trade.

The objective of this SIA is to determine the overall level of compliance with the AQTF, identify and analyse key areas of compliance and non-compliance, and identify key issues impacting on training and assessment outcomes and good training and assessment practice. The SIA will also provide comment on whether there are systemic issues which impact of the delivery of training and assessment, and recommend strategies to address key issues and to improve the quality of training and assessment for qualifications linked to electrical licensing.

11 audits of WA RTOs were conducted as part of this SIA. The findings from the SIA will be presented for consideration by the Council and the outcomes reported in the 2012-2013 period.

Aged Care and Home & Community Care

The Council also endorsed a SIA for Aged Care and Home & Community Care qualifications in February 2012, which will be completed in the next reporting period. This is in response to concerns about the quality of training in the sector, which have been raised by local industry stakeholders. Several areas of concern regarding training in this sector include:

- short duration of classroom/simulated delivery;
- lack of appropriate on-the-job experience and work based assessment; and
- lack of job readiness and English language skills of graduates of these qualifications.

The "*Caring for Older Australians" Productivity Commission Inquiry Report* (August 2011) proposed that due to reported problems with training in aged care that there needed to be an independent review of the outcomes of aged care training in order to ensure appropriate minimum standards are applied and that students demonstrate appropriate competencies.

In response to these concerns the Council endorsed a SIA to be undertaken in 2012 of the following qualifications:

- CHC30208 Certificate III in Aged Care;
- CHC40108 Certificate IV in Aged Care;
- CHC30308 Certificate III in Home and Community Care; and
- CHC40208 Certificate IV in Home and Community Care.

A preliminary survey was conducted to establish a realistic understanding of the actual training and assessment activity in this industry area in Western Australia.

A reference group has been established comprising of representatives from industry and employers, the Aged Care industry regulator, the Department of Training and Workforce Development, ASQA and the TAC Secretariat, to inform the SIA. The audits will occur in 2012-13 with the outcomes reported in the 2012-2013 period.

3.2.3.3   Arrangements for Auditors and Accreditation Reviewers

The current RTO Auditors and Accreditation Reviewers Panels were appointed through a public tender process and commenced on 1 September 2011. The panels were appointed for a one (1) year period with three (3) one (1) year extension options available.

The primary role of the auditors is to undertake audits of RTOs to determine compliance with the AQTF. 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 4.

Table 4: Panel of auditors and accreditation reviewers as at 30 June 2012

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
	Sharon Stewart	LCN Training Solutions
	Claire Werner	The Meyvn Group
Accreditation Reviewers	Mairead Dempsey	Assessment Training and Research Consultancy Services
	Russell Docking	Skills Resource Management Systems
	Cherrie Hawke	Torque Holdings Pty Ltd
	Lourdes McCleary	Lourdes McCleary Consultant

The DES, on behalf of the Council, implements a performance management model for the panel of external auditors and accreditation reviewers. Under this model, the DES 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' forums 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.

3.2.4 Course Accreditation

Accredited courses meet training needs that are not addressed in 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 2012 there were 271 accredited courses in WA. Overall, this represents about a 10% decrease in course accreditations in comparison to 2010-11. There were significant reductions in the accreditation of courses at lower Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) Levels. Courses below AQF Level 1 fell by 23% and courses at AQF Level 1 (Certificate 1) fell by 29%. At the same time, courses at higher AQF levels increased. Courses at AQF Level 6 (Advanced Diploma) increased by 5% and courses at AQF Level 8 (Vocational Graduate Certificate/Diplomas) increased by 20%.
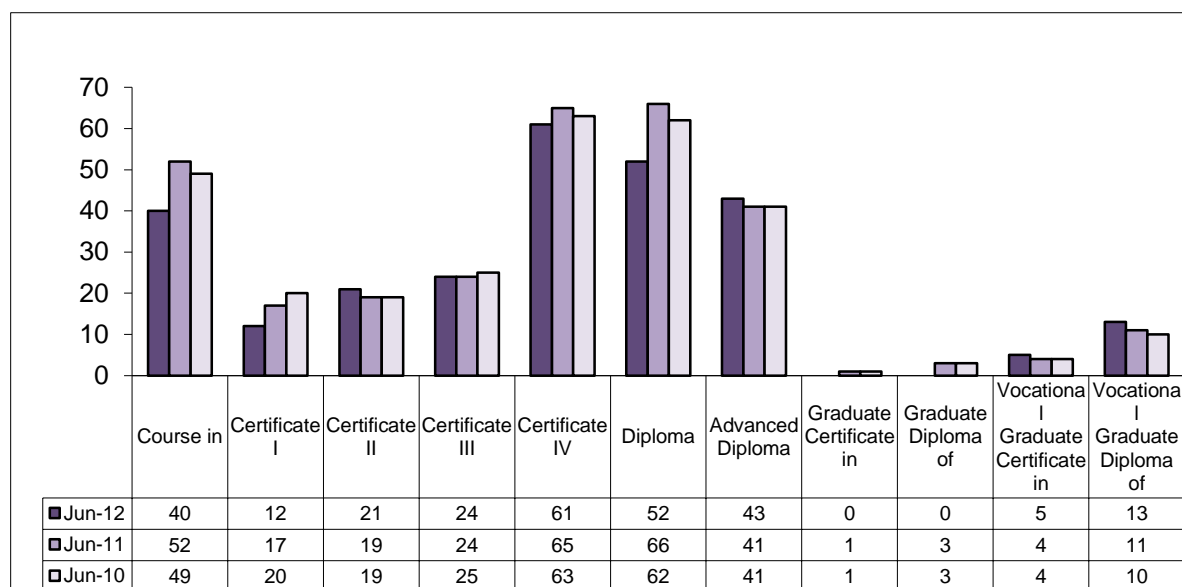
During the reporting period the Council considered 27 new accreditation applications, all of which were approved. 46 applications for the reaccreditation of existing courses were considered and approved. 25 applications for extensions were considered for courses which would otherwise have expired of these, one application was not approved. A total of 106 courses expired during 2011-12 and 28 of these courses were replaced/re-accredited with others.

The introduction of a preliminary notice of intent to accredit as a part of the course accreditation process commenced in January 2012. This is aimed at strengthening quality assurance in course accreditation by ensuring that course owners and proponents have conducted a thorough research of existing training package qualifications and that sufficient consultations had occurred with stakeholders to establish the need for the course. In the period from January to June 2012, 18 course concept proposals were received by the TAC Secretariat. Of these, one proposal was not accepted due to insufficient evidence of industry, enterprise, educational or community need.

Table 5 and Graph 4 summarise accreditation activity undertaken in the reporting period.

Table 5: Accreditation activity July 2011 – June 2012

Activity	Number of courses
Courses accredited	27
Courses re-accredited	46
Courses extended	25
Courses expired	106

Graph 4: Accreditation activity by AQF Level July 2011 – June 2012

	Course in	Certificate I	Certificate II	Certificate III	Certificate IV	Diploma	Advanced Diploma	Graduate Certificate in	Graduate Diploma of	Vocational Graduate Certificate in	Vocational Graduate Diploma of
Jun-12	40	12	21	24	61	52	43	0	0	5	13
Jun-11	52	17	19	24	65	66	41	1	3	4	11
Jun-10	49	20	19	25	63	62	41	1	3	4	10

3.2.5 Complaints Management

One of the important functions provided by DES on behalf of the 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.

Complaints are handled 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*.

The complaints management policy and methodology has been under review during 2011-2012 and new procedures for assessing complaints have been trialled. The new procedures include a distinction in definition between an actual complaint and a complaint inquiry and involves a rigourous assessment of complaint issues against TAC's jurisdiction for investigation. This trial has resulted in an increase in the number of complaints referred to more appropriate agencies and not recorded as a complaint.

Overall, the new process has resulted in a more accurate record of actual complaints as only those that can be progressed in-line with TAC's jurisdictional boundaries are logged on the system as a complaint.

The transfer of previously TAC registered RTOs to the national regulator and the implementation of the new complaints procedures has seen a decrease in the number of complaints from the last reporting period.

During the 2011-2012 reporting period eight (8) complaints were received by the Council, which is significantly less compared to the 54 complaints received in the previous reporting period. Of these, three (3) complaints were investigated and closed in this reporting period whilst five (5) were still open and within the complaints handling process as at 30 June 2012.   The three (3) complaints which remained outstanding from the previous reporting period were closed.

 A high percentage of the complaints continue to be related to Standard 1 and more specifically the quality of assessment procedures for RTOs offering fast track courses.

Table 6 shows an overview of the complaints received during the reporting period by the AQTF Standards.

Table 6 Complaints by AQTF Standards

AQTF Condition and Standards	% of complaints received
Condition 6 – certificate and issuing qualifications and statements of attainment	12%
Standard 1 – the RTO provides quality training and assessment across all of its operations	75%
Standard 2 – the RTO adheres to the principles of access and equity and maximises outcomes for its clients	25%
Standard 3 – management systems are responsive to the needs of clients, staff and stakeholders and the environment in which is operates	25%

4. KEY PRIORITY 2 – COMMUNICATION AND EVALUATION

Outcome Indicators

The Council's success in achieving Key Priority 2 is demonstrated by the extent to which the following indicator has been achieved:

Outcome	The Council effectively communicates with its stakeholders and gathers appropriate information to enhance its regulatory functions.

Work undertaken by the Council to progress this priority and to achieve Key Priority 2 is detailed as follows.

4.1 COMMUNICATION WITH CLIENTS AND STAKEHOLDERS

4.1.1 Report on Council Activities

The Snapshot of Activities report is produced by the Council every six (6) months, reporting on the previous six (6) month's activity and highlights the Council's regulatory activities in accordance with its functions under the *Vocational Education and Training Act 1996*. The report also documents the Council's activities as the WA registering and course accrediting body under the AQTF.

The report is forwarded to key stakeholders and clients including the Minister for Training and Workforce Development, government departments, Training Councils and RTOs. The report is circulated electronically to RTOs via email and included in the TAC Website.

4.1.2 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.

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 is regularly updated and is the major communication portal between the Council and stakeholders.

TAC Newsletters

The Council Secretariat continues to provide the regular newsletter, the TAC Update and Special Bulletin's, as required. The Updates highlight key information, policy direction, changes and on-going reminders to key stakeholders. It is emailed to the key stakeholders and interested parties and is also available electronically on the Council's website.

WA Training Awards

The Council continues to support the WA Training Awards through its sponsorship of the 'Trainer of the Year Award'. Given the Council's functions under the Act, sponsorship of this award reinforces the Council's on-going commitment to recognising quality training and assessment in the VET sector.

Training Forum

The DES provided an information booth on behalf of the Council at the May 2012 Training Providers' Forum hosted by the Department of Training and Workforce Development. The forum is a key event for the sector and is well attended by organisations involved in training. The Council booth was well attended and many of the visitors enquired about developments in the VET sector both in WA and nationally including the commencement of the National VET Regulator and its impact on WA training providers.

RTONet

RTONet is a web based database managed by the DES, 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 DES 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 Council website.

4.2 INFORMATION SESSIONS AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Information Sessions for RTOs

The DES 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 2011-2012 reporting period the Council Secretariat reviewed the format of the information sessions to organisations or individuals that were considering becoming an RTO. As a result of the review it was agreed to re-introduce 'one on one' sessions with participants meeting with Council Secretariat staff. A total of 28 information sessions were held comprising of eight group and 20 'one on one' sessions with 98 participants attending.

Key areas that were discussed include:

- National Skills Framework and the new national regulatory arrangements;
- 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 Council Secretariat on behalf of the Council regularly attends meetings with peak industry bodies to provide information and answer questions from participants. With the establishment of the national VET regulator and the resulting impact on WA RTOs, the Council Secretariat has engaged with RTOs and other stakeholders primarily through attendance at formal and informal forums and meetings with Training Councils.

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 (RPL) and self-assessment against the AQTF.

4.3   FEEDBACK FROM STAKEHOLDERS

Stakeholder feedback is collected from a number of sources including that received from RTOs via the audit survey, through direct contact with the Council Secretariat, through the Council's complaints handling process and auditor feedback. This feedback is incorporated within the Council's review and improvement process.

One of the Council's tools for measuring organisational effectiveness and continuous improvement is the client satisfaction survey. The Council collects feedback from RTOs 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.

During the 2011- 2012 reporting period, the survey results showed that 98% of respondents found that the audit process added value to their business. This is a slight increase from 2010-2011. In addition, 98% of respondents indicated that the pre-audit information provided by the registering body met their needs and that they were satisfied to very satisfied with the overall audit process.

Processes for gaining feedback will be reviewed by the Council Secretariat to ensure relevance and appropriateness for the Council's purpose and functions.

5. KEY PRIORITY 3 – COLLABORATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Outcome Indicators

The Council's success in achieving Key Priority 3 is demonstrated by the extent to which the following indicator has been achieved:

Outcome	Council collaborates with stakeholders to ensure confidence in the quality of training and consistency of quality assurance outcomes.

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

5.1 CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

During 2011-2012, 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 VET in WA.

In May 2012 the Council invited the Chairs and Executive Officers of the 10 Western Australian Training Councils to participate in a forum to share information about TAC's current regulatory environment and the impact of the introduction of the National VET Regulator (ASQA) in July 2011. The Council also invited the Training Councils to exchange information on current trends and training issues within their sectors, with a focus on the major training issues currently impacting Training Councils and Council's ability to respond to these.

The Council continues to consult with the Department of Training and Workforce Development on local policy issue and the Commonwealth Departments national issues.

5.2 ENGAGEMENT WITH INDUSTRY REGULATORS

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

During 2011 and 2012, a number of representatives from different regulatory authorities have participated as technical advisers in TAC audits. This includes Department of Mines and Petroleum and the Department of Commerce Energy*Safety* Branch (Gasfitting and Electrical areas).

The Council also consulted with WorkSafe, to assist in the regulation of high risk licensing outcomes within WA.

The Council Secretariat is currently undertaking a review of industry regulator engagement to build on the success of existing cooperative relationships. The aim of the review is to extend links to include a wider range of industry regulators within WA and establish collaborative arrangements.

5.3   MEETING WITH NATIONAL SKILLS STANDARDS COUNCIL

During the reporting period WA participated in one meeting with the NSSC. The meeting was attended by the Chairman, Training Accreditation Council and the Council's Executive Officer. The meeting was held in Melbourne on 19 April 2012.

Items discussed included:

• 2011 National Skills Standards Council Reporting Requirements – WA;

• recurring, new or emerging risks or trends arising from the application of the Standards for the regulation of VET; and

• State specific issues including concerns in the areas of electro-technology and aged care.

The outcomes from the meeting will be used to inform NSSC's planning for the VET sector in 2012-2013.

5.4   REVIEW OF VET REGULATORY STANDARDS

As part of the COAG VET reform agenda, in 2007 it was agreed that a new national standards setting body be created. The NSSC is an expert panel responsible for the establishment of VET regulatory standards through the Standing Council on Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment (SCOTESE).

In June 2012 the NSSC commenced the review of the standards for the regulation of VET. This was on the premise that the standards for the regulation of VET and the associated regulatory approach need to continue to evolve to ensure that current and future RTOs continue to deliver high quality training and assessment services.

The Council provided feedback to the NSSC's consultation paper designed to gather preliminary information to inform the review of the Standards by the NSSC was released, posing a series of questions designed to guide responses.

5.5   PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL REVIEWS

During 2011-2012, the Council continued to work collaboratively with the Australian government in the regulation and development of the VET sector.

- **Unique Student Identifier** – at the 13 April 2012 meeting of the COAG it was agreed to implement a Unique Student Identifier (USI) from 1 January 2014, which will be administered by a new statutory body (USI Agency).

  The USI will apply to all students undertaking nationally recognised VET. The purpose of the USI is to (a) manage an individual's training information, including AVETMISS compliant data; (b) manage student entitlement/ funding programs; and (c) inform VET sector policy development and research.

  The Council has provided feedback on the development of the initiative and will develop a communication strategy to ensure WA registered RTOs are kept informed of the developments regarding the introduction of the USI, proposed changes to the AQTF standards and new data reporting requirements.

6. KEY PRIORITY 4 – QUALITY PROCESSES AND SERVICES

Outcome Indicator

The Council's success in achieving Key Priority 4 is demonstrated by the extent to which the following indicator has been achieved:

Outcome	The Council delivers consistent and transparent quality processes and services.

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

6.1 REVIEW OF COUNCIL OPERATIONS AND PROCESSES

As a result of the 2011 independent internal audit of Council's compliance with its legislative requirements, national standards and guidelines, a number of recommendations were made in relation to the functions of the Council and the work of the Council Secretariat. The outcomes of the internal audit have been used as a major focus for work undertaken during in 2011-2012 with regards to the Council's policies and processes.

The Council has developed a comprehensive action plan to address the recommendations and to ensure Council's on going compliance with the AQTF Standards for Registering and Course Accrediting Bodies.

A significant body of work has been undertaken by the Council during the reporting period to progress recommendations from the report.

6.1.1 Registration and Organisation Workflow

During 2011-2012, the Council in line with the opportunities for improvement identified in the Internal Audit Report (July 2011) in relation to the functions of the Council agreed to undertake a review of the registration and organisation Workflow areas. The report recommended consideration of delegation of Council powers of approval for low risk, compliant RTO applications. It was seen as an opportunity to decrease the administrative burden on the Secretariat and to provide increased opportunity for the Council to focus on more strategic issues, including high level planning, legislative and AQTF Standards compliance.

The review considered a range of issues to ensure optimum workflow and efficiencies including the extent of the current Council delegations, identification of associated risks, policies and organisation arrangements required to mitigate identified risks, and the potential impact on RTOs. As a result, the review identified three (3) areas considered appropriate for delegation.

The first of these was the full implementation of the current delegation to the Executive Officer to approve amendments to scope. The second area related to the Secretariat's ability to respond in a timely manner to the specific category of critical non-compliance where a risk of injury or death was identified. The third proposal was for the Executive Officer to have authority to authorise audits relating to complaints and follow up audits when they had been recommended by an auditor.

The outcomes of the review were considered at the 170th meeting of the Council held 14 April 2012. As a result it was agreed that the proposed areas of delegations would be implemented in the 2012-2013 reporting period.

6.1.2   Review of the requirements for AQTF Condition 5 – Financial Management

Following the introduction of the new AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration and for Continuing Registration in 2010-2011, which were revised to strengthen the AQTF. A key focus for the Council in this year has been the review of the requirements related to AQTF Condition 5 and in particular the requirements for financial viability and financial management.

As a result the DES on behalf of Council has engaged an independent WA organisation to undertake a review of the existing financial viability and assessment arrangements. The project will consider the design, development and implementation of a strengthened approach to the financial viability risk assessment of RTOs to assist the Council meet its responsibilities. The review will be completed in 2012 and information provided on the outcomes in the next reporting period.

6.1.3   Review of Course Accreditation Processes

During 2011-12 the Council Secretariat undertook a comprehensive review of the Western Australian course accreditation function to ensure that policies and processes reflect good practice. A preliminary notice of intent to accredit was introduced in January 2012 which was aimed at strengthening the quality assurance of accreditation. This additional step in the process is to ensure that course owners and proponents have conducted a thorough research of training packages and sufficient consultations had occurred with industry, enterprise or community to establish a genuine demand for the proposed course.

Course accreditation application forms were reviewed and updated, and a new application for amendment form has been introduced to enable course owners to request amendments to accredited course.

6.2   APPEALS AGAINST COUNCIL DECISIONS

During the 2011-2012 reporting period the robustness of the Council's policies and procedures were fully tested through the lodgement of appeals by RTOs impacted by Council decisions.

Under the requirements of the *Vocational Education and Training Act 1996* (Section 58G), RTOs can appeal against Council decisions. Appeals must be lodged with the State Training Board (STB) in line with established processes. During the reporting period, the Council in line with the national Standards and the VET legislation cancelled the registration of three (3) RTOs.

As a result of the cancellations, two (2) appeals were lodged with the STB against the decisions of the Council. Both appeals were reviewed by the STB and it was determined that there was no merit in the appeals by the RTOs. The STB disallowed the appeals on the basis that the STB review panels could not find any ground of appeal that the Council had erred in its application of, or failed to apply criteria or procedures in, guidelines it was required to apply under the VET legislation.

7. APPENDIX 1 - Glossary of Terms

Accredited course means a structured sequence of vocational education and training that has been accredited by a state and territory course accrediting body that 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. Registering bodies conduct 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 nationally 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.

Complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with an action product or service of an education and training provider (or of the registering body) made to the registering body.

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 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 Skills Standards Council (NSSC) means a committee of the Standing Council on Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment (SCOTESE) and was established on the 1 July 2011. NSSC is one of several Standing Councils that report to the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), SCOTESE is the successor of the Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment (MCTEE). This change in structure reflects COAG's goal to strengthen Australia's vocational education and training sector.

The NSSC provides advice to SCOTESE on national standards for regulation of vocational education and training.

National recognition means the recognition by an RTO of the AQF qualifications and statements of attainment issued by all other RTOs, thereby enabling national recognition of the qualifications and statements of attainment issued to any person.

Recognition by each state and territory's registering body of the training organisations registered by any other state or territory's registering body and of its registration decisions.

Recognition by all state and territory course accrediting bodies and registering bodies of each other's accredited courses and accreditation decisions.

National Skills Framework (NSF) means the system of VET that sets out the system's requirements for quality and national consistency in terms of qualifications and the delivery of training. The NSF applies nationally, and has been endorsed by the Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) means an assessment process that assesses an individual's non-formal and informal learning to determine the extent to which that individual has achieved the required learning outcomes, competency outcomes, or standards for entry to, and/or partial or total completion of, a qualification.

Registering body means the authority responsible, under the VET legislation and decision-making framework, and in accordance with the AQTF 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 Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies, that a training organisation meets the requirements of the AQTF 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 jurisdiction registering body in accordance with the AQTF within a defined scope of registration. See also Scope of registration.

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:

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

- only assessment services, and to issue AQF qualifications and statements of attainment.

Statement of Attainment is issued by an RTO when an individual has completed one or more units of competency/modules from nationally recognised qualification(s)/course(s).

Strategic Industry Audit means where a specific area of risk has been identified, a strategic industry audit is conducted to confirm that a RTO's training and assessment services are meeting the requirements of a particular industry or licensing authority.

Training.gov.au (TGA) means the national database on VET in Australia. TGA is the official national register of information on Training Packages, Qualifications, Courses, Units of Competency and RTOs.

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.

8.   APPENDIX 2 – Acronyms

AQF   Australian Qualifications Framework

AQTF   Australian Quality Training Framework

ASQA   Australian Skills Quality Authority

COAG   Council of Australian Government

NSSC   National Skills Standards Council

NSF   National Skills Framework

RTO   Registered Training Organisation

TAC   Training Accreditation Council

VET   Vocational Education and Training