

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 fourth 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



It has been a busy first five months for the Council in 2007.

With the NQC Planning Day on 13 March, Council members met to set strategic directions, review the annual work plan and consider how the Council might best continue to add value to the evolving quality agenda and respond to COAG priorities. It was most pleasing to have the Australian Minister for Vocational and Further Education, The Hon Andrew Robb AO, MP attend the day for a one hour



the Honorable Andrew Robb MP, Minister for Vocational & Further Education and Patrick McKendry, Chair of the NQC.

session. His address to the Council was most encouraging as he reinforced the important role of the Council in bringing together all the players in the system to ensure quality and excellence in Vocational Education and Training.

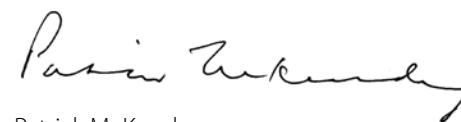
At the last meeting of the Council on 29 March, I had the pleasure of launching the long-awaited NQC website www.nqc.tvetaustralia.com.au. The website has a key role to play in the Council's communications strategy by providing timely information on NQC initiatives and access to Council documents including the 2007 Work Plan. One section of the site is dedicated to the AQTF 2007. The website makes it easy for anyone interested in the NQC to find information and answers to questions in a clear and user-friendly manner.

As Chair of the NQC, I recently took the opportunity to deliver a keynote address to over 800 VET practitioners, TAFE staff and key decision-makers at the 2007 WA Training Forum in Perth. My address covered the topics of building quality into the VET System, the role of the National Quality Council, and empowering the VET practitioner.

The NQC was further represented at the Forum through the TVET Australia exhibition booth. TVET staff distributed the Quality Council Focus, the NQC Charter, NQC flyers and a snap shot of the 2007 Work Plan, while also answering many questions on the Council's work and responsibilities in VET.

I continue to meet with and engage key stakeholders, having recently met with Ministers, Industry Leaders, Industry Skills Centres and senior state and territory officials. These opportunities facilitate open discussion on the work, operations and priorities of the NQC, as well as provide an important feedback loop to the Council. I look forward to continuing to represent the NQC and building on these important relationships.

Regards,



Patrick McKendry

Chair

PROFILE

In each edition of *Quality Council Focus*, a member of the Council is profiled. This edition will profile:

Julie Moss



Julie Moss is the ACPET/private provider nominee to the National Quality Council.

Julie is Managing Director of the Photography Studies College (PSC) in Melbourne. PSC offers a unique Advanced Diploma of Photography, a government endorsed and fully accredited course designed to

produce multi-skilled photographers for a career in the many sectors of the photographic industry. Julie has negotiated a unique credit transfer arrangement with Melbourne's RMIT University which enables College graduates to undertake one year degree conversions in either BA Photography or Media Arts.

Julie has over twenty five years experience in the vocational education and training sector in Australia, including management experience in community education and employment programs.

This experience has taken her to the top of her industry. In October 2004 she was elected National Chair of the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET). ACPET is the national industry association for more than 1000 private institutions delivering higher education, vocational education and training, English language and school courses. ACPET is the leading advocate for the private post-compulsory education and training sector in Australia.

Julie has been involved with ACPET since its inception in 1991. She has a wealth of experience representing the interests of private education and training providers at the state, national

and international levels in a range of capacities including her participation, over a number of years, in the judging of the Australian and Victorian Training Awards.

Julie is also a Board member of the Victorian Qualifications Authority, the first private provider to be appointed to the Board, and has been appointed to its soon-to-be replacement body, the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority. She is also on Victoria's Higher Education Advisory Committee.

Julie has participated in Australian Government delegations promoting VET to Latin America, China and Japan. She also visited Indonesia to participate in the signing ceremony for the ACPET-Nias Island Scholarship Program. This trip included participation in an Education and Training Forum with the former Minister for Vocational and Technical Education, Hon Gary Hardgrave MP. She has also represented private providers in the development of AEI's International VET Strategy.

Julie is a Bachelor of Arts graduate from Deakin University. She also holds a Graduate Diploma (Arts) and an Associate Diploma in Community Development.

First NQC Meeting of 2007

The NQC had its first meeting for 2007 on 29 March. This meeting was also the first for the new Chair, Patrick McKendry. Patrick joined the NQC from 1 January 2007 as its new Chair. This meeting was also the first for two new members of the NQC, Ms Dianne Stuart of the Minerals Council of Australia and Mr Barry Peddle representing TAFE Directors Australia. Mr John Langoulant representing Chamber of Commerce & Industry, WA also became a member of the NQC effective from March 2007 but was unable to attend the meeting.

The Chair noted that there were an additional three members yet to join the NQC, two equity and one further industry representative and it was hoped that appointments would be made shortly.

The Council also farewelled Anne Houghton, who had resigned from her position at the ACT Department of Education and Training and would be also resigning from the Council. The Chair thanked her for her extensive contribution to the Council.

Discussion around AQTF 2007 issues dominated the morning session. During the afternoon, discussion ensued around the Training Package Standing Committee report, an update on Employability Skills and the Skill Sets and Statements of Attainment component of the 2006 Work Plan.

An item reviewing collaboration with ISCs was also discussed followed by a consultation with Tom Karmel and Hugh Guthrie of NCVET. The afternoon ended with a demonstration of the new

National Quality Council website. The NQC website is now live and can be viewed at:
www.nqc.tvetaustralia.com.au

AQTF 2007 – Report from Quality Standing Committee

Since the December 2006 meeting of the Council a very significant amount of work has been undertaken by members of the Quality Standing Committee and their nominees on working groups in order to meet the COAG requirement of implementation of AQTF 2007 by 1 July 2007. Membership of the Committee is drawn from NQC members and includes Rebecca Cross (Chair-DEST), David Collins (NSW), Patricia Neden (Vic), Di Orr (Qld), Ann Doolette (SA), Mike Brough (Tas), Mary Ballantine

(WA), Mary Hicks (ACCI), Michelle Bissett (ACTU), Julie Moss (ACPET), and Barry Peddle (TDA)

In order to meet this deadline it was vital that decisions were reached at the NQC meeting regarding the Essential Standards for Registration and the Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies. The NQC succeeded in reaching decisions on each of these issues and a paper outlining these recommendations has been provided for MCVTE approval.

In addition, it was agreed to place the final draft of the Standards, draft Users Guide and other draft documents on national, state and territory websites to assist Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) in preparation for AQTF 2007 implementation, pending MCVTE approval of the Standards.

Members also noted that national RTO workshops in regard to Excellence Criteria are scheduled for September and October 2007.

Consultation drafts of the following documents are now available for feedback:

- Standards for State and Territory Course Accrediting Bodies
- Standards for Accredited Courses
- National Compliance Guidelines
- National Guidelines for Responding to Complaints about Vocational Education and Training Quality

These consultation drafts together with further information in regard to AQTF 2007 are available at the following website: www.training.com.au

Training Package Standing Committee

The NQC has recently established the Training Packages Standing Committee to provide advice on Training Package policy and strategic oversight of projects in the NQC Workplan which relate to Training Packages.

Membership of the Committee is drawn from the NQC and includes Patricia Neden (Victoria), Megan Lilly (AIG), Mike

Brough (TAS), Mary Hicks (ACCI), Julie Moss (ACPET), Catherine Vandermark (DEST) and Michelle Bissett (ACTU). An equity representative is still to be appointed. Patricia Neden and Megan Lilly Co-chair the Committee.

Over the next year, the work of the Committee will focus on streamlining and improving processes for the development, review and endorsement of Training Packages; and on improving the design of Training Packages, qualifications and units of competency to ensure Training Packages are flexible and responsive to changing industry and client needs, and workplace practices.

The Committee will provide a report on its activities to each NQC meeting and stakeholders will be kept informed through this newsletter.

Employability Skills Update

In 2006, the NQC began a project to develop a model for assessing and reporting on employability skills, which are currently being embedded in units of competency within Training Packages, together with a professional development strategy and resources to implement the model. Once the professional development strategy and materials have been formally endorsed by the NQC, they will be handed over to State and Territory authorities, which will manage implementation in their own jurisdictions.

Consultations in late 2006 confirmed strong support for an assessment and reporting model which involves:

- an integrated approach to assessment, where the assessment of employability skills is integrated with the assessment of technical skills within units and qualifications; and
- descriptive reporting, where short text is used to describe the employability skills developed as part of a qualification. To ensure the burden of reporting is minimised, reports will be based on the Employability Skills Summary provided for each qualification in a Training Package.

In early 2007, a professional development strategy was developed which provides for two levels of training. Level 1 training focuses on building generic skills and knowledge for assessing and reporting on employability skills; and Level 2 training focuses on building industry-specific skills and knowledge for assessing and reporting on employability skills.

Each level is to be offered in two delivery modes: online access to a set of workshop resources; or online access to resources combined with participation in a workshop.

The resources, which may be customized by facilitators to suit the needs of particular groups, include workshop programs and handouts for each level, a set of slides and background information about employability skills and their history.

The draft professional development strategy and materials were piloted and evaluated in a series of workshops with RTOs in NSW and QLD. A final workshop in April at the TVET office in Melbourne brought together a small group from across the country, with high level professional development expertise in this area.

The piloting process provided strong support for the two level professional development strategy. While the resources were generally very well received, and seen as appropriate for both delivery modes, some useful improvements were identified.

Looking ahead

A rather surprising finding from the piloting and evaluation process was that many VET practitioners and administrators still know very little about what employability skills are, how they are being embedded in Training Packages, and the impact this embedding will have on delivery, assessment and reporting in VET.

It is clear that for the employability skills professional development strategy to be most effective, it needs to be accompanied by a more general awareness-raising information campaign. Consequently, an NQC

project to develop and implement an Employability Skills Communication Strategy is planned for the second half of this year.

At its March meeting, the NQC supported further work to investigate costs associated with reporting of employability skills based on the Employability Skills Summaries. This work will begin soon, with the outcomes set to inform subsequent NQC decisions on reporting.

Skill Sets and Statements of Attainment

Implementation of the Communication and Professional Development Strategy for Skill Sets and Statements of Attainment developed by Precision Consultancy, and approved at the 8 December 2006 meeting of the NQC has now commenced.

Implementation of the strategy has followed a two stage process – firstly, awareness raising and information provision through articles for newsletters, communiqués, and websites, that promote and explain skill sets and their application; and secondly, through provision of professional development workshops.

Workshop sessions held to date have been very well attended in each state and territory and interest is so high that additional workshops have had to be organised which will bring the number of likely participants to in excess of 750 when the workshops are concluded in early June.

The participants include RTOs, representatives of state/territory recognition authorities and those working within state departments of education and training in curriculum support roles, as well as representatives of state industry training bodies and some industry association and union representatives.

Given the level of interest in Skill Sets and Statements of Attainment and the need to sustain the availability of reliable information regarding their use following the delivery of workshops, the NQC will shortly consider a project

proposal to develop an on-line resource. Such a resource will provide not only the information given in workshops, but also a location for information on the NQC resolutions on Skill Sets and Statements of Attainments along with links to key documents such as the Training Package Developers' Handbook and the AQF Handbook.

Information on workshops can be found at http://www.nqc.tvetaustralia.com.au/skill_sets or by contacting Precision Consultancy at skillsets@precisionconsultancy.com.au.

NQC Website

NQC Members were given a preview of the new NQC website which sits on the main TVET Australia website. The new website consists of a public access point with an overview of the NQC, its

Charter, a brief biography on each NQC member, the AQTF 2007, Skill Sets, NQC Newsletters, the NQC Secretariat, a Links page and a Contact Us section.

In addition to this, members were provided with a member-only log in and password with which they can access further confidential information on the website available only to members.

The NQC website home page can be located at: <http://www.nqc.tvetaustralia.com.au/>

Next NQC Meeting Date

The NQC will hold its next meeting on Thursday 5 July 2007.

For further information please contact Annalisa Corica on 03 9832 8110 or email annalisa.corica@tvetaustralia.com.au



Minister Robb with Julie Moss, NQC Member

NQC Planning Day, Tuesday, 13 March 2007



NQC Meeting in progress.



From Left: Patricia Neden, Mike Brough, Dianne Orr, Megan Lilly and Minister Robb.

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
- DEST** Department of Education, Science and Training
- 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

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