



Associate Secretary

Mr Tim Watling
Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Mr Watling

Supplementary Information for the Inquiry into the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Bill 2011 and the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (Consequential Amendments and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2011

Thank you for the opportunity to provide further technical information to the Committee on making the Higher Education Standards Framework and particularly the first set of Threshold Standards.

Making the Higher Education Standards Framework

Under ^58 of the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Bill 2011 (the Bill) the Higher Education Standards Framework (Standards Framework) will consist of the following standards:

- Provider Standards comprising:
 - the Provider Registration Standards
 - the Provider Category Standards
 - the Provider Course Accreditation Standards
 - Qualification Standards
 - Teaching and Learning Standards
 - Research Standards
 - Information Standards, and
 - Other standards against which higher education providers and the quality of higher education can be assessed.
- } *Threshold Standards*

All providers must meet the Provider Standards (based on the National Protocols which are currently applied by State and Territory Government Accreditation Authorities) and the Qualification Standards (based on the Australian Qualifications Framework) to be registered and operate as an Australian higher education provider.

The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (Consequential Amendments and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2011 (the C & T Bill) allows the Minister to make the first set of Threshold Standards without advice from the Standards Panel. The C & T Bill does however require the Minister to consult with other interested parties, the Research Minister, the appropriate Ministerial Council and TEQSA before making the first Threshold Standards.




Allowing the Minister to make the first set of Threshold Standards shortly after the TEQSA legislation comes into force will provide regulatory certainty for providers and facilitate a smooth transition to TEQSA. The C & T Bill also requires that the Panel begin a review of the first set of Threshold Standards within the first year of the Panel's operation.

Those Standards which are provided for in the Standards Framework but are not the first Provider Standards or Qualification Standards, can only be made under the provisions of the Bill. The Bill requires that the relevant Minister can only make those standards after receiving a draft of the standard from the Standards Panel. Which, in developing that advice, must consult with interested parties.

As the Standards Panel cannot be appointed until after the TEQSA legislation comes into force, it is expected that consultation on these standards will commence in late 2011.

Given that the Teaching and Learning Standards, Research Standards and Information Standards are new areas for standards it is appropriate that they be developed by the expert panel in close consultation with the sector and that the development of these standards is not rushed. The TEQSA legislation is capable of being fully operational without these Standards.

Yours sincerely



Robert Griew

21 April 2011