



MEDIA RELEASE

Claims of 'crisis' in the VET sector overstated

7 September 2012

Over the last three weeks the ABC television 7:30 program has aired several stories on the vocational education sector. These stories claim that poor quality training and fraudulent activity is widespread in the VET sector and that the national regulator, the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA), has been slow to respond to these issues.

ASQA Chief Commissioner Chris Robinson today strongly refuted both these claims.

"In ASQA's first year of operation we received a total of 4873 applications for initial registration, registration renewal or change of scope. Of those applications that were completed by 30 June 2012, only five per cent were found to have serious issues of non-compliance."

"The majority of training providers in Australia are working hard to deliver high quality training outcomes," Mr Robinson said.

"For the five per cent that do not meet the required standards there are clear consequences and we are unapologetic about taking strong action against providers to ensure those standards are met," Mr Robinson said.

"We have been given the resources and powers to take strong action, and we are deploying them."

ASQA Commissioners refused 202 applications between 1 July 2011 and 30 June 2012. Of these, 48 were rejections of applications to register as a new provider; 126 were rejections of applications to add new courses to a provider's scope of registration; and a further 28 were rejections of applications to renew the registration of existing providers.

In addition, ASQA took action to cancel or suspend the registrations of a further 18 providers.

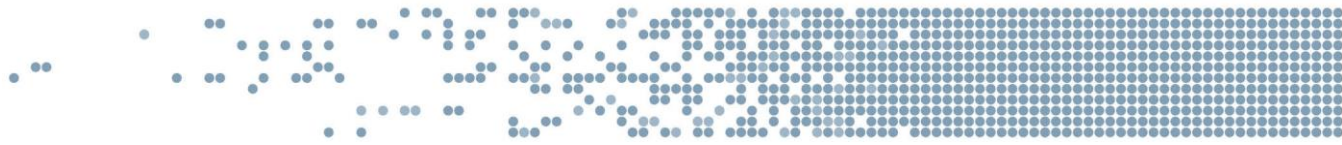
ASQA is currently rolling out a very substantial audit program nationally with 676 audits completed and another 646 scheduled or underway during our first year of operation. Some 377 of these were in Victoria.

"What this means in practice is that we have undertaken audit activity in regard to some 40 per cent of all RTOs in Australia that fell within our jurisdiction in our first year of operation (with the exception of Queensland providers which came under ASQA's jurisdiction on 29 June 2012). Clearly this is not a 'go-slow' approach," Chris Robinson said.

The ABC 7.30 program has stated that it has received numerous complaints from students on the training which they have received. ASQA is willing to take action on any complaints lodged and is disappointed that the ABC has not provided details of these complaints despite these being requested by ASQA on a number of occasions. The refusal

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to refer information indicates the 7:30 program is more interested in beating up a story than it is having the concerns of people with poor experiences of the VET system examined and acted upon.

“Recent events highlight the importance of the national regulator in ensuring quality standards are applied across the VET sector. While there is much more work to be done, I am confident that we have the tools required to meet and ensure compliance with those standards.”

Consumers and students can access information regarding regulatory decisions made by ASQA to suspend or cancel a training provider’s registration from ASQA’s website at www.asqa.gov.au/aboutasqa/regulatory-decisions/regulatory-decisions.html.