

## 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

As the Chair of the National Quality Council (NQC), I have been actively engaged in meeting with key stakeholders from across the National Training System to ensure that key personnel are informed and up-to-date on the work and priorities of the Council. Since the June meeting, I have met with a number of State and Territory Training Ministers to discuss the work of the NQC and provide an update on the progress of the 2008 Work Plan. I am looking

forward to meeting with the Commonwealth Minister in the next few weeks.

On 9 July, I took the opportunity to address the ISC CEO's Forum in Sydney. This was a valuable opportunity to speak with the senior representative from each ISC.

On Monday, 21 July, I met with the Chair of Skills Australia, Mr Phillip Bullock. This provided an opportunity to discuss possible collaboration between the two bodies in support of the National Training System.

Over the coming months, I will also be presenting at a number of key national VET conferences and events. These include the ACPET and Voc Ed Learning Group conferences in August as well as the Agri-Foods ISC and Mining Industry Skills Centre conferences in September.

Regards,



Patrick McKendry, Chair

### Let us know what you think!

One of our readers has told us she would like to see the newsletter produced in a format which is more user-friendly for reading on the screen. We are keen to know if this is a view shared by many other readers. What do you think? Would you prefer to stay with the current format, designed for printing out and reading in hard copy or would you like to see a change to a more screen friendly format? Do you have examples of alternative formats you would like us to consider? Please let us know your views in an email to: [luke.salman@tvetaustralia.com.au](mailto:luke.salman@tvetaustralia.com.au)

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**PROFILE****Mike Brough**

**Deputy General Manager  
Skills Tasmania**

Mike is Deputy General Manager of Tasmania's state training authority, Skills Tasmania. He has direct responsibility for key functions within the Tasmanian training system and supports the General Manager in all aspects of the development and operation of the national training system within Tasmania, including representing Tasmania in high level national forums.

He is one of three National Quality Council members nominated by the training system's National Senior Officials Committee.

Mike has extensive experience in government with a particular emphasis on governments' role in supporting skills development. His professional qualifications in accounting and education have supported a career that has covered accounting and finance, management, TAFE teaching, industrial relations and training policy, strategy and operations. His career has also included terms as State and national president within TAFE teacher unions.

Mike has been involved in national and state training system development for many years and understands that the training system must engage effectively with its clients to ensure their needs are met, while addressing requirements for future economic and social development.

**QUALITY STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT****'AQTF 2007' to be known simply as 'AQTF'**

Now the initial implementation phase is over and there is no need to distinguish the AQTF 2007 from its predecessor, the NQC has decided that the '2007' tag should be dropped and that the AQTF 2007 will be known simply as the AQTF. However, given there are no immediate plans to rebrand resources currently branded 'AQTF 2007', the Council accepts that there will be a gradual transition to the renaming.

**2008 Quality Standing Committee Work Plan approved**

The Quality Standing Committee is overseeing continuing work in 2008 on components of AQTF to further increase its effectiveness and provide opportunities for continuous improvement. This ongoing work relates to the:

- deployment of quality indicators for registered training organisations;
- development and deployment of quality indicators for registering and accrediting bodies;
- completion of the Excellence Criteria trial and development of the final business model for deployment of the Excellence Criteria to all interested registered training organisations.

The projects that have been approved as part of the 2008 Quality Standing Committee Work Plan are:

**Quality Indicators Resources Package**

The Quality Indicators Resources Package project involves the integration of the three quality indicators (Employer Satisfaction, Learner Satisfaction, and Competency Completion) into a single resource package. The Resources Package will include data collection tools and supporting software, advice on how to use the tools as well as advice on how to use the data collected for continuous improvement.

The Quality Indicators Resources Package will be released at the end of August.

It will be supported by a series of national information sessions and RTOs will also have access to online and telephone help.

The Resources Package will include free software that will allow RTOs to generate the quality indicator summary reports to be provided to registering bodies. Reports on 2008 operations will be due in late May 2009.

The Australian Council for Educational Research have been contracted to manage the work.

**Development of Quality Indicators for Registering Bodies**

This project will develop stakeholder survey tools to collect data against the Registering and Accrediting Body Quality Indicators. Having nationally consistent survey tools will allow registering and accrediting bodies to fulfil their data collection, continuous improvement and reporting obligations in accordance with the AQTF requirements

**Dissemination of publications for AQTF 2007 implementation**

This project supports the continuing distribution of printed versions of AQTF 2007 Essential Standards for Registration and AQTF 2007 Users' Guide to the Essential Standards for Registration in response to RTO demand.

Note: AQTF 2007 Users' Guide to Standards for Accredited Courses has been published and may be downloaded from [www.training.com.au](http://www.training.com.au)

**National Registration and Accreditation Technical Committee projects**

NRATC is a technical committee of the Quality Standing Committee. It supports the operation of a nationally consistent regulatory system administered through state and territory registering and course accrediting bodies.

The Committee's work focuses on the implementation of national standards, guidelines and resources. It identifies opportunities for improvement, conducts moderation activities and supports national consistency through review and information sharing. The Committee's 2008 Work Plan projects include:

- providing annual recommendations to the QSC which specifies the qualitative and quantitative data that will form the basis for state and territory reporting against the quality indicators for registering and accrediting bodies
- reporting annually on key quality assurance outcomes and issues
- identifying and acting on opportunities to streamline regulatory activities. This includes consideration for the streamlining of complaints handling procedures in 2008
- supporting continuous improvement of registering and accrediting functions through benchmarking and moderation activities
- building the capacity of auditors and course accreditation officers through professional development and moderation activities.

### Formative review of AQTF 2007

The National Quality Council remains committed to an external review of the AQTF 2007, but agreed that it would be more appropriate to postpone the review until 2009 to allow more time to fully implement the new arrangements, including the quality indicators. The formative evaluation that is currently underway will provide initial feedback on the implementation of AQTF 2007.

### TRAINING PACKAGES STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT

The role of this Committee is to ensure that improved and timelier processes are in place for the development, review and endorsement of Training Packages; and to guide work on improving the design of Training Packages, qualifications and units of competency.

This includes ensuring the quality of processes leading to endorsement of Training Packages as well as initiatives relating to ensuring Training Packages are flexible and responsive to changing industry and client needs and workplace practices.

Two key projects are due for completion in the coming months.

### Stakeholder consultation around the next generation of Training Packages

A significant priority for the NQC in 2008, in keeping with the COAG skills formation agenda, is to build on work begun in 2007 and determine what, if anything, needs to happen with VET qualifications, Training Packages, accredited courses, units of competency and assessment guidelines to ensure that the VET system is able to deliver high quality outcomes against future demand.

During the rest of the year, wide consultation will be undertaken, seeking feedback from a broad range of stakeholders on a number of options.

### Improving industry confidence in VET assessment

A 2007 NQC project to investigate industry expectations of VET assessment processes in non-regulated industries has recently been completed. The aim of the research was to provide a firm evidence basis for future NQC work to improve industry confidence in the outcomes of VET assessments.

As part of the research, a range of possible strategies for improving industry confidence in the outcomes of VET assessment were identified and

then tested with industry participants. A number of potential points of intervention emerged as likely to increase industry confidence included those relating to Training Package development; training and ongoing professional development of assessors; validation and/or moderation processes; and relationships between enterprises and RTOs (for current employees undertaking training).

Both the Training Package Standing Committee and the VET Workforce Development Standing Committee are currently considering further work for 2008 in line with the recommendations of the report.

It is expected that the final report *Investigation into industry expectations of Vocational Education and Training assessment* will be published on [www.training.com.au](http://www.training.com.au) following endorsement by the Council at its next meeting in September.

### VET WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STANDING COMMITTEE

This is a newly created Standing Committee of the NQC, with two major roles: to oversee NQC Work Plan projects to develop the professional capability of the VET workforce; and to provide advice on strategic priorities for the National VET Professional Capability Building Program (currently 'Reframing the Future').

A number of projects have been identified for 2008, with work to begin in the second half of the year.

### Development of a National VET Workforce Development Strategy

The objective of this project is to develop a national strategy, building on existing strategies at the state and local level, to ensure the national VET workforce has the capacity (including the necessary set of professional capabilities) for responding to changing industry and national priorities and meeting future demands for skills and skills training. As part of this project, strategic priorities for the National VET Professional Capability Building Program for 2009 will be identified. ▶

Three projects for developing the capability of the VET workforce in order to increase industry confidence in the outcomes of VET assessment processes have been identified. All three projects will build on the outcomes of the 2007 'Investigation into industry expectations of VET assessment'.

### Quality of assessment practices

As an outcome of this project, a targeted strategy for improving the quality of assessment practice across the VET sector will be developed and implemented.

### Industry/ enterprise and RTO partnerships

This project aims to improve the responsiveness of training to industry and employer needs by identifying, documenting and disseminating best practice examples of partnerships and new ways of working between RTOs and industry/ enterprises to adopt more innovative, flexible approaches to training and skills development.

### National approach to moderation to improve consistency of assessment

This project aims to improve national consistency within the operation of the national skills framework through the development of a national approach to moderation of assessment within the VET sector which includes the involvement of industry. Work to be undertaken includes: a literature search and commentary of approaches used to undertake moderation in differing sectors, both within Australia and internationally; and the development, trial and evaluation of moderation models suitable for the Australian VET context.

### New standing committee arrangements

TVET Australia now provides project management services to all three NQC Standing Committees. Any queries relating to the Quality, Training Packages or VET Workforce Development Standing Committee can be directed to Dawn Selkirk on 03 9832 8151 or [dawn.selkirk@tvetaustralia.com.au](mailto:dawn.selkirk@tvetaustralia.com.au)

## NATIONAL VET QUALITY MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

At its June meeting, the Council considered a paper, prepared by DEEWR, which provides a summary of the key elements of Australia's quality assurance arrangements for VET including: national quality governance arrangements, the AQTF; Training Package development and endorsement processes; course accreditation processes; and the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

Processes are underway to work the paper into a high quality publication, suitable for use as a tool for showcasing the Australian VET system overseas. It is expected the final version will be made available on [www.training.com.au](http://www.training.com.au) after endorsement by the Council in September.

## NQC STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

At its recent meeting Council approved a framework for an NQC Stakeholder Engagement and Communication Strategy for 2008 which provides a model of the Council's various stakeholders; general guidelines for communicating and engaging for different stakeholders and contexts; and guidelines to inform development of communication and engagement strategies for particular projects in the NQC Work Plan.

The framework includes new guidelines for formal communication of NQC policy decisions with regulatory implications. In future, where NQC decisions have regulatory implications, details of the decision will be conveyed in a letter from the NQC Chair to the Chairs of the bodies formally responsible for implementing the decision. In the case of regulatory decisions relating to the AQTF this will be the Chairs of the Registering and Course Accrediting Bodies and the CEO of the National Audit and Registration Agency (NARA). In the case of regulatory decisions relating to the implementation of the AQF this will be the Chair of the Australian Qualifications Framework Council (AQFC). In the case

of decisions relating to Training Package policy, NQC decisions will be formally conveyed to Industry Skills Councils through DEEWR.

Consultations will be conducted with stakeholders to finalize the NQC Stakeholder Communication and Engagement Strategy 2008 which will be published on the NQC website [www.nqc.tvetaustralia.com.au](http://www.nqc.tvetaustralia.com.au) following endorsement by the Council.

From 2009, it is anticipated that the process to develop an annual NQC Stakeholder Communication and Engagement Strategy will be streamlined and occur in conjunction with the development of the next year's Work Plan.

## INTERNATIONAL VET – FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Council also considered a scoping paper prepared by DEEWR as a starting point for a discussion of issues relating to international VET. The paper highlights the rapid growth in the number of international students participating in Australian VET, both in Australia and offshore and in the number of Australian providers delivering Australian VET programs to international students; and notes a number of challenges to the quality, reputation and long term sustainability of Australian VET posed by the growth in international VET.

Members agreed that international VET is an area in which the NQC is already involved and that this involvement is appropriate considering the Council's remit in relation to safeguarding the quality of Australian VET. It was noted that Australia has been the most effective player in promoting its VET system internationally over the last few years but that others, such as Germany and the US were becoming increasingly active in the international VET market. The discussion covered issues such as the potential damage to the Australian brand and the risk to all providers if a single provider failed to deliver quality outcomes in their international work. Members agreed on the need for further information on risks, risk drivers and the agencies responsible for managing risks in relation to international VET.

## AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO EQUITY

The NQC has allocated funds to a scoping project to identify strategies that ensure equity issues are systematically considered in all aspects of the NQC's business practices. The project will be completed in consultation with the National VET Advisory Alliance over the coming months.

A final report is due to be presented to the December NQC meeting identifying a set of principles and protocols that provide an equity 'lens' through which all existing NQC projects and business practices can be considered. Principles and protocols emerging from this work will also assist the NQC in considering equity issues across projects in the 2009 NQC Work Plan, and beyond.

**For further information please contact:**  
**Luke Salman on 03 9832 8110 or**  
**email: [luke.salman@tvetaustralia.com.au](mailto:luke.salman@tvetaustralia.com.au)**

## 2008 Future NQC Meeting Dates

25 September	NQC meeting (all day)
6 Nov	ISC CEOs forum (PM - TBC) - Environmental Scans
7 Nov	NQC 2009 Planning Day (all day)
4 Dec	NQC meeting (all day)

## ACRONYMS

**AEI** Australian Education International

**AESOC** Australian Education Systems Officials Committee

**AQFC** Australian Qualifications Framework Council

**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



**NATIONAL  
QUALITY  
COUNCIL**

## REQUEST FOR TENDERS - 2008 PROJECTS

*The National Quality Council (NQC) is a Committee of the Ministerial Council for Vocational and Technical Education (MCVTE) and oversees quality assurance and ensures national consistency in the application of the Australian Quality Training Framework standards for the audit and registration of training providers.*

### National Vocational Education & Training Workforce Development Strategy

The NQC invites suitably qualified and experienced consultants to tender for a project to develop a national VET Workforce Development Strategy which reflects:

- COAG directions and national priorities and complements existing programs undertaken by states and territories; and
- good practice in VET workforce development.

A consortia approach will be welcome.

### Integrating equity considerations into NQC outputs and business practices

The NQC has identified equity as a priority within its 2008 work plan and invites suitably qualified and experienced consultants to tender for a project to:

- develop a set of principles and protocols to ensure equity issues are systematically considered in all aspects of the NQC's business practices; and
- recommend priorities to be included in the forward NQC work plan.

Both project specifications can be obtained by visiting the NQC website:

**[www.nqc.tvetaustralia.com.au/tenders](http://www.nqc.tvetaustralia.com.au/tenders)**

or by contacting the NQC Secretariat at TVET Australia:

**Luke Salman: (03) 9832 8104**

**[nqc.secretariat@tvetaustralia.com.au](mailto:nqc.secretariat@tvetaustralia.com.au)**

**The closing date for tender submissions is strictly:**

**5pm (EST) Friday  
5 September 2008**

*\* Note: these projects are being commissioned by TVET Australia Ltd on behalf of the National Quality Council with funding through the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and State and Territory Governments*

**Additional NQC projects will be advertised on the NQC website in the near future - [www.nqc.tvetaustralia.com.au](http://www.nqc.tvetaustralia.com.au)**