



NQC Chair, Patrick McKendry with Di Lawson, CEO, Community Services & Health Industry Skills Council at the recent national conference in Sydney.

PAGE CONTENTS

- | PAGE | CONTENTS |
|------|---|
| 1 | From The Chair |
| 2 | Profile |
| 2 | Collection of information on skill sets |
| 2 | Information resource for skill sets and Statements of Attainment |
| 2 | Quality Standing Committee |
| 2 | AQTF 2007 publications |
| 2 | AQTF 2007 Quality Indicators |
| 3 | AQTF 2007 Excellence Criteria |
| 3 | AQTF 2007 Formative Evaluation and Monitoring |
| 3 | New Offshore Skills Assessments – Offshore Technical Skills Record |
| 3 | Employability skills |
| 4 | Training Packages Standing Committee |
| 4 | Strategic priorities- National VET Professional Capability Building Program |
| 4 | Hospitality Professional Development Report |
| 4 | Tourism, Hospitality and Events Management Training Package Endorsed |
| 4 | The Transnational Quality Strategy (TQS) and AusLIST |
| 5 | ACRONYMS |
| 5 | NQC draft meeting dates for 2008 |

NQC Communiqués

- | | |
|---|---|
| 6 | New Offshore Skills Assessments – Offshore Technical Skills Record |
| 7 | Bridging the migrant skills gap |
| 8 | Amendment to NQC policy on languages for delivering and assessing vocational education and training |

Quality Council Focus

The National Quality Council (NQC) is a Committee of the Ministerial Council for Vocational and Technical Education (MCVTE). The Council plays a key role in bringing together industry, unions, governments, equity groups and providers to oversee and support the quality of vocational and technical education across Australia.

Welcome to the sixth *Quality Council Focus*, a regular newsletter from the Chair and Members of the National Quality Council. The Council seeks to strengthen relationships with its key stakeholders, by providing relevant news and updates on progress of work being undertaken by the Council.

From The Chair

Since the last meeting of the NQC, I have undertaken a series of meetings and official engagements with peak industry bodies, senior officials within Commonwealth, State and Territory Training agencies, as well as providing keynote addresses at several national conferences.

In October and November, I was a keynote speaker at the Community Services and Health ISC national conference in Sydney and the Reframing the Future Forum in Brisbane, while I also attended the Australian Training Awards in Hobart.

In late November, I hosted a visit from the Tasmanian Minister for Education, The Hon David Bartlett MHA at the TVET offices in Melbourne. This provided an opportunity to highlight and discuss some of the work of NQC.

In early December, I wrote to Deputy Prime Minister, The Hon Julia Gillard MP, and Northern Territory Minister for Education, Marion Scrymgour MLA, welcoming both Ministers to their new portfolios. I look forward to meeting with both Ministers in the coming months.

Regards,

Patrick McKendry



Chair

PROFILE

In each edition, a member of the Council is profiled.



Mark Bagshaw

**Managing Director
Innov8 Consulting Group**

Mark Bagshaw joined the National Quality Council in May 2007 as its Equity representative for people with a disability.

Mark is the Managing Director of the Innov8 Consulting Group, a consultancy that specialises in business re-engineering projects across the government, business and community sectors.

Previously, Mark worked for IBM Australia for over 25 years in a variety of technical, marketing, sales and management positions.

Mark sits on a number of Boards and is strongly involved in community organisations. He is currently the Chair of the Ability Australia Foundation and Humanitech; Co-chair of the National VET Disability Advisory Taskforce; Vice-patron of Technical Aid for the Disabled. He is also one of the judges for the NSW Premier's Teacher Scholarships Scheme and the Australian Humanitarian Awards.

He is passionate about social reform and the critical role of education in addressing disadvantage.

Mark has received a number of awards including a Paul Harris Fellowship from Rotary International, an Australian National Training Authority Board Award, an Australian Humanitarian Award, an Australian Centenary Medal, and an Honorary Doctorate from Griffith University.

Collection of information on skill sets

The Council noted advice from the National Training Statistics Committee (NTSC) in regard to the cost implications for the VET system of reporting on skill set activity and completions if no specific codes are allocated to skill sets. Members confirmed that, in line with their decision of 5 July 2007 that "there is no need to allocate specific codes to skill sets", the Council's view is that reporting beyond that which is currently possible, that is, reporting on completion of a specific combination of units of competency, will not be required.

In reinforcing their previous position, NQC members agreed that in the interest of keeping open communication with the NTSC that their Chair be invited to the first meeting of NQC in 2008 to discuss further the issues raised in correspondence.

Information resource for skill sets and Statements of Attainment

NQC members approved a project brief that will see the information provided during national workshops conducted during 2007 regarding skill sets policy and how skill sets are presented on Statements of Attainment, provided on training.com.au as an information resource for VET stakeholders. It is anticipated the site will be operational in early 2008.

In the meantime, general policy advice on skill sets is available on the NQC website at http://www.nqc.tvetaustralia.com.au/skill_sets. Specific industry advice on skill sets in Training Packages is available through the relevant Industry Skills Council. (ISC) at http://www.isc.org.au/display_main.php?id=contact. Advice on how skill sets are to be presented on Statements of Attainment is available in the relevant section of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Implementation Handbook (Fourth Edition 2007), available from the AQF website www.aqf.edu.au/pdf/han73_80.pdf

Quality Standing Committee

AQTF 2007 publications

The AQTF 2007 Standards for State and Territory Course Accrediting Bodies and the AQTF 2007 Standards for Accredited Courses have been approved by the Ministerial Council for Vocational and Technical Education (MVCTE) and are now available on www.training.com.au/aqtf2007.

The AQTF 2007 Standards for State and Territory Course Accrediting Bodies apply to course accrediting bodies that manage course accreditation under state and territory legislation. These standards focus on national consistency, client service and responsive management systems and specify quality indicators and operating protocols for course accreditation.

The AQTF 2007 Standards for Accredited Courses apply to the course design for vocational education and training (VET) accredited courses.

The final version of the *AQTF 2007 National Guideline for Audit Moderation* has also been endorsed for on-line publication.

AQTF 2007 Quality Indicators

Following extensive consultation and piloting during 2007, registered training organisations (RTOs) will be required, from 2008, to collect and use data on the three quality indicators endorsed by the National Quality Council:

- **Learner engagement.** This indicator will focus on the extent to which learners are engaging in activities likely to promote high-quality skill outcomes and will include learner perceptions of the quality of their competency development and the support they receive or have received from RTOs.
- **Employer satisfaction.** This indicator will focus on employer evaluation of learner competency development and the relevance of learner competency to work and further training, as well as employer evaluation of the overall quality of the training and assessment.

- **Competency completion.** This indicator will show the number of enrolments and qualifications completed and units of competency awarded in the previous calendar year by each RTO.

A package of resources will be made available to all RTOs by 31 May 2008 to support the collection and use of the data.

The package will comprise survey instruments, an RTO guide and data collection and reporting software. RTOs will be required to use the Learner Questionnaire and the Employer Questionnaire instruments.

- **The Learner Questionnaire** will be used by RTOs to gather information across the scope of their registration within each term of registration in line with the sampling guidance provided in the RTO Guide.
- **The Employer Questionnaire** will be used in a manner which reflects the nature of an RTO's business.

A tool to support the collection of information for the *Competency Completion Indicator* is currently being developed and will also be made available to RTOs.

Information sessions will be held across Australia in April and May 2008 to introduce the quality indicator resources. Further information about the timing of implementation will be provided in March 2008.

AQTF 2007 Excellence Criteria

NQC members endorsed the draft Excellence Criteria which are now on the www.training.com.au/aqtf2007 website. This component of AQTF 2007 is voluntary and designed to recognise high quality training and assessment delivery, and to encourage the continuing development of high RTO performance.

NQC members have also agreed to a live trial of the Excellence Criteria and supporting infrastructure and processes during the first half of 2008 in fifteen RTOs, comprising five small, five medium and five large. Participating

RTOs will take part in the full evaluation process and receive formal recognition of their level of performance. A draft guide and supporting materials will be published to support RTOs participating in the trial. It is anticipated that the Excellence Criteria will be available for use by all RTOs in the second half of 2008.

AQTF 2007 Formative Evaluation and Monitoring

In the spirit of continuous improvement that is a feature of all parts of AQTF 2007, NQC has agreed to a formative evaluation of the implementation of the new quality arrangements that will be undertaken during the first half of 2008.

KPMG has been appointed to undertake this work on behalf of the NQC. The consultants will conduct research between January and July 2008 which will involve input from registered training organisations, registering and course accrediting bodies and a range of organisations with an interest in vocational education and training. As this is a formative evaluation there will be progressive reporting to the NQC and the outcomes will inform policy making and decisions made during 2008.

Work is also underway by the Quality Standing Committee to develop a reporting framework using comparable information from all jurisdictions that will support the NQC in its monitoring of AQTF 2007 implementation.

New Offshore Skills Assessments – Offshore Technical Skills Record

In order to meet the COAG requirement for a single off-shore assessment process which will meet pre-migration, qualification and occupational licence requirements to Australian standards in specified licensed occupations, the NQC has agreed to support the recognition and use of the Offshore Technical Skills Record by RTOs as evidence of recognition of prior learning.

A communiqué outlining the offshore assessment process and the skills documentation to be issued is an attachment to this newsletter.

Employability skills

The NQC project to initiate a national employability skills professional development (PD) strategy and national communication strategy around employability skills and the NQC endorsed model for assessing and reporting on employability skills, is due for completion in early February 2008.

Over 200 key personnel participated in workshops as part of a national train-the-trainer program conducted in all State and Territory capitals to initiate the PD strategy. Feedback from workshop participants has been used to enhance a generic set of PD resources. These resources are presented in word format to enable customization to suit the needs of particular groups of trainers, assessors and other RTO staff and are available for downloading from www.employabilityskillsresources.com

At its July 2007 meeting, the Council endorsed an approach to descriptive reporting on employability skills which involves learners downloading qualification specific Employability Skills Summaries for Training Package qualifications from an online repository.

Employability Skills Summaries are progressively being developed for all Training Package qualifications as part of the process to embed employability skills in Training Packages and those which are available can be downloaded from <http://employabilityskills.training.com.au>. Further Summaries will be successively added to the site as they are developed.

RTOs will be required to add the following standard sentence to all qualification testamurs for Training Package qualifications:

A summary of the employability skills developed through this qualification can be downloaded from <http://employabilityskills.training.com.au>

Following the March 2008 NQC meeting, a special Employability Skills Bulletin will be released providing detailed information for RTOs on the new reporting arrangements, including the timeline for transition to the new requirement to include the URL sentence on Training Package qualification testamurs.

During 2008, there will be a further roll-out of both the PD strategy and the communication strategy around employability skills.

Training Packages Standing Committee

The work of this Standing Committee in 2007 included progressing a range of projects on behalf of the Council in relation to Training Packages. For example:

- In the project to scope and explore the next generation of enhanced Training Packages and the construction of units of competency, four working documents were initially produced. These provided preliminary information and views on the topics of Training Package rationalisation, Training Package design, qualification packaging rules, and the construction of units of competency. A report, analysing and drawing together key themes and findings, and highlighting potential conceptual, policy and change management issues, is being finalised and will be considered by the Council at its meeting in March 2008.
- The project investigating industry confidence in assessment was also progressed. A national cross-industry survey of enterprises is a feature of this project. Council members are helping to ensure sufficiently broad consultation by providing links to the survey to their various constituents. The project team will contact employers to identify issues, and then RTOs. The final report is expected in April 2008.

Significantly, the work of the Standing Committee in 2007 also included work on a new streamlined, quality assured and transparent process for the development and endorsement of Training Packages that is being progressively implemented during 2008.

The process, agreed to by the NQC, will enable better responsiveness to industry priorities for new and updated skills, and give Industry Skills Councils greater responsibility and accountability for the final product. Documents to support the implementation of the new model are available from www.dest.gov.au.

www.dest.gov.au/sectors/training_skills/policy_issues_reviews/Training_Package_Development_Endorsement_Process_2008.htm

Quality Assurance processes include the establishment, through public invitation, of a Quality Assurance Panel and provision of professional development and moderation for its members. The model also has innovations, including an Environmental Scan, Continuous Improvement Plan and Impact Statement, which will enable greater 'speed to market' of Training Packages and their national qualifications, skill sets and units of competency.

During 2008 evaluations will be undertaken to confirm the process is delivering on its goals of greater 'speed to market' and higher quality Training Packages. As part of its work in 2008, the Standing Committee will consider the outcomes of the evaluations, and recommend any adjustments if required.

Strategic priorities- National VET Professional Capability Building Program

The Council has identified a number of national strategic priorities for building the capability of the VET workforce, at both the level of the individual VET practitioner and the RTO as an organization, as emerging from its 2007 Work Plan.

In relation to the implementation of AQTF 2007, priorities include: developing and maintaining the currency of trainer/assessor vocational competencies; building capability around tailoring training and assessment to meet needs of learners from equity groups; and building RTO skills in relation to the Excellence Criteria.

Building VET workforce capability in relation to the AQTF 2007 Quality Indicators is also seen as a high priority, particularly in relation to developing the necessary individual and organizational capacities required to analyze data from the new Quality Indicators and translate analyzed data into effective continuous improvement strategies across the RTO.

In direct response to industry demand, other areas identified as priorities for capability building of the VET professional workforce over the next year include building both RTO and individual practitioner capacities to effectively deliver, assess and report on employability skills and to provide assessment processes and outcomes in which industry expresses confidence.

Hospitality Professional Development Report

Professional Development workshops for the Hospitality Training Package, delivered by Service Skills Australia, have been completed and the final report on the workshops has been referred to the Quality and Training Packages Standing Committees for consideration.

Tourism, Hospitality and Events Management Training Package Endorsed

The Tourism, Hospitality and Events Training Package has been endorsed in the form in which it was originally presented to the Council, but with the removal of any reference to three years of industry experience within the assessor requirements.

Council also referred to its Standing Committees the issue of further amending the *AQTF 2007 Users' Guide to the Essential Standards for Registration* to refer users to the relevant training package for information on relevant 'vocational competence' for assessors in a particular industry.

The Transnational Quality Strategy (TQS) and AusLIST

In early 2008, as a major initiative of the TQS, DEEWR will implement AusLIST- the Australian list of institutions and courses in other countries.

AusLIST is a directory of Australian registered education providers delivering nationally approved courses offshore that meet domestic regulatory and quality assurance standards; and who have declared a commitment to delivering offshore courses to a comparable quality to those delivered in Australia. It will offer prospective students, overseas governments, and

other stakeholders a single point of entry to and ways of identifying: quality assured Australian providers, their courses and locations.

It is important to note that AusLIST is not the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS). That Register is a part of the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* regulatory framework to protect overseas students studying in Australia on student visas. AusLIST has no such regulatory requirements.

Further information on the TQS and AusLIST is available from the TQS website <http://aei.dest.gov.au/offshore> or by contacting tqs@dest.gov.au

NQC draft meeting dates for 2008

The NQC will confirm dates of meetings for 2008 when the revised membership is in place.

- 28 February - Planning Day
- 27 March
- 10 July
- 25 September
- 26 September - Planning Day
- 4 December

ACRONYMS

- AEI** Australian Education International
- AESOC** Australian Education Systems Officials Committee
- AQF** Australian Qualifications Framework
- AQFAB** Australian Qualifications Framework Advisory Board
- AQTF** Australian Quality Training Framework
- AVETMISS** Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard
- COAG** Council of Australian Governments
- DEEWR** Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
- ISC** Industry Skills Council
- MCVTE** Ministerial Council for Vocational and Technical Education
- NSOC** National Senior Officials Committee
- NISC** National Industry Skills Committee
- NTIS** National Training Information Service
- NCVER** National Centre for Vocational Education Research
- NQC** National Quality Council
- MCEETYA** Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs
- RTO** Registered Training Organisation

For further information please contact:
Jocelin Walker on 03 9832 8110 or
email: jocelin.walker@tvetaustralia.com.au



New Offshore Skills Assessments – Offshore Technical Skills Record

A new streamlined and robust service to assess people with trade skills wishing to migrate to Australia commenced operation on 1 September 2007.

Overseas skills assessments will be provided by a consortium of Victorian and Western Australian registered training organisations, led by VETASSESS. All prospective migrants from our key source countries of migrants with trade skills in key occupations will be tested to agreed Australian standards before coming to Australia.

The new service is a world first for skills recognition and means more certainty for migrants and more certainty for employers. It comes as a result of extensive consultation with industry and state and territory governments.

The new service will include an assessment of qualifications, skills and licensing requirements to make it easier for skilled migrants to work immediately upon arrival in Australia. This will also assist in meeting industry demands. It will ensure that the quality of the migrant assessment process is not only maintained, but significantly increased.

General electricians, cable jointers, electrical power line persons, general plumbers, motor mechanics, refrigeration and air-conditioning mechanics, carpenters and joiners and bricklayers from India, Sri Lanka, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the Philippines will be able to access the service.

The initiative will benefit both the migrant, who will encounter a more streamlined, efficient process incorporating both skills and pre-migration requirements and who will not have to face further duplicate assessment, and Australia, which will welcome migrants with known skills, able to work in skills need areas and to contribute to Australia's productivity much earlier than has been the case until now.

Assessment will take place against standards set by Australian industry and regulators as part of the Council of Australian Government process agreed in February 2006. In most occupations, the standard will be at the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Certificate III level except for the plumbing trade, where the migrant will be tested against nationally agreed specified units of competency. In all cases, the standard set will be higher than that presently used for assessment and migrants will be expected to meet the standard in full.

To ensure confidence in the new measures, VETASSESS has set in place a number of stringent quality measures in addition to existing requirements under the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) 2007.

VETASSESS will also work closely with the Department of Immigration and Citizenship to address questions of identity and document fraud and documentation will involve photographic identification.



Bridging the migrant skills gap

In the electrical and plumbing occupations, regulators expect that intending migrants will be able to demonstrate the technical skill competencies but will not be able to demonstrate the appropriate Australian related knowledge, which will need to be addressed through gap training on arrival. For this reason a new form of skills documentation has been developed. The Offshore Technical Skills Record (OTSR) will be issued by VETASSESS on successful completion by the migrant of the technical component of the relevant units of competency or qualification. It will list both the technical skills demonstrated and any gap in the Australian skills or knowledge component which needs to be bridged to meet the full standard, for example the Australian Wiring Rules for electrical trades.

Regulators in these industries have agreed to provide a provisional licence against the OTSR to allow migrants to work, once they have arrived in Australia, while they complete the 'Australian knowledge' element of each unit.

RTOs will be asked to accept the OTSR as evidence of recognition of prior learning contributing to a statement of attainment or qualification. It is expected that the RTOs in Victoria and Western Australia that are VETASSESS' consortium partners will provide gap training in the first instance but that additional RTOs in other jurisdictions may also choose to provide gap training.

The NQC supports the COAG decision to improve the skilled migration process and approves, in principle, the recognition of the OTSR as evidence of recognition of prior learning. Formal incorporation of the OTSR within the AQTF 2007 will be considered during the Review of the AQTF 2007 Guidelines.

While numbers of migrants likely to arrive under this process will be small, RTOs are encouraged to be on the lookout for this new skills document and to provide every assistance to our skilled migrants as they enter the country under the new arrangements.



Amendment to NQC policy on languages for delivering and assessing vocational education and training

At its September 2007 meeting, the Council agreed to amend its policy on languages for delivering and assessing vocational education and training (and the subsequent issuance of testamurs) to ensure consistency with the position that has been adopted by MCEETYA for implementation of the Transnational Quality Strategy (TQS).

The amended policy now reads:

'AQF qualifications and Statements of Attainment covered by the Australian Quality Training Framework must be delivered and assessed at a level of English language proficiency appropriate to the context of delivery. This does not preclude the use of Languages Other Than English (LOTE) to support training delivery and assessment.

Where the majority of units of competency or the majority of the qualification has been delivered and assessed in a LOTE, then the language of delivery and assessment should be noted on the testamur. Testamurs are to be in English. Official translations may (optionally) be included on the reverse of the document.'

The amendments relate to the second paragraph. Where the previous policy required the language of delivery and assessment to be noted on the testamur in the case where the units or qualification are delivered and assessed *entirely* in a LOTE, the amended policy requires the language of delivery and assessment to be noted on the testamur in the case where either the *majority* of units of competency or the *majority* of the qualification has been delivered and assessed in a LOTE.

The amended policy has been included in the latest (2007) edition of the AQF Implementation Handbook, available at www.aqf.edu.au