



Training Accreditation Council

# Annual Report



**Training Accreditation Council**  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

# 2014 - 2015

## Statement of Compliance

Hon Liza Harvey MLA

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 2014 to 30 June 2015.



Ian C Hill  
CHAIRMAN  
TRAINING ACCREDITATION COUNCIL

14 September 2015

### Street Address

Training Accreditation Council  
Level 9, 20 Walters Drive  
Osborne Park WA 6017

### Postal Address

PO Box 1766  
Osborne Park WA 6916

### Contact

P: (08) 9441 1900 (Monday to Friday, 8:30 am – 4:30 pm)  
F: (08) 9441 1901  
E: [tac@des.wa.gov.au](mailto:tac@des.wa.gov.au)  
W: [www.tac.wa.gov.au](http://www.tac.wa.gov.au)

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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 VET Act) by reporting on the operations of the Training Accreditation Council (the Council) to the Minister for Training and Workforce Development for the period 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015.

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 VET Act and the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF). In October 2014 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Industry and Skills Council signed off on the new Standards for VET Regulation (*Standards for VET Regulators 2015* and *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015*). The Council, in recognition of the work required by RTOs to implement the new requirements, agreed to transition arrangements for Western Australian (WA) RTOs with the new Standards commencing effective 6 April 2015.

Note: The Annual Report includes reference to both the AQTF (the Standards) and the new Standards for VET Regulation (the Standards). For the purposes of this report the term 'the Standards' will be used to reflect both the requirements of the AQTF and the new Standards for VET Regulation.

Where possible, data for the 2014-2015 reporting period and both the 2013-2014 and 2012-2013 reporting periods have been provided to allow a comprehensive assessment of the activities and achievements of the Council.

The report comprises:

- **Executive Summary** – this includes:
  - the Chairman's report – an overview of the operation of the Council
  - major achievements and highlights for 2014-2015
  - significant issues including current or emerging issues that impact or 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 2014 to 30 June 2015. This section relates to the key areas of priority from the Council's Business Plan 2014 to 2017 and its achievements against the areas.

The four key priority areas of the Council are identified below:

- legislation and compliance
- communication and evaluation
- collaboration and engagement
- 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 WA.

## 1.2 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Training Accreditation Council's 2014-2015 Annual Report reflects on a busy year that has seen the introduction of a range of amendments within the Council's regulatory framework that set the foundation for an improved, more targeted approach to the quality assurance of providers within the VET sector.

Key changes have included providing greater clarity of regulatory requirements through the introduction of new standards and the implementation of a number of strategies aimed at ensuring that regulatory effort is targeted at the highest level of risk.

In October 2014 the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Industry and Skills Council signed off on the new *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015* and *Standards for VET Regulators 2015*. The standards provide increased guidance for RTOs and are more focused on the core elements of training and assessment which directly impact on quality outcomes. The standards for Regulators provide greater flexibility allowing targeted individual responses to be developed moving away from a 'one size fits all' approach. The new Standards came into effect from 6 April 2015 for Council regulated RTOs with appropriate arrangements put in place to ensure RTOs were not disadvantaged through the transition period.

To support the implementation of the new Standards the Council implemented a comprehensive communication strategy to ensure greater awareness of the new requirements and a smooth transition. The strategy has included joint workshops with the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) and the development of a range of resource materials for RTOs. In addition, the Council has undertaken significant stakeholder consultation including nine (9) information workshops for RTOs across metropolitan and regional WA, attended by 516 participants, with positive feedback received.

During 2015, the Council made considerable progress in addressing reform of the management of risk and cutting red tape. In April 2015 the Council endorsed a new Risk Management Model that will evaluate risk at the provider, product, complaint and industry level and encourage closer working relationships with co-regulators. A targeted risk based regulatory approach will help deal more effectively with poor quality and improve confidence in the sector.

Further components of a program to reduce regulatory burden for RTOs were implemented in November 2014 with the abolishment of requirements for RTOs to submit applications and pay fees for new Training Package qualifications that were deemed to be direct replacements to existing qualifications. By automatically placing the qualifications of the RTO scope, this initiative results in both a saving of time and fees associated with areas of low risk. A further reform, the Compliance Recognition Program was introduced in April 2015. This program provides RTOs that have consistently demonstrated compliance with the standards with a degree of flexibility by removing the requirement to submit applications or fees for amendment activity.

During the reporting period the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) conducted an audit of the Council. The audit focussed on whether the Council could provide assurance that RTOs deliver quality training and assessment of student skills. The final report was tabled in Parliament on 24 June 2015. The findings concluded that the Council followed the national approach to the regulation of RTOs and five (5) recommendations for improvement were identified, that were accepted by Council. Implementation of the recommendations will be a key focus during 2015-2016.

In line with the Council's commitment to stakeholder engagement, the Council implemented its revised Industry Engagement Framework, which has resulted in a more cohesive strategy for engagement by the Council. During 2014-2015, the Council held approximately 50 formal meetings with stakeholders on a range of VET related matters.

An outcome of the work with key stakeholders has been the identification of significant areas where industry stakeholders have raised concern with the quality of VET provision. During the reporting period work was undertaken to progress two strategic industry audits (SIA) endorsed by the Council. The focus of the two (2) audits included units of competency that lead to High Risk Work Licences (HRWL) in Western Australia and the finalisation of the SIA into the delivery of VET in Schools. In addressing the recommendations from the SIA into the delivery of VET in Schools the Council has undertaken 22 presentations and meetings with key stakeholders.

In June 2015, the Council finalised the second survey of its key stakeholders, including RTOs, as part of its commitment to communicate effectively with stakeholders and to gather appropriate information to enhance its regulatory functions. Overall, the Council was seen as an effective regulator (88% of respondents) with positive client interactions, with the case management model appreciated by stakeholders.

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

The new Standards will provide a number of challenges for the VET sector over the next 12 months. The Council is committed to working collaboratively with the Commonwealth government and VET Regulators to ensure the new Standards are fully implemented and the VET sector is regulated effectively. The Council would like to acknowledge the commitment that WA RTOs have made in meeting the requirements of the new Standards and in ensuring that the quality of the WA training system remains at the highest level.

Ian C Hill  
CHAIRMAN  
TRAINING ACCREDITATION COUNCIL



### 1.3 2014-2015 HIGHLIGHTS

#### Major achievements and key activities for 2014-2015

The Council:

- endorsed 78 initial and renewal of registration applications and approved a total of 44 courses for accreditation and re-accreditation
- undertook 235 audits, comprising 32 initial and 43 renewal of registration audits; 41 monitoring audits, 110 extension to scope audits and nine (9) complaint audits. During the reporting period Council also undertook 39 accreditation reviews
- conducted 255 risk assessments of RTO applications. Of the 255, 42% (106) did not require an audit and 58% (149) required either a desktop and/or site audit
- conducted 25 information sessions focused on the requirements of becoming an RTO and industry requirements, with participants from across WA in attendance
- conducted 11 workshops to support the introduction the new Standards for VET Regulation including two (2) joint workshops with ASQA and nine (9) WA focussed information workshops conducted by the Council across metropolitan and regional WA, with 516 participants in attendance
- launched the Compliance Recognition Program in May 2015 a key initiative of the Council designed to reduce regulatory burden for RTOs with a strong compliance history. The program commenced with 49 invitations sent to eligible RTOs in June 2015 with expressions of interest to be progressed in 2015-2016
- finalised the SIA of delivery of VET in Schools in WA. The SIA was completed in 2014 and the final report including recommendations was endorsed by Council in October 2014. Work has continued on the implementation of the recommendations from the report. In progressing the recommendations Council has undertaken 22 presentations and meetings with key stakeholders
- strengthened its relationship with key industry and regulatory bodies in WA, with the implementation of the revised Industry Engagement Framework during 2014. Council's engagement focused on the new Standards for VET Regulation, quality assurance outcomes, streamlining of audit processes and promoting a consistent approach to regulation within the VET environment. During 2014-2015 approximately 50 formal meetings were held with stakeholders on various VET related matters

- sponsored the 2014 'Trainer of the Year Award' category of the WA Training Awards. Council also presented at the 2015 Training Providers Forum held in May 2015. The presentation focussed on the introduction of the new Standards for VET Regulation and unpacking the requirements for RTOs
- finalised in June 2015 the second survey of its key stakeholders. Overall, the Council was seen as an effective regulator (88% of respondents). The outcomes from the survey will be used to help focus the Council's review and improvement strategies during 2015-2016.

#### 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 2015-2016. Issues identified include:

- **New Standards for VET Regulation** – in October 2014, the COAG Industry and Skills Council signed off on the new Standards for VET Regulation (*Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015* and *Standards for VET Regulators 2015*). The new Standards came into effect from 6 April 2015 for Council regulated RTOs. A significant focus for Council during 2014-2015 has been the implementation of the new Standards including the requirements for VET Regulators, that will continue in the next reporting period.

A key priority for the COAG Industry and Skills Council as part of the VET reforms and the introduction of the new Standards has been the requirement for VET Regulators to implement a nationally consistent approach to risk management. During 2015 Council made considerable progress in addressing the reforms and in April 2015 endorsed a new Risk Management Model, consistent with the national approach. Implementation of the new model will be staged commencing in 2015-2016 and will be a key priority during that period.

- **WA Auditor General's Report – Regulation of Training Organisations**– in June 2015, the Auditor General tabled in Parliament a report on the regulation of training organisations by the Council in WA. While the Auditor General acknowledged that the Council followed the national approach to the regulation of training organisations, the report identified five (5) recommendations for consideration, that were endorsed by the Council. The implementation of the recommendations will be a key focus for the Council during the 2015-2016 period.

- **Working relationship with VET Regulators** - in 2015-2016 the Council will continue the existing collaborative working relationship with ASQA, both at a state and national level, and the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA), ensuring that the quality of training in WA is managed and regulated effectively, with minimal impact for WA RTOs. Of particular importance will be the ongoing implementation of the new Standards for VET Regulation including the consistent application of the Standards across VET Regulators.
- **Legislative amendments** – as a result of the introduction of the new Standards for VET Regulation in late 2014, a review of the WA legislation was undertaken to ensure a consistent regulatory environment for the WA VET sector. The legislative amendments were finalised in April 2015.

During the reporting period the Minister for Training and Workforce Development announced a review of the VET Act in line with legislative requirements. The review commenced in 2014 and once finalised the outcomes will be a focus for the Council in the next reporting period.

- **Strategic Industry Audits (SIAs)** – progress has been made on the SIA of units that lead to High Risk Work Licences (HRWL) in WA. The SIA will be a major undertaking for Council and is expected to be finalised in late 2015. The outcomes from the SIA will be a key focus for Council during the 2015-2016 reporting period. It is anticipated that further SIAs will be announced by the Council as part of its planning processes in 2016.

## 2. INTRODUCTION – THE COUNCIL AT A GLANCE

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

### 2.1 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Council has developed guiding principles that communicate to stakeholders the way in which it intends to undertake its business. The Council's guiding principles underpin its commitment 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
- 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 VET Act. Members are selected on the basis of their expertise, qualifications and experience relevant to the Council's functions.

For the reporting period, the members were:

- Mr Ian Hill, Chairman
- Miss Janelle Dawson, Sterling Business College Pty Ltd
- Dr Irene Ioannakis, Chevron Australia
- Mr Iain McDougall, Hospitality Group Training (WA) Inc
- Mr Ron Dullard, Consultant
- Ms Debra Goostrey, Urban Development Institute of Australia (WA Division)
- Mr Neil Fernandes, Central Institute of Technology

### 2.3 FUNCTIONS OF THE COUNCIL

The Council's functions are detailed in Part 4 and 7A of the VET Act. The focus is on quality assurance, registration of training providers and the accreditation of courses in respect to VET in WA.

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

- register training providers
- 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
- cancel qualifications.

Provision for appeals against Council decisions is available through the State Training Board under section 58G of the VET Act.

## 2.4 THE CONTEXT IN WHICH THE COUNCIL WORKS

The Council is an independent statutory body that assures the quality of training and assessment of RTOs registered with Council and accreditation of courses in the VET sector in WA. The Council operates within an agreed national regulatory framework and is responsible for ensuring compliance with the relevant Standards.

During the reporting period the Council operated under the following arrangements:

- AQTF – 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:

- *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration*
- *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration*
- *AQTF Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies*
- *AQTF Standards for Accredited Courses*
- *AQTF Standards for State and Territory Course Accrediting Bodies.*
- New Standards for VET Regulation (from the 6 April 2015) - the Council commenced operating under the new Standards (*Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 and Standards for VET Regulators 2015*), that form part of the TAC Regulatory Framework (TRF), which consists of the:
  - *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015*
  - Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)
  - Fit and Proper Person Requirements as outlined in the *Standards for RTOs 2015*

- Financial Viability Risk Assessment Requirements as outlined in the Financial Viability Assessment Guidelines for the Registration of Training Providers 2012 issued by the Minister for Training under section 13 of the *Vocational Education and Training Act 1996*
- Data Provision Requirements of the Council as the WA VET Regulator.

The Standards should be read together with the:

- Standards for Training Packages
- AQTF Standards for Accredited Courses
- *Standards for VET Regulators 2015*

Note: The term ‘the Standards’ reflects the requirements of both the AQTF and the new Standards for VET Regulation.

## 2.5 VET REGULATORY ARRANGEMENTS IN WA

In WA two (2) VET Regulators, the Council and the national VET regulator (ASQA), have responsibility for the regulation of providers. This arrangement resulted from the COAG decision in late 2009 to endorse the establishment of a national regulator for the VET sector through the referral of State powers to the Commonwealth.

WA is committed to ensuring effective national regulation of the VET sector and has continued to regulate those providers who operate only in this State (the majority of providers in WA) through the Council. In January 2014, the WA Government enacted legislation that mirrors 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.

## 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 (3) year basis (from 2014–2017) 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 at a national level, as required.

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 ARRANGEMENTS FOR AUDITOR 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. In addition, the panel was extended in July 2012 and again in September 2014, through a further public tender process, following a review of future work requirements.

The primary role of the auditors is to undertake audits of RTOs to determine compliance with the Standards. Accreditation Reviewers assist the Council to evaluate submissions for accreditation to ensure that they reflect the requirements of the Standards. RTO Auditors and Accreditations Reviewers appointed to the panel are listed in Table 1.

**Table 1: Panel of auditors and accreditation reviewers as at 30 June 2015**

PANEL	AUDITOR	ORGANISATION
<b>RTO Auditors</b>	Allison Burnett	Specialised Training Solutions
	Mairead Dempsey	Assessment Training and Research Consultancy Services
	Russell Docking	Skills Resource Management Systems
	Cherrie Hawke	Torque Holdings Pty Ltd
	Julie Large	JAL Enterprises
	David Love	Workplace Skills Management Pty Ltd
	Helen McCarter	Helen McCarter Consultant
	Sharon Stewart	LCN Training Solutions
	Michaela Tarpley	Aptus Solutions Pty Ltd
	Pam Vlajsavljevich	Pam Vlajsavljevich
	Claire Werner	The Meyvn Group
<b>Accreditation Reviewers</b>	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
	Grazia Pagano	Grazia Pagano Solutions

DES, on behalf of the Council, implements a performance management model for the panel of external auditors and accreditation reviewers. Under this model, 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 three (3) 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. In addition to the scheduled forums, panel members also participated in a range of professional development opportunities including additional auditor moderation and peer review activities and attendance at workshops on the new Standards for VET Regulation.

## 2.8 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 the WA decision to mirror the Commonwealth's national VET Regulator legislation to ensure a nationally consistent regulatory environment WA fees and charges have been aligned with the national VET Regulator (ASQA). This has resulted in a nationally consistent fee model being applied to all RTOs operating in WA. As a result, registration fees for training organisations and course accreditation fees were increased during 2014-2015. The approved schedule of fees and charges is provided at Table 2.

**Table 2: Registration and accreditation fees as at 30 June 2015**

<b>INITIAL REGISTRATION FEES</b>		
<b>Application Lodgement Fee</b>	Payable on application	\$800
<b>Application Assessment Fee</b> Base fee includes up to 4 qualifications, up to 20 units of competency and up to 2 delivery sites.  <i>Total application fee, including lodgement and assessment, is capped at \$50,000.</i>	Base fee	\$8,000
	Plus:	
	- each additional qualification	\$145
	- each additional unit of competency	\$50
	- each additional delivery site	\$1,395
<b>RENEWAL OF REGISTRATION FEES</b>		
<b>Application Lodgement Fee</b>	Payable on application	\$900
<b>Application Assessment Fee</b> Base fee includes up to 4 qualifications, up to 20 units of competency and up to 2 delivery sites.  <i>Total application fee, including lodgement and assessment, is capped at \$50,000.</i>	Base fee	\$7,000
	<b>Plus:</b>	
	- each additional qualification	\$145
	- each additional unit of competency	\$50
	- each additional delivery site	\$700



AMENDMENT TO REGISTRATION FEES		
<b>Change of Scope Application</b>  <i>*For transition to equivalent training package qualifications or units of competency, no application is required and no fees apply.</i>	- 1 qualification	\$920
	Plus: - Each additional qualification	\$135
	- First 7 units of competency	\$240 per unit
	Plus: - Each additional unit	\$135 per unit
	- First 7 units of competency	\$240 per unit
	Plus: - Each additional unit	\$135 per unit
ANNUAL FEES		
<b>Annual RTO Registration Fee</b> (includes any number of units of competency)	- 0-4 qualifications	\$1,130
	- 5-10 qualifications	\$3,220
	- 11-60 qualifications	\$6,975
	- 61 or more qualifications	\$10,730
<b>Note:</b> Applications for Skill Sets will be charged per unit of competency.		
ACCREDITATION FEES		
<b>Application for accreditation/ reaccreditation of a course</b>	includes: Courses at AQF Level 1 (Certificate I) and above Short courses below AQF Level 1 (Course In...)	\$8,070
<b>Amendment to accredited course</b>	Per course <i>Note: excludes where the amendment involves updates to imported units from training packages that are deemed equivalent</i>	\$2,290

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 <i>Vocational Education and Training Act 1996</i> and <i>Vocational Education and Training (General) Regulations 2009</i> .

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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

##### 3.1.1 Council membership for 2014-15

Membership of the Council continued to comply with the requirements of the VET Act during the reporting period. In June 2014, Ms Elisabeth Harris completed her term of appointment and Mr Neil Fernandes was appointed to the Council by the Minister commencing 1 July 2014.

##### 3.1.2 Operation of the Council

The Council is supported by 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 15 times over the 12 months to 30 June 2015, which consisted of 13 full Council meetings and two (2) Executive Committee meetings. The Council holds full meetings on a monthly basis to consider applications from organisations, with additional full meetings and Executive Committee meeting held on an as required basis.

#### Remuneration

During the 2014-2015 reporting period Council members received the following remuneration.

**Table 3: Council remuneration**

Members	Position	Type of remuneration	Term of membership	Remuneration
Mr Ian Hill	Chairman	Annual	Full Year	\$35,756
Dr Irene Ioannakis	Member	Annual	Full Year	\$20,067
Miss Janelle Dawson	Member	Annual	Full Year	\$20,067
Mr Neil Fernandes	Member	N/A	Full Year	-
Mr Iain McDougall	Member	Annual	Full Year	\$20,067
Mr Ron Dullard	Member	Annual	Full Year	\$20,067
Ms Debra Goostrey	Member	Annual	Full Year	\$20,067
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>\$136,091</b>

### 3.1.3 Amendments to legislation

In early 2015, work was finalised on the review of WA legislation to identify changes required to address the requirements of the new Standards for VET Regulation (*Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015* and the *Standards for VET Regulators 2015*). The review was undertaken to ensure consistency in regulation across Australia in the VET Sector following the introduction of the new Standards. On the 6 April 2015, amendments to the *Vocational Education and Training (General) Regulation 2009* came into effect.

The amendments to the legislation bring the regulatory scheme for WA based training providers in-line with the national VET regulator to ensure consistency with the national approach to the introduction of the new Standards.

During the reporting period the Minister for Training and Workforce Development announced a statutory review of the operation and effectiveness of the VET Act in-line with legislative requirements. The review is being coordinated by the Department of Training and Workforce Development (DTWD) and is expected to be finalised in 2015-2016. The Council in conjunction with DES has made a submission to the review with proposed amendments to the VET Act to further align with the national regulatory system.

In June 2015, work commenced on a further amendment to the *Vocational Education and Training (General) Regulations 2009* to reflect changes nationally to increase the period of registration period for training organisations. The proposed amendment will result in the registration period being increased from five (5) years to seven (7) years. It is expected that the amendment will be endorsed and implemented in the 2015-2016 reporting period.

### **3.1.4 Compliance with the Standards for VET Regulators**

The Council in its capacity as the VET Regulator is required under the Standards to report to the COAG Industry and Skills Council, as required, on the operation and its compliance with the Standards. In 2013, the former National Skills Standards Council (NSSC) agreed that in light of the work associated with the national review of VET regulation and the focus on the development of new Standards that annual reporting would be postponed as an interim arrangement. With the introduction of the new Standard in 2015 it is anticipated that performance reporting by regulators will resume in the next reporting period.

In addition to national reporting requirements, the Council as the VET Regulator is also required to participate in external review processes as directed by the COAG Industry and Skills Council. In line with the NSSC decision in 2013 concerning reporting it was decided that given the work associated with the review of the Standards external reviews would also be postponed. As a result this decision remained unchanged for the 2014-2015 reporting period.

The Council, independent of national monitoring requirements, agreed in 2013 to a program of internal reviews and audits of the Council's quality system to assess its compliance with State and national requirements.

In 2013-2014, the Council completed an internal review and audit with the final report including the audit findings and recommendations endorsed by the Council in June 2014. The audit focussed on a broad range of regulatory obligations including the Standards and legislative requirements, the quality system's effectiveness in supporting Council's compliance and its approach to continuous improvement. The report identified a number of non-compliances during the audit process with the majority generally related to the lack of benchmarking with the other VET regulators and the need to strengthen the continuous improvement arrangements. Work on the implementation of the recommendations has been an ongoing focus for the Council.

In December 2014, the Council's Secretariat commenced a further internal review of the quality system to assess ongoing compliance. The aim of the review was to ensure Council's policies, processes and procedures were consistent, fit for purpose and compliant with the new Standards, prior to their commencement in April 2015. As a result of the review a number of changes have been identified and implemented to reflect new regulatory requirements or for continuous improvement purposes. The review also identified future changes required to support the new risk management arrangements.

## 3.2 OVERVIEW OF THE REGULATORY MARKET

### 3.2.1 Registration of Training Organisations

As at 30 June 2015 there were 313 RTOs registered with the Council. This represents a slight decrease from the 328 RTOs registered as at 30 June 2014.

Of the 313 WA RTOs registered with the Council:

- 12 WA RTOs were also delivering vocational education and training qualifications under the AQTF in countries other than Australia
- 12 were registered to deliver only in WA and Victoria.

During the 2014-2015 year:

- 10 WA RTOs voluntarily relinquished registration (compared to 27 for 2013-2014 period)
- 13 WA RTOs did not renew registration when it expired (compared with 21 for previous reporting period)
- Two (2)\* WA RTOs had a sanction of cancellation imposed on their registration (compared with 10 for the 2013-2014 period)  
(\* one (1) sanction was subject to appeal and was finalised in the next reporting period).

Council endorsed the following applications:

- 30 initial registrations
- 48 renewal of registrations
- 547 amendments to registration
- 44 courses for accreditation and re-accreditation.

### 3.2.2 Demographics of RTOs

The following provides an overview of the WA VET market for the 2014-2015 reporting period.

#### WA RTOs by type of business

229 (73%) of the 313 WA RTOs registered with the Council at 30 June 2015 were private RTOs. The other 84 RTOs included a range of business types, including state training providers, government and non-government enterprise RTOs, independent, Catholic and government school RTOs and community based adult education RTOs.

**Table 4: WA RTOs by type of business**

Type of Business	30 June 2015	30 June 2014
State Training Providers	11	11
Professional Association	0	1
Industry Association	9	9
School Government	20	19
School Independent	1	2
School Catholic	1	1
Enterprise Non-Government	20	23
Enterprise Government	11	12
Community Based Adult Education	11	11
Private RTO	229	239

### WA RTOs by location

The definition of locations associated with WA RTOs is based on the location of the RTO's head office rather than its delivery location(s).

Of the 313 WA RTOs registered with the Council 75% (235) were located in the Perth region; 26 (8%) were located in the South-West region and the remaining RTOs spread across WA. As illustrated in the table below, the distribution of RTOs by location has remained fairly stable between 30 June 2014 and 30 June 2015.

**Table 5: WA RTOs by location**

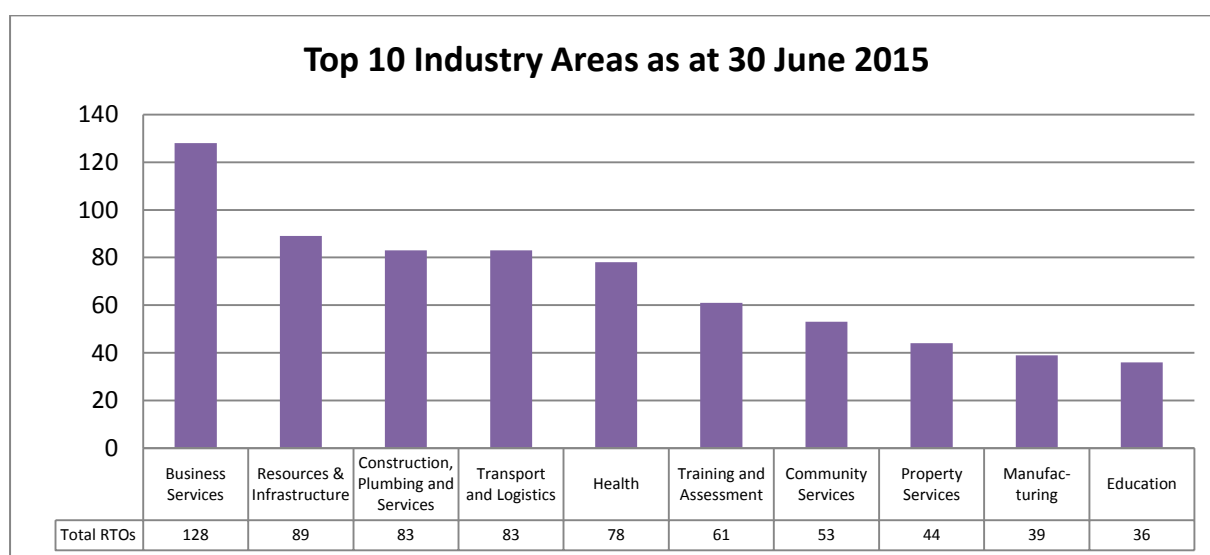
Location	30 June 2015	30 June 2014
Perth	235	244
Peel	11	11
South West	26	30
Great Southern	5	5
Goldfields/Esperance	8	8
Mid-West	5	7
Wheatbelt	5	5
Pilbara	7	8
Kimberley	6	5
Interstate	5	5

## Top 10 industry areas

At 30 June 2015, Business Services was the industry with the highest level of training delivery by RTOs registered with the Council. 128 (41%) of the 313 WA RTOs registered with the Council on 30 June 2015 had Business Services on their scope of registration, followed by 89 (28%) in Resources and Infrastructure, 83 (27%) in Construction, Plumbing and Services and 83 (27%) in Transport and Logistics.

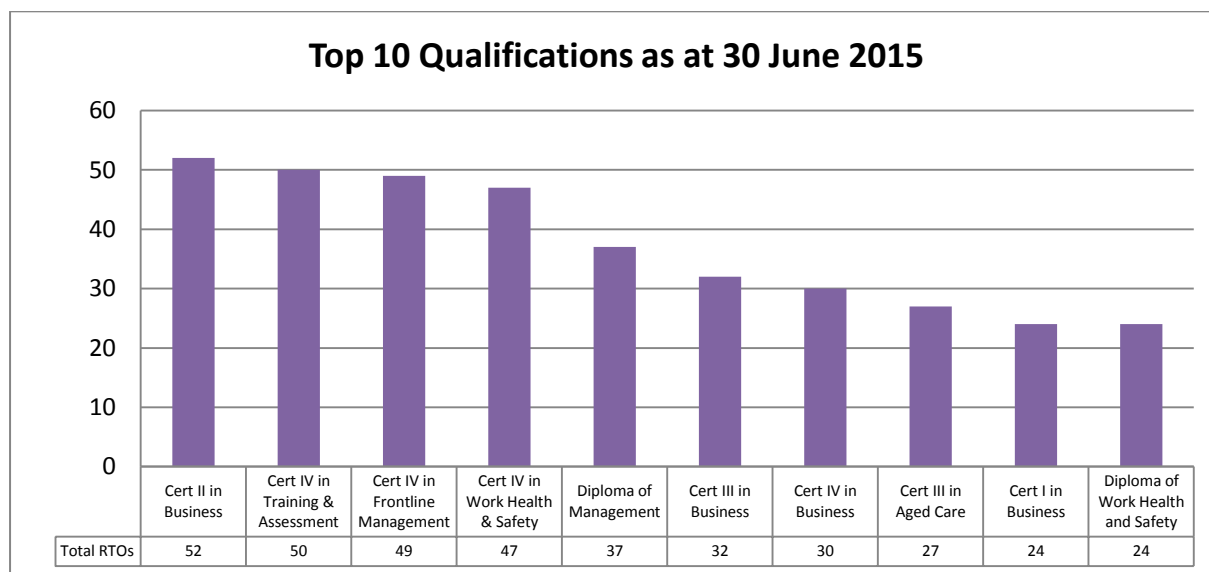
Figure 1 identifies the top 10 industry areas of training delivery, based on the number of industry training packages delivered by WA registered RTOs as at 30 June 2015.

**Figure 1: Top 10 Industry Areas as at 30 June 2015**



## Top 10 overall qualifications

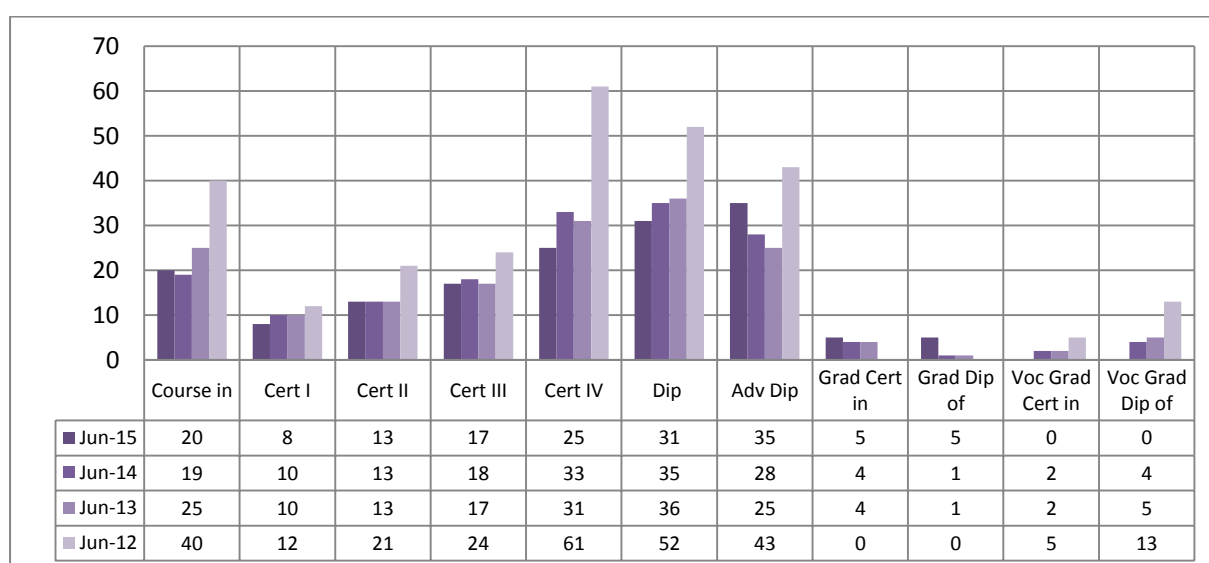
The following graph provides a profile of the WA regulatory market based on the highest number of qualifications for WA RTOs registered with the Council as at 30 June 2015. Of the 313 WA RTOs registered at the end of June 2015, 17% (52) had Certificate II in Business on their scope of registration, 16% (50) had Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, 16% (49) had Certificate IV in Frontline Management and 15% (47) had Certificate IV in Work Health and Safety on their scope of registration.

**Figure 2: Top 10 overall Qualifications as at 30 June 2015**


## Accredited Courses

In its capacity as the VET Regulator the Council accredits courses in line with the requirements of the Standards to meet training needs not addressed in training packages.

At 30 June 2015 the Council had accredited 159 courses. The Figure below shows courses accredited by the Council by Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) level.

**Figure 3: Accredited courses by AQF level**




Advanced Diploma (AQF level 6) courses made up the highest proportion of accredited courses – approximately 22% of the total. Diploma (AQF level 5) courses were 19% and Certificate IV (AQF level 4) courses were 16% of the total. Courses below AQF level 1 constituted about 13% of the total. Certificate I (AQF level 1) courses were the least represented at 5% of the total of accredited courses.

### 3.2.3 Regulatory Activity

During the reporting period the Council continued to regulate the WA VET sector in accordance with the requirements of the VET Act and the Standards. In line with its regulatory requirements the Council continued to apply a rigorous approach to training provider compliance and the assessment of courses for accreditation.

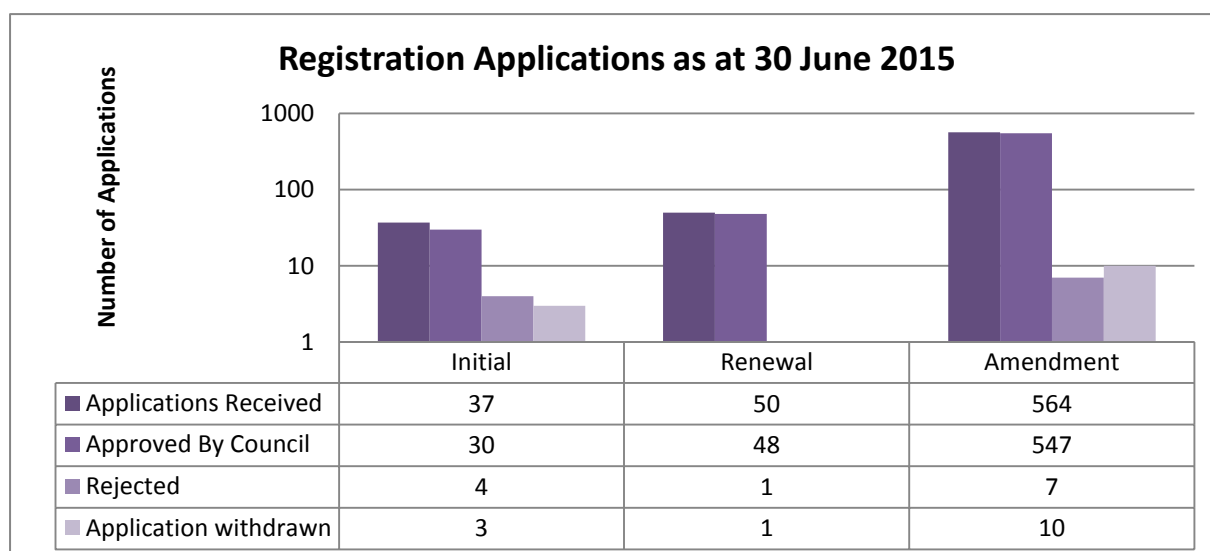
The following section provides an overview of the Council's regulatory activity for the reporting period 1 July 2014–30 June 2015.

#### Registration activity

During the 2014-2015 year the Council received a total of 651 new registration applications from training organisations. 564 were amendment applications and 87 were initial and renewal applications.

The Figure below provides a summary of registration applications received during the reporting period.

**Figure 4: Registration applications for July 2014 – June 2015**



While the majority of applications received during the reporting period were approved by the Council, several registration applications were withdrawn by the applicants. A range of reasons exist for applications being withdrawn including applications withdrawn at audit and/or no additional evidence provided by the applicant.

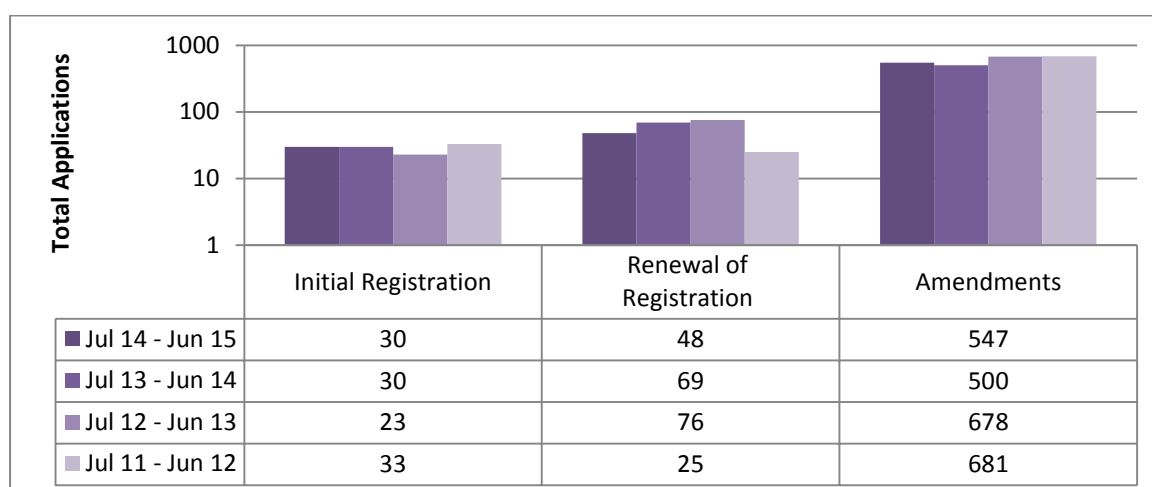
## Applications endorsed

During 2014-2015, the Council endorsed the following applications:

- 30 initial registrations – no change from the 2013-2014 period
- 48 renewal of registrations – a decrease of 21 from 69 in 2013-2014
- 547 amendments to registration – an increase of 47 (9%) from 2013-2014.

The Figure below provides an overview of the applications endorsed by Council for the July 2014 to June 2015 period and the three previous reporting periods.

**Figure 5: Registration Activity – applications endorsed**



The decrease in the number of applications for renewal of registration could be attributed to the cyclic nature of the registration process and is not considered significant. While the increase in applications for amendment to registration endorsed could be linked to the decrease in renewal of registrations applications and RTOs reviewing their business requirements including scope of delivery.

## Risk Management of Applications

The Council is responsible for undertaking audits of training organisations and accreditation reviews against the Standards for VET Regulation.

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 assessment outcome may result in an RTO not requiring an audit.

During the 2014-2015 reporting period, a total of 255 RTO risk assessments were undertaken by the Council. This represents a significant decrease overall when compared with the 2013-2014 reporting period total of 347. The decrease in RTO risk assessments could be linked to fewer RTOs undergoing renewal of registration, changes to fees and charges, the introduction of the new Standards during 2014-2015 and training organisations reassessing their business requirements.

Of the 255 risk assessments undertaken 106 applications (42%) did not require an audit, while a desk and/or site audit was required for the remaining 149 applications (58%). This represents a 9% decrease in the number of applications requiring an audit compared to the 2013-2014 reporting period.

### **3.2.4 Audit Activity**

#### **Audit Strategy**

The Council, as part of its review and improvement process, implements a continuous audit strategy. This complements the national approach to risk management and enables monitoring on an on-going basis. The audit strategy includes regulatory audits such as registration audits, monitoring audits, audits in response to complaints, strategic industry audits and identified risk audits. Wherever possible, audits are integrated to help minimise disruption to RTOs.

Audits conducted by the Council were in accordance with the Standards and the Audit Handbook (a reference guide for conducting audits of 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 determine the type, scale and scope of an audit, similarly, a risk assessment may determine that no audit is required.

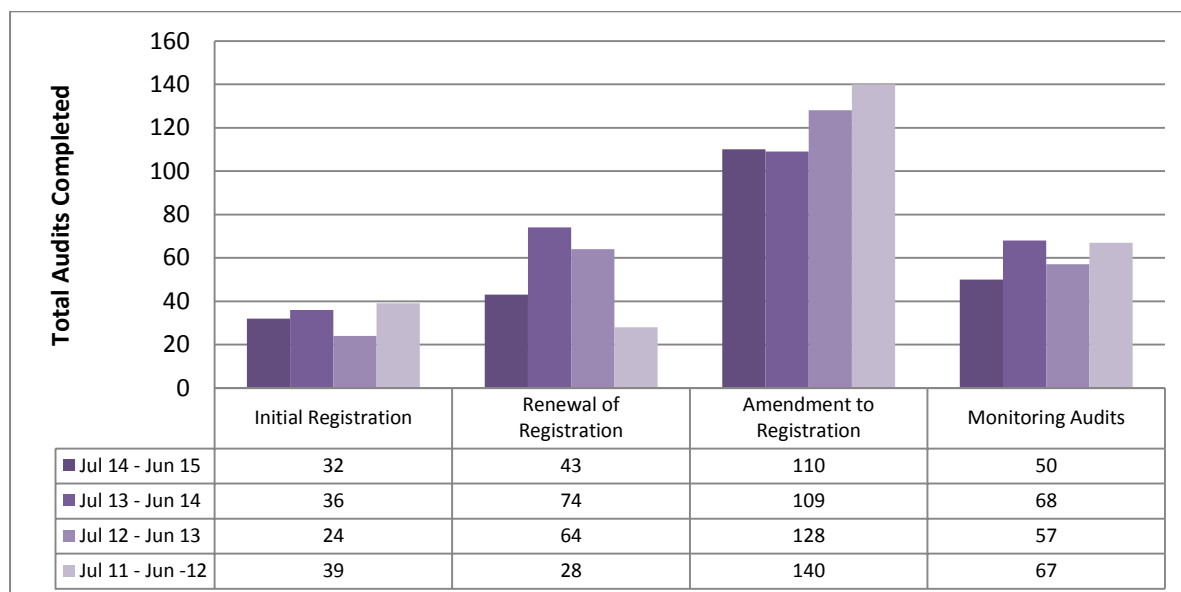
#### **Overview of Audits for 2014-2015**

During the reporting period the Council conducted a total of 235 audits. Audits were undertaken in accordance with the Standards, the AQTF Audit Handbook and the guidelines for risk management.

Of the 235 audits conducted 185 (79%) were client initiated, comprising 75 initial and renewal audits and 110 amendment to registration audits.

There were 50 regulator initiated audits covering a range of audit types. These consisted of 32 Post Initials and nine (9) Monitoring audits and nine (9) Complaint audits.

Figure 6 provides information on the type and number of audits conducted in the reporting period.

**Figure 6: Total audits July 2014 – June 2015**

During the reporting period decreases in the number of audits were noted in renewal of registration and monitoring audits. The decrease for renewal of registration audits was not considered significant and could be attributed to the registration period. While the decrease in monitoring audits was not considered notable as SIA audits were not undertaken during this period. Note: Monitoring audits in 2013-2014 included audits conducted for the VET in Schools SIA.

### Audits by Method

The Council, in line with its approach to risk assessment, utilises the outcomes of the risk process to determine the method of audit to be applied. The outcome of this process could result in either a desk audit and/or site audit being conducted. Of the 235 audits undertaken as at 30 June 2015, 156 (66%) were site audits and 79 (34%) were desk audits.

The following table provides a comparison of the audit method between the current and the previous reporting periods. The number of desktop audits increased by 18 while the number of site audits decreased by 70 when compared to the previous reporting period.

**Table 6: Total number of audits as at 30 June 2015 by method**

Type	30 June 2015	30 June 2014	30 June 2013
Desk audit	79	61	62
Site audit	156	226	211
<b>Total</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>273</b>

## Audit outcomes

While the Council conducted a total of 235 audits, it should be noted that the number of audits undertaken by the Council does not align to the number of training organisations, only total audits conducted. Audits may include multiple audit types for individual training organisations during the reporting period.

This is illustrated by the following example. During a 12 month period a training organisation may have initiated audits related to its registration (initial or renewal) and/or several amendment to scope audits related to proposed new delivery and the Council may have also initiated an audit in its capacity as the VET Regulator.

The following table provides a breakdown of the outcomes of audits conducted during the July 2014 to June 2015 period (based on overall level of non-compliance identified at the main audit). The Council considered non-compliance outcomes identified at audit in accordance with the National Guideline for Managing Non-Compliance.

**Table 7: Overall level of non-compliance at main audit**

Outcome	30 June 2015	30 June 2014	30 June 2013
Compliant	82	104	94
Minor	48	71	68
Significant	87	80	88
Critical	18	32	23
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>273</b>

The 235 audits for delivery of training and assessment conducted by Council during 2014-2015 consisted of:

- **Market entry audits** - 142 (60%) of the audits conducted were audits related to market entry by training organisations. Market entry audits include new training organisations seeking registration with the Council or existing RTOs applying to amend their scope of delivery to add new training products. Training organisations can only commence delivery if full compliance has been achieved against the Standards and subsequently endorsed by the Council. Note: These types of audits have no impact on students, industry or the quality of training as delivery has not been undertaken prior to Council endorsement.

Of the 142 market entry audits conducted:

- 38% were compliant at main audit
- 86% were complaint following the 20 day rectification period (in line with the national guidelines).

Due to the high risk nature of these audits organisations cannot operate within the WA VET market until compliance has been demonstrated and endorsed by the Council.

- **Audits of existing RTOs** – 93 (40%) were audits related to existing RTOs and include:
  - renewal of registration audits - RTOs applying to renew their registration with the Council must demonstrate compliance against the Standards in order to be re-registered and enable delivery to continue
  - audits initiated by the Council - these audits include post initial, complaint and monitoring audits and may have minimal disruption to the RTOs operation unless the outcomes of the audits warrant further regulator actions. For example Council may impose sanctions on the RTOs registration including varying registration, placing conditions on the registration, suspension or cancellation of the registration.

Of the 93 audits conducted:

- 30% were compliant at main audit
- 81% were complaint following the 20 day rectification period (in line with the national guidelines).

Non-compliances identified at audit were considered by the Council in line with the agreed national guidelines and RTOs must demonstrate compliance with the Standards in order to continue to operate within the WA VET market.

### 3.2.5 Strategic Industry Audits

Strategic Industry Audits (SIAs) provide an in-depth analysis of systemic issues faced by a particular industry area. The consideration of risk at the local level allows WA to respond to locally identified quality issues and intervene in a timely manner in line with public expectations.

SIAs are managed by the Council Secretariat on behalf of the Council with the guidance of operational reference groups, which provide invaluable industry specific input and guidance to supplement the audit processes.

When finalised and endorsed by the Council, SIA final reports are published and available on the Council's website [www.tac.wa.gov.au](http://www.tac.wa.gov.au).

During the reporting period, work was undertaken to progress two (2) SIAs endorsed by the Council. The SIAs included the delivery of VET in Schools (VETiS) and the delivery of units of competency that lead to HRWL in WA.

## VET in Schools SIA

On 21 January 2013 the WA government introduced major reforms that require students to achieve an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) or a minimum Certificate II VET training program/s in order to graduate from 2016. This consolidated the role of VET in schools and highlighted the dependence of the school system on the delivery of quality VET programs.

A significant increase in recent years in VETiS student enrolments, coupled with the anticipated further growth due to the new legislative requirements for the Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE), the Council undertook a strategic industry audit of VET in Schools delivery in WA.

Other concerns prompting the SIA included industry concerns regarding the perceived issues around the quality and outcomes of VETiS programs compared to mainstream training and the important role VET plays in the broader spectrum of Australia's workforce capabilities.

The objectives of the VET in Schools SIA were to:

- determine the level of compliance with the AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration by:
  - the overall level of RTO compliance
  - level of compliance by specific qualification
  - level of compliance by industry area
  - level of compliance and trends by delivery arrangement
  - examining aspects of VET in Schools partnership arrangements and their contribution to an RTOs level of compliance with the Standards.

Initial planning and commencement of the audits began during the 2013-2014 reporting period and all audits completed during the current reporting period with 31 RTO audits across 19 qualifications ranging from Certificate II to IV. The selection was based on factors including enrolments, risk profile, qualification characteristics and delivery arrangements.

A reference group was established to support the SIA, with members representing all key stakeholder groups either directly involved with VETiS delivery or having responsibility for its governance within their respective portfolios.

Overall, the audit outcomes revealed varying levels of compliance with the Standards, with outsourced delivery and RTO Schools demonstrating the highest levels of compliance. The outcomes for auspice/partnership delivery arrangements supported both industry and anecdotal concerns with these arrangements demonstrating the highest levels of non-compliance.

Evidence indicated that most RTO Schools have a good understanding of the requirements of the AQTF and of maintaining registration as an RTO. School principals promote VETiS as a value-added service to students that is a key component of each school's program and part of core business. Senior school timetabling, forward planning and resource allocation for VETiS programs are indicative of the commitment to using only qualified and industry-current staff, developing strong relationships with local employers, facilitating meaningful work placements and ensuring dedicated VET facilities and equipment are available.

As with RTO School results, RTOs who delivered directly to students demonstrated higher levels of compliance.

RTOs found non-compliant at audit were provided an opportunity to rectify these within 20 working days in-line with Council processes.

Seven (7) recommendations were endorsed to address the key findings of the SIA broadly covering:

- monitoring and management of risk
- collaborating with stakeholders to develop educative and support mechanisms for schools and RTOs
- working with Training Councils (TCs) to ensure training packages reflect industry standards.

The final report was endorsed by the Council in October 2014. Implementation of the recommendations of the final report commenced during this reporting period.

### **High Risk Work Licences SIA**

In response to consultation with key stakeholders such as industry training councils, industry regulators and advisory groups, in April 2015 the Council endorsed a strategic industry audit into the quality of the training and assessment for units of competency that lead to HRWL in WA.

During the reporting period, planning and scoping work commenced to determine the audit sample and focus areas. Early scoping identified audit focus areas would, in general, identify key issues impacting on the quality of training and assessment practices.

Reference group members will meet and audits will commence during the 2015-2016 reporting period. The SIA will be finalised and findings from the SIA will be presented for consideration by the Council and the outcomes reported in the 2015-2016 period.



### 3.2.6 Course Accreditation

Accredited courses are intended to fill gaps in national training packages. The Council does not accredit a course if a training package product exists that can be customised to meet the same vocational outcome.

At 30 June 2015 there were 159 accredited courses in WA. This is a slight fall from the total of 167 courses during 2013-2014 which is likely the result of natural attrition due to organisational reassessing business requirements and changes to fees and charges.

In the period to June 2015, only one Course Concept Proposal (CCP) was received by the Council. This is due to a change in the course accreditation process early in the reporting period which removed the requirement for submission of a separate CCP. The CCP was incorporated into the accreditation application form on 1 August 2014 which has helped to streamline the application process for course owners.

During the reporting period the Council considered and approved a total of 63 accreditation applications. These included 10 applications for accreditation of new courses, 34 applications for reaccreditation of existing courses, six (6) applications for amendment to courses and 13 applications for extension of accreditation. 22 (50%) of the 44 courses that expired during 2014-2015 were reaccredited.

Table 8 summarises accreditation activity undertaken in the reporting period.

**Table 8: Accreditation activity**

Activity	30 June 2015	30 June 2014	30 June 2013
Accreditation reviews undertaken	39	36	42
CCPs submitted	1	52	35
Courses accredited	10	12	13
Courses re-accredited	34	44	51
Courses extended	13	5	34
Courses amended	6	12	14
Courses expired	44	26	90

The table below sets out the outcome of each accreditation review undertaken against the AQTF Standards for Accredited Courses during the reporting period.

**Table 9: Outcome of accreditation reviews**

Type	30 June 2015	30 June 2014	30 June 2013
Compliant	31	25	35
Non-compliant	8	11	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>42</b>

Accreditation reviews are undertaken when a course owner submits an application for course accreditation, course re-accreditation or, in some cases, course amendment. Depending on the nature of the application, a single accreditation review may include more than one (1) accredited course. In line with the Council processes and national guidelines, if the outcome of the initial review is non-compliance, the applicant is given a further opportunity to provide evidence during a rectification period of 20 working days.

Eight (8) accreditation reviews undertaken during the reporting period had an outcome of non-compliance but in all cases applicants were able to address the issues reported and demonstrate compliance during the rectification period.

### **3.2.7 Complaints Management**

A key function provided by the Council Secretariat on behalf of the Council is the investigation of complaints made by sector stakeholders. Complaints can only be investigated if they relate to the on-going compliance by RTOs with the Standards and the VET Act.

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](http://www.tac.wa.gov.au).

A total of 84 complaint enquiries were received during 2014-2015. Of these, 27 complaints were formalised in this reporting period and an additional 10 from the previous reporting period as potential issues that required further investigation. 29 of these were investigated and resolved and eight (8) complaints were not yet finalised at 30 June 2015.

Four (4) of the complaints that were formalised required a complaint audit of the RTOs concerned. Non-compliances were identified at all four (4) audits which substantiated the complaints. All audited complaints were resolved and finalised during the reporting period.

The table below provides a breakdown of complaints formalised by type of complaint.

**Table 10: Complaints activity as at 30 June 2015**

Complaints	June 2015	June 2014	June 2013
Complaints about RTOs	27	35	9
Complaints against TAC processes and services or against individual officers	0	0	3

The highest number of complaints received and formalised related to AQTF Condition 6 or Standard 3 of the *Standards for RTOs* with 14 complaints raising concerns in relation to certification and issuing of qualifications and Statements of Attainments. The second highest was 12 complaints relating to AQTF Standard 1 or Clause 1.1 of the *Standards for RTOs* and more specifically to the quality of RTO assessment practices and the qualifications of delivery and assessment staff.

Table 11 provides an overview of complaints received during the reporting period by Standards.

**Table 11: Complaints formalised by Standards**

Standards	No. of complaints formalised
<b>AQTF Conditions and Standards</b>	
<b>Condition 1</b> - Governance	1
<b>Condition 6</b> - Certificate and issuing qualifications and statements of attainment	10
<b>Condition 7</b> – Recognition of Qualifications issued by other RTOs	1
<b>Condition 8</b> - Accuracy and integrity of marketing	2
<b>Standard 1</b> – the RTO provides quality training and assessment across all of its operations	5
<b>Standard 2</b> – the RTO adheres to the principles of access and equity and maximises outcomes for its clients	5
<b>Standard 3</b> – management systems are responsive to the needs of clients, staff and stakeholders and the environment in which it operates	2

<b>Standards for RTOs (from April 2015)</b>	
<b>Standard 1</b> – training and assessment strategies and practices are responsive to industry and learner needs and meet training package and accredited course requirements	3
<b>Standard 2</b> – RTO operations are quality assured	1
<b>Standard 3</b> – AQF certification is issued, maintained and accepted and learners have access to records	2
<b>Standard 4</b> – RTOs information is accurate and accessible with its services and performance available to inform learners and clients	3
<b>Standard 5</b> – each learner is properly informed and protected	3
<b>Standard 6</b> – complaints and appeals are recorded, acknowledged and dealt with fairly, efficiently and effectively	1
<b>Standard 7</b> – there are effective governance and administration arrangements in place	1
<b>Standard 8</b> – RTO cooperates with the VET regulator and is legally compliant at all times	1

*Note: A complaint may include several issues that cut across more than one Standard.*

### **3.3 REDUCING REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS**

The Council is committed to ensuring a client centred approach to regulation that minimises risk to the training sector while actively working to reduce regulatory burden for RTOs. This forms part of a collaborative arrangement between VET Regulators to ensure national consistency of regulatory approach. During the 2014-2015 reporting period the Council progressed several initiatives to help reduce regulatory requirements for RTOs.

#### **3.3.1 Compliance Recognition Program**

The Council has a strong commitment to reducing the regulatory burden for providers that consistently demonstrate compliance with the requirements for RTOs in WA. The Council's Compliance Recognition Program (CR Program) was introduced in May 2015 and is designed to provide RTOs that consistently demonstrate compliance a degree of flexibility by removing the requirement for RTOs to submit applications or fees to the Council for amendment activity to their scope of registration.

The CR Program is premised on the basis that the RTO has undertaken an internal verification process to determine that training products meet compliance with the Standards, Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) and requirements of registration as an RTO under the VET Act. The Council retains the overall authority to approve the amendment.

The granting of participation in the CR Program by the Council does not indicate or imply that the RTO is of a higher standard or of a lower risk than other RTOs.

At 30 June 2015, 49 offers were made to RTOs eligible to participate in the program. Due to the limited period between the introduction of the program and the end of the reporting period, RTOs were yet to express their interest in participating in the program. Therefore, the numbers of RTOs participating in the CR program will be included in the 2015-2016 reporting period.

#### **3.3.2 Risk Management Model**

Following their adoption through legislation, the Council is now required to operate in accordance with the *Standards for VET Regulators 2015*. The Regulator Standards have been designed to ensure that VET Regulators have increased flexibility to recognise the different level of risk posed by different providers, and enable regulators to deal more effectively with poor quality, while reducing the regulatory burden for RTOs with a history of strong compliance. The new Standards require all regulators to implement a risk assessment framework that has been endorsed by the COAG Industry and Skills Council.

A meeting of national officials was convened in April 2015 to discuss the design of the Framework to achieve the objective set out in the Regulator Standards. It was agreed that the design of the overarching Framework should be complementary to the risk management models progressed by ASQA and Council and that this work would continue concurrently.

In April 2015, the Council endorsed a risk management model that directs its resources to areas that pose the greatest risk to the quality of VET outcomes. A significant shift in focus and resources will occur to direct and guide the Council's regulatory actions toward RTOs that are considered higher risk, together with a focus on identifying systemic issues across the sector. This will be achieved through the use of data analysis tools and information gained through a variety of sources via environmental scans to inform risk profiles and risk ratings.

Risk indicators will include consideration of the risk presented by complaints, the risk associated with the nature of the training product, concerns raised by industry and key stakeholders into the risk assessment of the RTO and the risk assessment at the industry level. The information will be used to determine the appropriate regulatory response at the RTO level and also to determine the appropriate broader regulatory strategies of the Council in regard to industry wide audits (strategic industry audits), and the provision of educational support and communication strategies to RTOs.

Regulatory actions will be more informed and proportionate to the issue being considered and the model will significantly improve the ability to reduce regulatory burden on RTOs that consistently demonstrate compliance. Work will progress during the 2015-2016 reporting period in regard to transition and implementation of the new risk management model.

### **3.3.3 Replacement of equivalent training package products**

In July 2014, the Council in collaboration with other VET Regulators agreed as part of its commitment to reducing regulatory burden and minimising risk to the VET sector that equivalent training package products (qualifications and/or units of competency) would be automatically added to an RTOs scope of registration without requiring an application or a fee.

The process applied to all of the Council regulated RTOs with a training package product listed on their scope that an Industry Skills Council had superseded with a new training product that it has deemed equivalent and would apply to all future training package updates. From 1 July 2014, the Council updated all training products on an RTOs scope that were in transition had been superseded by a new equivalent product in the last 12 months. The Council agreed to ensure new products were placed on RTOs scope of registration as soon as was practicable following endorsement. This initiative was fully implemented during the 2014-2015 reporting period.

## 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 and provides an educative service on its functions to stakeholders and gathers appropriate information to enhance its regulatory functions.
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Work undertaken by the Council to progress this priority and to achieve Key Priority 2 is detailed as follows.

### 4.1 COMMUNICATIONS 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) months activity and highlights the Council's regulatory activities in accordance with its functions under the VET Act and the Standards.

The report is forwarded to key stakeholders and clients including the Minister for Training and Workforce Development, government departments, and circulated more broadly via the Council's Website to RTOs and Training Councils.

#### 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 website is the Council's major communication portal and the most frequently accessed communication tool. The website houses all Council Policy and Standards documentation and other key information that is relevant to the sector.

- **TAC Newsletters**

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

## 4.2 INFORMATION SESSIONS, PRESENTATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

A broad range of initiatives was undertaken during the reporting period with a focus on transition information and guidance to the sector in regard to the implementation of the new Standards and information targeted for the school sector.

Initiatives undertaken include:

- 25 information sessions were delivered to those training organisations seeking registration with the Council. Sessions focused on the requirements of becoming an RTO, providing information about national and state policies and guidelines, as well as course accreditation and training provider registration processes.
- Two (2) joint Council/ASQA RTO workshops were undertaken during November 2014 for all WA RTOs to support the introduction of the new Standards.
- The Council website was updated to include all relevant information related to the Standards including supporting materials, including resources and relevant web links.
- The Council published a Users' Guide providing training providers with an overview of the Standards and intent, guidance to compliance and case studies.
- Publication of information to RTOs on the new Standards and transition arrangements are published regularly via TAC newsletters, special bulletins and the Council's website.
- Two (2) presentations were undertaken at DTWD's Training Provider's Forum held in May 2014. The first session focused on vocational competence and industry currency in a VET in Schools environment and the second session providing information about common non-compliances including information to support the introduction of the new Standards for VET Regulation.
- A key undertaking by the Council was a series of nine (9) workshops during February 2015 to support the implementation of the new *Standards for RTOs* and *Standards for VET Regulators*. The sessions were delivered in metropolitan and regional locations across WA including Perth (two (2) sessions), Kalgoorlie, Broome, Karratha, Geraldton, Northam, Bunbury and Albany. The sessions provided an opportunity to distribute and promote resources published by the Council to assist RTOs in transitioning to the new Standards and to discuss specific issues impacting RTOs in regard to the implementation of the new Standards.



516 attendees participated in the workshops and feedback collected from the sessions confirmed they were well received. The sessions provided a mechanism for Secretariat staff to engage with RTOs to gather intelligence of the on-the-ground issues facing RTOs in the implementation of the new Standards. The sessions also helped inform content for the Users' Guide and to ensure future educative campaigns are tailored to meet these needs.

- The Council continues its focus and educative response to providing information sessions and presentations to stakeholders on vocational competence and industry currency. Vocational competence in a particular industry is defined as broad industry knowledge and experience, combined with a relevant industry qualification. A person who has vocational competence is expected to be familiar with the content of the vocation and have relevant current experience in the industry. During the reporting period these sessions have been targeted to support the school sector, with four (4) presentations being delivered to education stakeholders and Industry Training Councils.

### **4.3 FEEDBACK FROM STAKEHOLDERS**

A key priority of the Council's 2014-2017 Business Plan requires that Council effectively communicates and provides an educative service on its functions to stakeholders and gathers appropriate information to enhance its regulatory functions. One (1) of the identified strategies is that the Council gathers reliable data to measure its performance and adds value to its planning, policies and services.

#### **2015 Council RTO and Stakeholder Survey**

In June 2015, the Council finalised the second survey of its key stakeholders including RTOs, industry organisations, other regulatory bodies as part of its commitment to communicate effectively with stakeholders and to gather appropriate information to enhance its regulatory functions. The design of the survey was similar to the 2014 survey with Australian Survey Research (ASR) Pty Ltd again selected to undertake the survey.

The survey sample consisted of 368 RTOs and 70 stakeholders and was conducted between May and June 2015. Responses were received from 216 RTOs and 34 stakeholders. Overall, the Council was seen as an effective regulator (88% of respondents), this was the same as in 2014, with positive client interactions, while the case management model continued to be appreciated by stakeholders and the Council website also received positive feedback. Client interactions were working well with the overall experience slightly improved since 2014

The 2015 results were slightly improved from 2014 and the Council's introduction of the new Standards was rated highly by respondents. Other identified strengths included client interactions and communication with the Council and the Secretariat and the majority of RTOs indicated the audits added value to their business and positive responses were received in relation to auditors and the Secretariat.

Feedback received from RTOs as part of the site audit process also showed that 83% of respondents found that the audit process added value to their business and 83% of respondents indicated that overall they were satisfied with the audit.

An area of concern raised by RTOs included the ease and use of RTONet (client management system) which will be addressed through the development of a new RTO portal as part of Council's new client management system. The Council will continue to improve its system and practices to ensure there is a high level of transparency in decisions and a greater focus on outcomes and engagement with industry. The Council will also be undertaking a review of mechanisms to ensure further improvements in audit consistency and interactions with RTOs during audits.

Respondents were asked to comment on the Council's communications, audits, VET sector improvements, introduction of new standards and overall Council's performance. A summary of the responses is provided below.

### Communication

Overall, the Council's communication with RTOs through updates, application processing, general email service, phone service, information sessions and presentations was rated highly with the outcomes consistent with the 2014 survey. Timeliness of response and availability of follow up assistance have also been identified as strengths. The Council's website received positive feedback compared with 2014 and RTONet was again mentioned as needing improvement.

### Audits

Overall results in relation to the management and conduct of the audit process were similar across the different audit types (i.e. site, SIA's, desk and accreditation) but were slightly lower than 2014 (noting overall outcomes were still positive). The results were considered fairly positive in light of the Council's regulatory role. The majority of respondents indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with their audit and the manner in which the Council conducted its audits was appreciated.

Benefits of audits identified included the ability to demonstrate compliance and aid continuous improvement (same as 2014). The majority of RTOs again indicated a positive response in relation to auditors and the Council staff including audit staff were organised, provided information regarding scope, purpose and the audit process that assisted RTOs in the preparation of audits.

### VET Sector Improvements

Respondents were asked to indicate which areas RTOs generally do NOT do well in order to focus the Council's future regulatory services. With a wide range of issues identified, with continuous improvement and appropriate length of courses again chosen as the most common areas.

### Introduction of the new standards

Overall RTO respondents rated Council's introduction of the new Standards highly, with over 85% of respondents indicating Council provided adequate support to RTOs if assistance was required. A range of comments were received from respondents regarding the introduction of the standards including timeliness and clarity of information and time allocated for implementation. A high number of stakeholders answered don't know or not applicable to this section, impacting on the overall level of satisfaction with the roll out and implementation of the new Standards.

### TAC Overall Performance

88% of respondents rated the Council at the good or excellent level as a regulator which was the same as the 2014 survey. The highest levels of performance were indicated as provides timely and quality advice to organisations on its regulatory activities, promotes and encourages continuous improvement of RTOs, improves the quality of VET outcomes in WA and overall as a regulator.

When asked to offer suggestions about what the Council does well and should continue doing, respondents most commonly indicated that they were happy with the case manager and state based approach. Specific examples of what the Council does well includes feedback and support given to RTOs especially about compliance, communication and staff being helpful and available. These outcomes were similar to the 2014 survey.

Feedback collected from the survey including auditing will help inform the Council's review and improvement processes and will continue to be a key focus during 2015-2016. Feedback from the survey also supports the Council's ongoing commitment to remaining transparent and facilitating communication, with internal and external stakeholders to improve the VET system.

### **Feedback from RTOs following audit**

In addition to the Council's external client and stakeholder survey further feedback is collected from a number of sources. This includes feedback from RTOs via audit surveys, direct contact with key stakeholders, the Council's complaints handling process and auditor feedback. This feedback is incorporated into the Council's continuous improvement processes and is reported on a biannual basis.

The Council collects feedback from RTOs following completion of audits during the initial and renewal of registration process. The data collected during the 2014-2015 reporting period supported the outcomes and findings of the Council's external client and stakeholder survey. The results highlighted that 87% of respondents found that the audit process added value to their business. This figure is slightly decreased from the 2013-2014 (94%) reporting period. In addition, 87% of respondents indicated that the pre-audit information provided by the Council met their needs and 84% indicated 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 in the provision of vocational education and training regulatory and educative services to ensure confidence in the quality of training and assessment and consistency of quality assurance outcomes.
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Work undertaken by the Council to progress and achieve Key Priority 3 is detailed as follows.

### 5.1 ENGAGEMENT WITH STAKEHOLDERS, INCLUDING INDUSTRY REGULATORS AND TRAINING COUNCILS

A key function of the Council is to ensure that training providers operate within the national quality assurance arrangements to meet employer and industry expectations. Stakeholder consultation and engagement is a key component of the Council's regulatory process. Engaging with stakeholders ensures the exchange of appropriate and relevant information and informs the Council of potential problems within VET areas and assists in the development of the Council's risk assessment approach and audit program, including strategic industry audits.

During the previous reporting period (June 2014), the Council endorsed an Industry Engagement Framework that requires regular quarterly reporting on the outcomes of engagement activities including issues that may have arisen from the meetings that impact on regulatory requirements.

Engagement with Industry Regulators and Training Councils is a key component of the framework. Specifically, outcomes of discussions with industry regulators and training councils during the current reporting period initiated the strategic industry audit into the quality of training and assessment for units of competency that lead to HRWL in WA.

Further, the Council utilises technical advisors to provide advice on current industry, regulatory or workplace requirements. Technical advisors are consulted when the Council needs expert industry advice to ensure that RTO strategies for training and assessment meet industry requirements. Technical advisors may attend the Council audits, or be available to provide advice to auditors and Secretariat staff when required.

While the work on the development of the new Standards for RTOs and Regulators required the majority of resources during this period, industry engagement activities continued, with the majority of activity focussed on stakeholder meetings across the education sector to support the VET in Schools SIA and progress recommendations published in the final report.

In progressing the recommendations of the VET in Schools Strategic Industry Audit, 22 presentations and meetings were undertaken with various stakeholders including Training Councils, Industry Regulators, Department of Training and Workforce Development and education sector stakeholders including Department of Education, School Curriculum and Standards Authority, Association of Independent Schools of WA and the Catholic Education Office. Collaboration with stakeholders was the key theme for presentations and meetings to develop educative and support mechanisms for schools and RTOs. The Council has also been strengthening relationships with representatives from education sector stakeholders to develop a better understanding of, and provide feedback on, policies and operational issues within VETiS programs.

The work undertaken with stakeholders promoted information sharing to support an informed and consistent approach to regulation within the WA VET environment. Approximately 50 formal meetings were undertaken with various stakeholders including Training Councils, Industry Skills Councils, State and Commonwealth government agencies, including those outside the VET sector and RTOs. Examples include a presentation and participation on a VET Regulator Panel at the Australian Council for Private Education and Training's (ACPET) national conference held in Perth during August 2014. A professional development session was also delivered as part of DTWD's professional development 'Summer Shorts' program in December 2014.

Stakeholder consultation and engagement is a key component of the Council's regulatory process. Engaging with stakeholders ensures the exchange of appropriate and relevant information. This engagement also provides opportunities for the Council to provide information and professional development about its regulatory processes and guidance in relation to compliance.

## 5.2 NEW VET REGULATORY STANDARDS

The introduction of the new *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015* and *Standards for VET Regulators 2015* follows an extensive national review of the regulation of VET, which commenced in the 2013-2014 period. WA actively participated in the review by providing feedback, making submissions, attending national meetings and its membership on a joint national taskforce.

As part of the national the COAG Industry and Skills Council in April 2014, agreed to six (6) objectives for VET reform and three key priorities for action. The first key priority for action included a new review of the standards for RTOs and regulators to ensure they better recognised the different level of risk proposed by different providers, enabling regulators to deal more effectively with poor quality in the sector and to improve confidence and meet the Commonwealth government's deregulation objectives.

The new Standards incorporated a range of new requirements for RTOs. Some of the key changes for RTOs include:

- responsibility for determining the amount of training required by each learner to enable him or her to meet the course requirements and also to advise learners as to which training products best meet their needs
- ensuring training products are independently validated at specified intervals
- recognising Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) issued by other providers
- from 1 January 2016, people delivering training or conducting assessments must hold the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment or a higher qualification in adult education
- people engaged to deliver training who do not hold the requisite qualification are to work under supervision and, from 1 January 2016, must possess one (1) of three (3) stipulated skill sets
- from 1 January 2016, people training trainers and assessors will be required to hold the training and assessment qualification at least to the level being delivered and from 1 January 2017 will be required to hold a diploma or higher qualification
- providers engaging a third party to provide services on its behalf must enter into a written agreement about those services
- new time limits are imposed on providers to issue certificates and other course documentation to graduates
- new time limits are also imposed on providers obligations to report information to the regulator
- marketing material will be subject to new disclosure requirements
- providers complaints and appeals policies are to include defined content
- fitness and propriety requirements make explicit a range of matters the regulator is to consider while retaining the existing capacity of the regulator to consider, in addition, any matter it deems relevant. These include, whether the person has ever been disqualified from managing corporations, whether the person has ever provided a regulator with false or misleading information and whether the public is likely to have confidence in the person's suitability to be involved in a training provider.

The legislative amendments giving effect to the new standards were introduced in April 2015.



### 5.3 PARTICIPATION AT A NATIONAL LEVEL

During 2014-2015, the Council continued to work collaboratively with the Commonwealth government, VET Regulators and national stakeholders in the regulation and development of the VET sector.

- **Working relationship with other VET Regulators** – During the reporting period VET Regulators have continued to collaborate and work co-operatively to ensure consistent implementation of regulatory requirements. Activities during the reporting period has included VET Regulator representation on reference groups for strategic industry audits and reviews and several joint meetings to discuss major initiatives including the implementation of new VET Regulatory Standards.
  - **Reference group representation for strategic industry audits and reviews** – Reference groups are a key feature of strategic industry audits and reviews undertaken by VET Regulators. During the reporting period, ASQA provided reference group membership during the Council's VET in Schools Strategic Industry Audit. Similarly, the Council provided reference group membership for ASQA's strategic reviews for the equine and security industries during the reporting period.
  - **Moderation meetings with other VET Regulators** – A key focus for VET Regulators is the consistent interpretation and application of the new VET Standards. The Council's Executive Officer attended a joint meeting of VET Regulators held in Melbourne on October 2014 to discuss the new Standards prior to their approval.

On 12 June 2015, senior staff from the Council's Secretariat attended a meeting in Brisbane to participate in a moderation discussion with ASQA about key elements of the new Standards. The intent of this meeting was to moderate the implementation of the new Standards. Participation in the moderation session with the national regulator ensures consistency between regulators. Key issues moderated included interpretation and consistency of application regarding the Standards in areas that have been identified as requiring extra information and clarity towards their intent. This information was communicated to the Council's Auditor Panel to ensure consistency in their approach to compliance during audits.



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

### 6.1 REVIEW OF COUNCIL OPERATIONS AND PROCESSES

As part of its role in supporting the business of the Council, the Council's Secretariat maintains a quality system that underpins the day to day operations and processes of the Council. The quality system is designed to support Council's functions as a VET Regulator and ensure compliance with a range of State and national requirements.

In December 2014 the Secretariat commenced a scheduled internal review of the quality system. The aim of the review was to ensure all of the Council's policies, processes and procedures were consistent, fit for purpose and compliant with the *Standards for VET Regulators 2015* and *Standards for RTOs 2015* ahead of the April 2015 commencement date.

Changes were identified and made to almost half of the documents that were reviewed, either to reflect regulatory changes or for continuous improvement purposes. The most common changes were:

- changes to reflect the transition from the AQTF to the *Standards for VET Regulators 2015* and *Standards for RTOs 2015*
- updates to more closely support the Council's current practice
- removal of redundant information
- restructuring and streamlining of published documents for clarity and ease of use by clients.

The review also identified some further changes to be made at a later stage in support of the operations of the Council's new risk management model. It is anticipated that the next stage of the review will be completed following implementation of the model during the 2015–2016 reporting period.

## 6.2 OAG REVIEW

During the reporting period the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) conducted an audit of the Council. The audit assessed whether the Council could provide assurance that RTOs deliver quality training and assessment of student skills. The audit was conducted between October 2014 and June 2015.

The final report from the OAG on the Regulation of Training Organisations was tabled in Parliament on 24 June 2015 by the Auditor General. The audit findings concluded that:

- The Council follows the national approach in how it regulates RTOs. This includes deciding which RTOs to register, checking compliance and when to sanction RTOs that do not comply.
- The Council's activities restrict registration to eligible RTOs and offers some assurance that non-compliance will be identified and fixed. In 2013-14 more than half the checks the Council did found non-compliance with the national standards. As a result of the Council's work most problems that led to non-compliance were fixed.
- Non-compliance by RTOs raises concern that students may not get the training they need and industry expects. The Council is concerned about the high rate of RTO non-compliance and is working on ways to improve compliance and reduce the risks to students and industry.

The report included five recommendations which were accepted by Council. The agreed recommendations were:

The Training Accreditation Council should:

- within 12 months, fully implement its revised approach to regulating RTOs. This should focus on high risk RTOs and ways to increase compliance in the sector.
- seek industry input when it plans and conducts its mandatory checks of RTOs. This would better focus checks on industry concerns.
- develop clear requirements for when its contract auditors should talk with students to verify the quality of training and assessments.
- consider the need for legislative or policy change to allow the Council to check RTO compliance without prior notice. The threat of unannounced checks might help ensure RTOs stay compliant with the standards.
- explicitly consider and document the risk to students and industry of training provided by non-compliant RTOs and any decisions made. In addition, find ways to reduce timeframes before sanctioning an RTO to reduce the risk that students receive inadequate training.

The implementation of the OAG recommendations has commenced and will be a key focus for Council during 2015-2016.

### 6.3 TAC DECISION REGISTER

In May 2015, the Council following a review of its current arrangements concerning regulatory decisions and in line with the requirements of the new *Standards for VET Regulators 2015*, agreed to establish a decision register. Under the current arrangements Council decisions affecting RTOs registration while not published, have been provided publicly on the National Register at [www.training.gov.au](http://www.training.gov.au).

Under the new Standards VET Regulators are required to provide relevant stakeholders with clear and accurate information on Council decisions including publishing, once all review periods have expired. The register will include details on Council decisions such as sanctions and reasons for decisions and will be published on the Council's website from the 2015-2016 reporting period.

### 6.4 APPEALS AGAINST COUNCIL DECISIONS

During the 2014-2015 reporting period the rigour of the Council's policies and procedures were 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 Standards and the VET legislation, cancelled the registration of one (1) RTO. The Council also rejected four (4) applications for initial registration and one (1) application for renewal of registration.

As a result of the cancellation and the rejection of one (1) application for initial registration, two (2) appeals were lodged with the STB against the decision of the Council. At the time of reporting both appeals were still to be finalised by the STB and the outcomes will be reported in the 2015-2016 period.

## 7. APPENDIX 1 - Glossary of Terms

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

**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 Training Package or VET accredited course.

**Audit** means a planned, systematic and documented process used to assess an RTO's compliance with the Standards. VET Regulators 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 Standards 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.

**COAG Industry and Skills Council** means the Commonwealth, State and Territory ministerial council established by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), or its successor.

**Competency** means the consistent application of knowledge and skill to the standard of performance required in the workplace. It embodies the ability to transfer and apply skills and knowledge to new situations and environments.

**Complaint** is an expression of dissatisfaction with an action product or service of an education and training provider (or of the VET Regulator) made to the VET Regulator

**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.

**Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)** means an assessment process that assesses the competency/s of an individual that may have been acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning to determine the extent to which that individual meets the requirements specified in the training package or VET accredited courses.

**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 registration by a VET Regulator, in accordance with the Standards, that a training organisation meets the requirements of the Standards.

**Registered Training Organisation (RTO)** means a training organisation registered by a VET Regulator in accordance with the Standards within a defined scope of registration.

**Scope of registration** means the training products for which an RTO is registered to issue AQF certification documentation. It allows the RTO to:

- both provide training delivery and assessment resulting in the issuance of AQF certification documentation by the RTO; or
- provide assessment resulting in the issuance of AQF certification documentation by the RTO.

**Statement of Attainment** means a statement issued to a person confirming that the person has satisfied the requirements of the unit/s of competency or accredited short course specified in the statement.

**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** is the process used by an RTO or a third party delivering services on its behalf, to facilitate learning and the acquisition of competencies in relation to the training product on the RTO's scope of registration.

**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 AQF qualification, skill set, unit of competency, accredited short course and module.

**VET Regulator** means the Training Accreditation Council in WA or National VET Regulator.

## 8. APPENDIX 2 – Acronyms

AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
AQTF	Australian Quality Training Framework
ASQA	Australian Skills Quality Authority
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
DES	Department of Education Services
DTWD	Department of Training and Workforce Development
NSSC	National Skills Standards Council
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
SIA	Strategic Industry Audit
TAC	Training Accreditation Council
VET	Vocational Education and Training