



Australian Government
Australian Skills Quality Authority

Senate Estimates: May 2014

AUSTRALIAN SKILLS QUALITY AUTHORITY (ASQA) - OPENING STATEMENT

ASQA's Chief Commissioner, Mr Christopher Robinson, would like to apologise for not being able to appear before the Committee today, however he is currently on leave due to illness.

ASQA is the national regulator for vocational education and training (VET) in Australia. It also regulates providers delivering VET and English language education to international students in Australia.

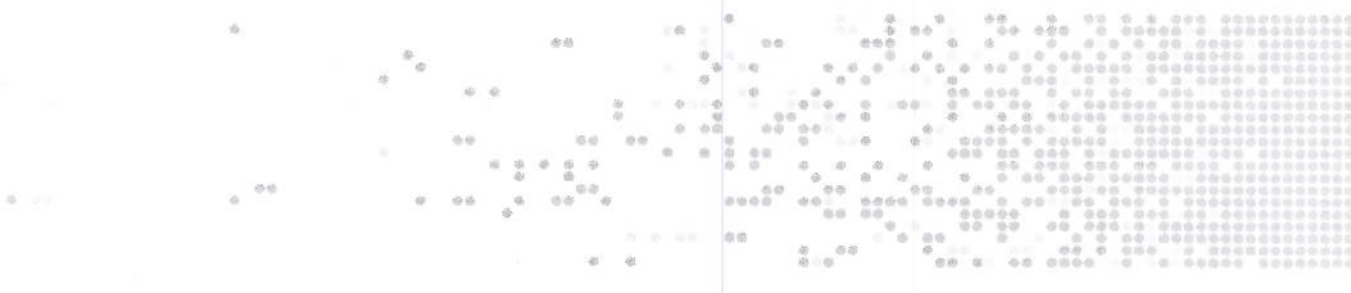
For the 6 month period from 1 October 2013 to 31 March 2014 ASQA finalised 436 audits of existing registered training organisations (RTOs) from across Australia. These audits test compliance with national standards. 80.0% of the existing RTOs audited were found to have at least one instance of non-compliance at the initial audit.

Following a 20-day rectification period in which ASQA allows RTOs to address any identified deficiencies and prove their compliance, 23.4% of RTOs were still found to have at least one instance of significant non-compliance.

Only 22.1% of existing RTOs audited by ASQA between 1 October 2013 and 31 March 2014 were found to be fully compliant with National Standard No. 15 (Training and Assessment). Following rectification 77.2% of RTOs audited were found to be compliant.

A strong VET sector is essential to Australia's economic prosperity. We need to ensure that training providers are delivering the education and training that Australians need so that they have the requisite skills for a modern economy. Employers and industry have made it clear to ASQA that they expect national regulation to ensure that high quality vocational education and training is provided that meets employer needs. Industry skill needs are defined as competency standards in training packages.

Since ASQA's inception on 1 July 2011 it has - as at 31 March 2014 - issued 273 written notices to cancel/suspend registration (and actually made 130 decisions to cancel or suspend registration) and refused to reregister 113 existing RTOs. These decisions affected a total of 283 individual RTOs (given an RTO can have more than one decision made against it).



As at 31 March 2014, 178 (62.9%) of the 283 affected RTOs were listed as “Current” on the National register, while the remaining 105 (37.1%) were listed as either “Cancelled” or “Not-Current”.

Significantly, as at 31 March 2014 ASQA has been party to 94 finalised matters before the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (i.e. a regulatory decision made by the regulator was subject to external review). Of these finalised matters, just 2 resulted in a decision to overturn an ASQA decision. This reassures us that our regulatory decisions have been confirmed as appropriate and fair given that these providers are those who have the most significant non compliances. It is also indicative that ASQA takes its role as the national regulator seriously and that it is effective in addressing poor quality training providers.