



Training Accreditation Council
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Annual Report

2010-2011

To the Hon Peter Collier MLC

MINISTER FOR ENERGY; TRAINING AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

In accordance with Section 30 of the Vocational Education and Training Act 1996 I submit, for your information and presentation to Parliament, the Annual Report of the Training Accreditation Council for the period commencing 1 July 2010 and ending 30 June 2011.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping, sweeping lines that form a stylized, somewhat abstract shape.

Ian C Hill
CHAIRMAN
TRAINING ACCREDITATION COUNCIL

13 September 2011

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I am pleased to present to you the Training Accreditation Council's (the Council) 2010-2011 Annual Report. During the 2010-2011 reporting period, the Council in fulfilling its functions under the *Vocational Education and Training Act 1996* (the Act) continued to provide a range of services to manage the quality assurance of vocational education and training (VET) in Western Australia (WA).

In executing its functions under the Act in 2010-2011, the Council has risk assessed 568 applications and undertaken 485 audits of Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), endorsed 75 initial and renewal of registration applications and accredited or re-accredited 79 courses. The Council has continued to focus on delivering products and services to improve the quality of VET in WA. This has included delivering information sessions for prospective applicants and continuing its case management model to support RTOs through their registration period.

Of major significance has been the on-going review of national quality assurance arrangements and the establishment of a national regulator for the VET sector. The national regulator will be established under Commonwealth legislation and will be responsible for the registration and audit of registered training providers and accreditation of courses. Whilst WA is committed to ensuring effective national regulation of the VET sector and will participate in the national system, it will continue to regulate those providers who operate only in this State through the Council. Legislation will be enacted that will mirror the Commonwealth arrangements creating a nationally consistent regulatory environment.

The WA Government considers it important to maintain a balance between national consistency and State responsibility. The arrangement in WA will allow the State to be responsive to State based priorities and risks, and to receive on-going reports on the health of VET providers operating in WA. The WA Government is committed to ensuring that WA providers are not disadvantaged, and WA's participation in the national system will be as seamless as possible. Students can be assured that the quality of providers delivering in WA is consistent with providers located anywhere in Australia.

In addition, a major focus for the Council over the last 12 months has been the implementation of the strengthened Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF). The Council has implemented a comprehensive communication strategy involving a range of stakeholders including industry, Training Councils, regulatory bodies and RTOs to ensure greater awareness of the new requirements and a smooth transition. The Council would like to acknowledge the commitment that WA RTOs have made to meeting the new AQTF requirements and in ensuring that the quality of the WA training system remains at the highest level.

Throughout the period, the Council, in line with national guidelines, continued to engage with key industry regulatory bodies to build the confidence of industry regulators to ensure that the training and assessment practices of RTOs adequately address their regulatory requirements.

During 2010-2011, the Council completed a strategic industry audit of security training in WA. The strategic audit arose from concerns from industry stakeholders at the State and national level about the quality of training and assessment. The audit was strongly supported by the WA security industry, regulatory body and the Training Council, with a reference group established to oversee the strategic audit.

Overall, the strategic audit highlighted variable levels of compliance with the AQTF Conditions and Standards for Registration. As a result the audit report identified six (6) key recommendations to address the findings and the Council will be working with all stakeholders to implement the recommendations.

The Council would like to extend its appreciation to the Training Accreditation Council Secretariat of the Department of Education Services for their on-going professional conduct, dedication and assistance provided in supporting the work of the Council.

The new national regulatory arrangements will provide a number of challenges for the VET sector over the next twelve (12) months. The Council is committed to working collaboratively with the Australian Skills Quality Authority to ensure the quality of training in WA is managed and regulated effectively. Given the maturity of quality assurance arrangements and the commitment of WA RTOs, the Council is confident that WA is well positioned to implement the new arrangements and continue to provide quality training and assessment outcomes.



Ian C Hill
CHAIRMAN
TRAINING ACCREDITATION COUNCIL

2010-2011 HIGHLIGHTS

Major achievements for 2010-2011

The Council:

- endorsed 75 initial and renewal of registration applications and 369 extension to scope applications;
- approved a total of 79 courses for accreditation and re-accreditation;
- undertook 485 audits, which included 62 initial and renewal registration audits; 66 accreditation reviews; 118 monitoring audits and 239 extension to scope audits;
- conducted 568 risk assessments of RTO applications. Of the 568, 219 (39%) did not require an audit and 349 applications (61%) required either a desk and/or site audit;
- continued its focus on engaging and involving stakeholders and peak bodies in matters related to quality assurance and recognition arrangements;
- conducted 36 information sessions related to the AQTF, with participants from across WA attending. Each information session focuses on the requirements of becoming an RTO and industry requirements;
- engaged with key industry regulatory bodies to ensure that they can be confident that the training and assessment practices of RTOs adequately address their regulatory requirements;
- has implemented the strengthened AQTF;
- sponsored the 2010 'Trainer of the Year Award' category of the WA Training Awards, with support from the Department of Education Services; and
- completed a strategic industry audit of security training in WA following concerns raised by industry stakeholders at the State and national level about the quality of training and assessment in the industry.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report fulfils the requirements of Section 30(1) of the Vocational Education and Training (VET) Act 1996 by reporting the operations of the Training Accreditation Council to the Minister for Training and Workforce Development for the period 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011.

The Council's Business Plan is prepared on a financial year basis. Where possible, data for the 2010-2011 reporting period and both the 2009-2010 and 2008-2009 reporting periods have been provided to allow a comparative assessment of the activities and achievements of the Council.

The report is structured to include four (4) main sections (see below), which relate to the key outcome areas from the Council's business plan. Each section incorporates a range of indicators that the Council has developed that will be the focus of their work over the medium term. The indicators complement the four key outcomes identified below:

- the Council's legislative functions and responsibilities under the AQTF are carried out and managed effectively;
- the Council communicates effectively with clients and stakeholders;
- the Council effectively engages with relevant industry bodies; and
- the Council's clients are satisfied or very satisfied with the services provided by the Council.

INTRODUCTION

FUNCTIONS OF THE TRAINING ACCREDITATION COUNCIL

The Council's functions are detailed in Part 4 and 7A of the Vocational Education and Training (VET) Act 1996. They focus on quality assurance and recognition in respect to vocational education and training in WA.

Under the Act, the functions of the Council are to:

- register training providers; and
- accredit courses.

In discharging its functions, the Council may also:

- inquire into training providers and courses;
- vary, suspend or cancel registration;
- vary, suspend or cancel accreditation; and/or
- cancel qualifications.

Provision for appeals against Council's decision is available through the State Training Board under section 58G of the Act.

MEMBERSHIP

The Council has seven (7) members who are appointed by the Minister for Training and Workforce Development in accordance with the Vocational Education and Training Act 1996. They are selected on the basis of their expertise, qualifications and experience relevant to the Council's functions.

The members are:

Mr Ian Hill, Chairman,

Ms Liz Harris, Challenger TAFE,

Miss Janelle Dawson, Sterling Business College Pty Ltd,

Ms Lorraine Carter, Consultant,

Mr David Wood, Curriculum Council,

Dr Irene Ioannakis, CEO Ioannakis and Associates; and

Mr Iain McDougall, Hospitality Group Training.

THE CONTEXT IN WHICH THE COUNCIL WORKS

The Council is an independent statutory body that provides for quality assurance and recognition processes for vocational education and training in WA. The Council operates within the National Skills Framework and is the WA Registering Body and Course Accrediting Body under the AQTF.

The AQTF is a set of nationally agreed quality assurance arrangements for training and assessment services delivered by training organisations and also comprises of Standards for the accreditation of courses. The AQTF was initially implemented in 2002 and revised again in 2005, 2007 and 2010.

The AQTF comprises:

- a) *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Initial Registration;*
- b) *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration*
- c) *AQTF Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies;*
- d) *AQTF Excellence Criteria;*
- e) *AQTF Standards for Accredited Courses;* and
- f) *AQTF Standards for State and Territory Course Accrediting Bodies.*

The Council is responsible for ensuring compliance with the relevant standards and for complying with both the AQTF Standards for State and Territory Registering and Course Accrediting Bodies.

The Council is supported by the Department of Education Services through the services of the Training Accreditation Council Secretariat located in Osborne Park. One of the Council Secretariat's key roles is to process applications for registration of training organisations and accreditation of courses. The Council Secretariat also provides substantial support to the work of the Council on policy issues.

The Council formally met 25 times over the twelve months to 30 June 2011, which consisted of 16 full Council meetings and nine (9) Executive Committee meetings. The Council holds full meetings on a monthly basis to consider applications from organisations, with additional meetings held as required. Executive Committee meetings are held approximately every four (4) weeks to consider additional applications, resulting in Council considering applications within a relatively short period of time.

PLANNING AND REPORTING FRAMEWORK

In order to carry out its functions, the Council uses an outcomes based planning and reporting framework.

The framework consists of a Business Plan for the Council that is prepared on a three year basis (from 1 July 2008 – 30 June 2011) and reviewed annually. The framework also consists of a corresponding operational plan for the support services provided by the Department of Education Services and an Annual Report on the achievements of the Council. In addition, the Council also reports on VET regulation related outcomes to the National Quality Council each year.

In supporting the work of the Council, the Department of Education Services' operational plan addresses the priorities outlined in the Council's business plan 2008-2011. The Council Secretariat reports progress to the Council.

This approach ensures comprehensive monitoring and reporting of the Council's achievements against the planned outcomes and provides a sound methodology for monitoring progress against the respective business and operational plans.

The Council has developed four (4) Key Outcomes that will be the focus of its work over the medium term. Sitting underneath the Key Outcomes are a range of indicators that the Council uses to meet and measure, and report against annually. In addition, the Guiding Principles have been developed that communicate to the Council's stakeholders the way in which the Council intends to undertake its business.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Council:

- will be open, accountable and transparent;
- is clear on its role as a regulatory body;
- will embed an outcomes focus;
- is fair and equitable; and
- will maintain a culture of continuous improvement.

OUTCOME 1 – The Council’s legislative functions and responsibilities under the AQTF are carried out and managed effectively

Outcome Indicators

The Council’s success in achieving Outcome 1 is demonstrated by the extent to which the following indicators have been achieved:

- Council’s membership is maintained in accordance with the *Vocational Education and Training Act 1996* (the Act);
- Council meetings are conducted in accordance with the Act and the Council’s Code of Conduct;
- Council’s policies and processes are reviewed regularly;
- the Council Secretariat’s quality system, which provides the framework for Council to carry out its functions and responsibilities, is reviewed regularly;
- internal audits are conducted regularly to ensure that Council’s policies and processes are being implemented;
- compliance is maintained with the AQTF Registering Body Standards and Course Accrediting Body Standards; and
- Council’s annual reporting requirements are met.

Work undertaken by the Council to progress these priorities and to achieve Outcome 1 is detailed as follows.

REGISTRATION OF TRAINING ORGANISATIONS

There were 1856 training organisations registered to deliver training in WA on 30 June 2011. A total of 552 were organisations registered with the Council, with the remaining 1304 registered to deliver in WA under national recognition arrangements. In addition, 53 of the 552 organisations registered with the Council were also delivering vocational education and training under the AQTF in countries other than Australia.

During the reporting period the overall number of organisations registered with the Council has increased by 12.9% since the last reporting period from 1,155 in 2009-2010 to 1304 in 2010-2011. The total number of WA RTOs also remained fairly steady with an increase from 547 in 2009-2010 to 552 in 2010-2011.

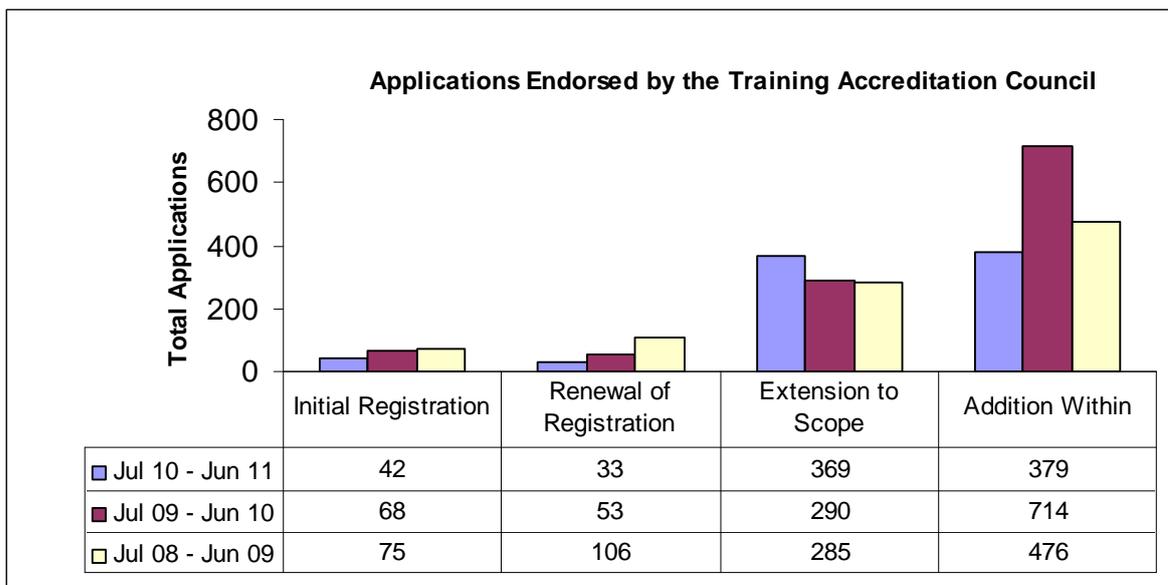
During the 2010-2011 year, the Council endorsed the following applications:

- 42 initial registrations;
- 33 renewal of registrations;
- 369 extensions to scope; and
- 379 notifications received from RTOs adding courses/qualifications within their current scope.

During the reporting period six (6) RTOs had their registration cancelled by the Council.

Graph 1 reports on registration activity that has occurred in 2010-2011 and provides comparisons with the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 reporting periods.

Graph 1: Registration Activity July 2010 – June 2011



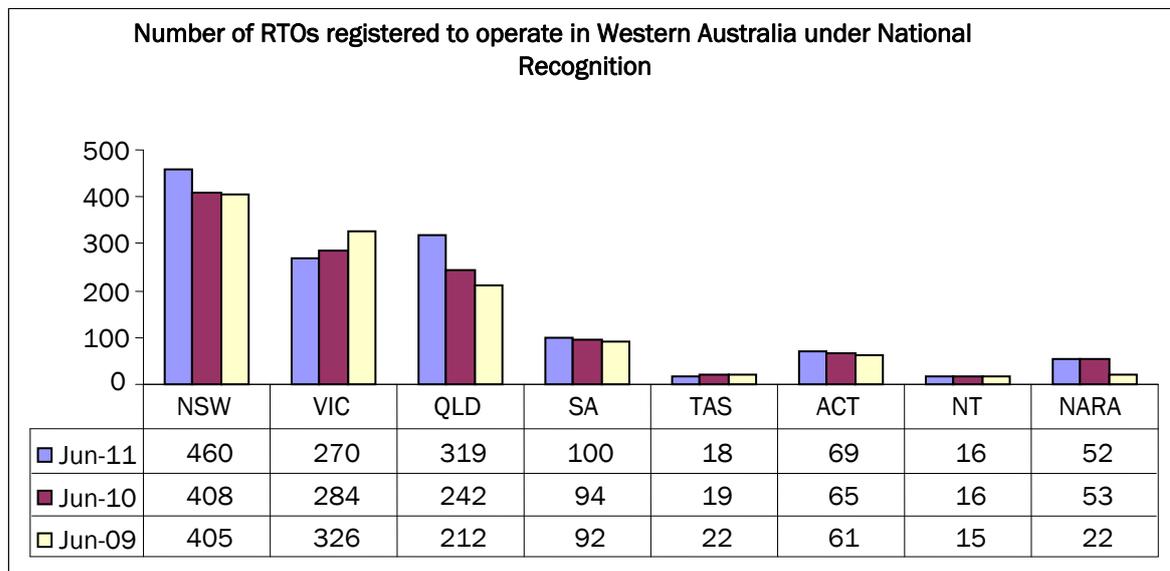
In this reporting period, there were significant decreases from 2009–2010 for initial registrations, (38% decrease), renewal of registrations (39.7% decrease) and addition within applications (46.9% decrease). The decrease with regard to renewal of registrations is expected due to the cyclic nature of the re-registration period. There was however an increase in extension to scope applications of 27.2% from 2009-2010.

NATIONAL RECOGNITION

In addition to the training organisations registered by the Council as at 30 June 2011, there were 1304 interstate RTOs which operate, or plan to operate, within WA.

The number of organisations delivering under national recognition does not reflect actual delivery by interstate RTOs in WA. Many organisations register with their primary Registering Body their intent to deliver, however, for a variety of reasons do not proceed to actual delivery. Graph 2 shows RTOs, by State of registration, or National Registering Body, operating in WA.

Graph 2: Interstate RTOs registered to deliver in Western Australia as at 30 June 2011



THE TRAINING ACCREDITATION COUNCIL AUDIT STRATEGY

The Council, as part of its on-going improvement process, implements a continuous audit strategy. This ensures a more flexible and fluid audit strategy, with the ability to address identified issues as they arise to complement the national approach to risk management and enable monitoring on an on-going basis. The audit strategy includes regulatory audits such as registration audits, follow up audits and audits in response to complaints.

Audits conducted by the Council were in accordance with the *AQTF Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies* and the *Audit Handbook* (a reference guide for conducting audits of training organisations against the AQTF. Non compliances identified at audit were processed in accordance with the National Guideline for Managing Non-Compliance.

Applications to the Council from training organisations are risk assessed in line with the National Guideline for Risk Management. Risk indicators which focus on the performance of the RTO delivering quality skills outcomes and supplementary indicators which apply to the operational context of the RTO, determine the type, scale and scope of an audit.

MANAGEMENT OF THE ANNUAL AUDIT SCHEDULE

The Council is responsible for undertaking audits and accreditation reviews of RTOs against the requirements of the AQTF.

The Council, in line with the National Guideline for Risk Management, has implemented a risk managed approach to audits with risk assessments undertaken for all applications. An RTO’s risk rating, which is determined by evaluating relevant information, may result in an RTO not requiring an audit.

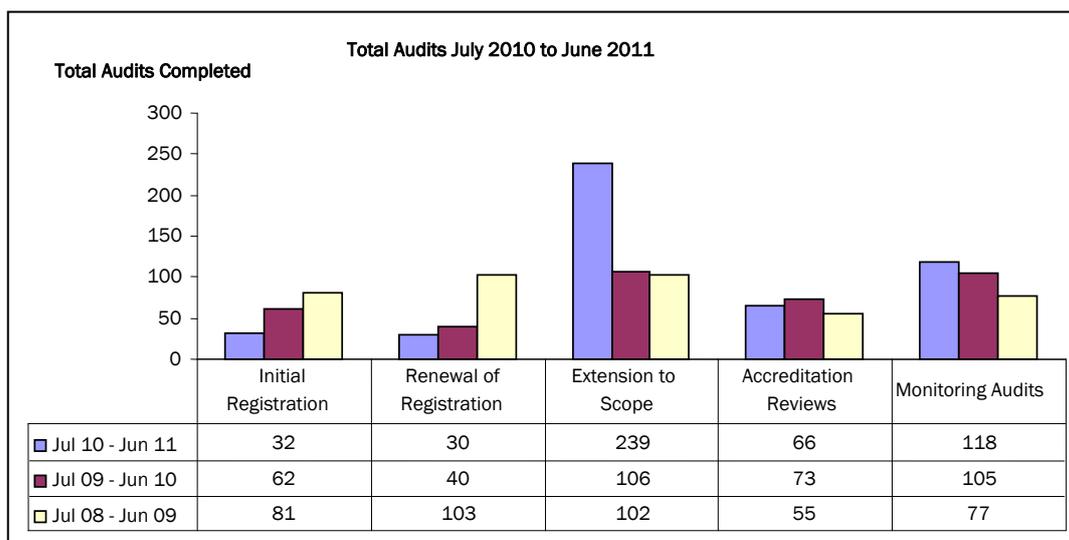
During the 2010-2011 reporting period, a total of 568 RTO risk assessments were undertaken by the Council. This represents a decrease of over 21.7% when compared with the 2009-2010 reporting period total of 726.

Of the 568 risk assessments undertaken in 2010-2011, 219 applications (38.5%) did not require an audit, while an external desk and/or site visit audit was conducted for the remaining 349 applications (61.5%).

The Council’s audit strategy incorporates registration audits as well as strategic industry audits on the basis of identified risks. Wherever possible, these audits are integrated with audits for compliance with the Department of Training and Workforce Development’s Delivery and Performance Agreement held with private RTOs in receipt of public funds.

The Council’s integrated approach to auditing helps minimise disruption to RTOs. Graph 3 provides information on the type and number of audits conducted in the reporting period.

Graph 3: Total audits July 2010 – June 2011



A total of 485 audits were undertaken in the twelve (12) month period ending 30 June 2011. This represents an increase of 20.4% from the 2009-2010. There was a significant decrease (48.4%) in initial registration audits and a decrease of 25% in renewal of registration audits from the 2009-2010 reporting period.

Most notable during the reporting period is the increase from 2009-2010 of 55.6% in extension to scope audits.

Audits were undertaken in line with the Council's audit strategy, which includes regulatory audits such as registration audits, follow up audits and audits in response to complaints. Also included are strategic audits and identified risk audits.

Strategic Industry Audit of Security Training in WA

The Council completed a strategic industry audit of security training in early 2011. The audit arose from concerns from industry stakeholders at state and national level about the quality of training, and focussed on the Certificates II and III in Security Operations qualifications.

A survey was conducted of 57 RTOs registered to deliver the qualifications in WA. Data from the survey indicated that 50% of the RTOs that responded to the survey were registered in other states; 69% were private providers; 60% had been providing training in the industry for more than four years; 96% delivered whole qualifications and 90% provided face-to-face training on their own premises. A total of 27 RTOs were selected for site visit audits.

Overall, the audits highlighted variable levels of compliance with the AQTF Conditions and Standards of Registration. Of the RTOs audited, 33% were found to be compliant with all the Conditions and Standards; 38% had minor compliances; 12% had significant non compliances and 17% were found to be critically non-compliant. At least 50% of the RTOs audited were found to be non-compliant in areas relating to staff, facilities, equipment and training materials and assessment practices.

The audit report made six recommendations to address the findings. These include transition and audit strategies for RTOs who are adding the revised qualifications to their scope of delivery; the need for more detailed specification of the workplace communication skills requirements of the industry; and the need for appropriate resources to support learners and trainers in simulated delivery and assessment environments.

The Council has endorsed the recommendations from the audit report which will be implemented during the next reporting period.

COURSE ACCREDITATION

Accredited courses meet training needs not addressed by Training Packages. The Council does not accredit a course if a Training Package qualification exists that can meet the same training outcome through customisation.

At 30 June 2011, there were 303 accredited courses in WA which is a slight increase from 297 in 2009-2010. During 2010-2011 the Council approved a total of 79 courses for accreditation and re-accreditation, a decrease of 34% from the previous reporting period.

In 2010-2011 the total number of courses accredited increased slightly, while the total number of courses re-accredited by the Council decreased significantly from 97 in 2009-2010 to 50 in 2010-2011, a decrease of 48.5% during the reporting period.

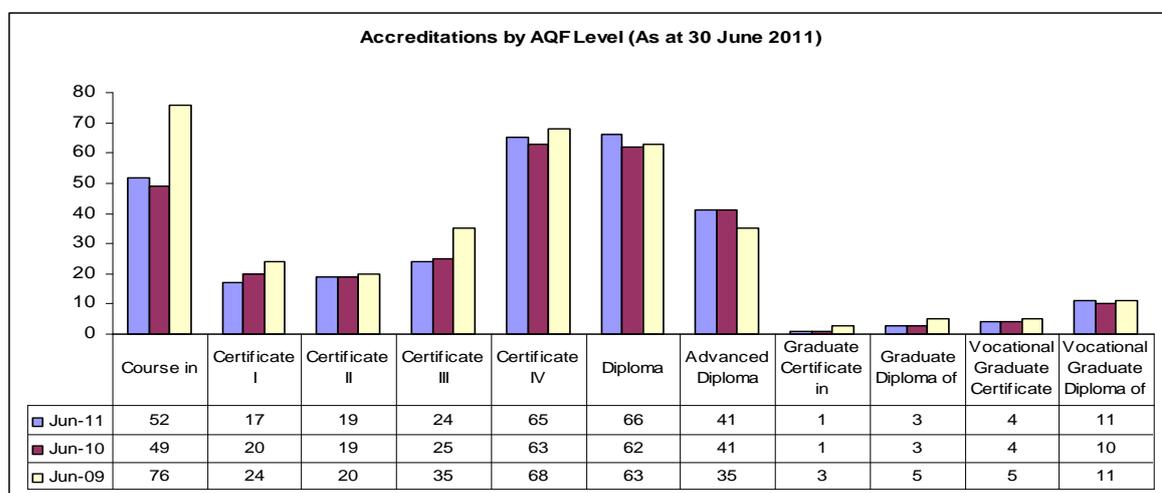
During the reporting period, the Council considered 46 proposals to extend the accreditation period of courses which would have otherwise expired. The Council considers extensions to course accreditations for a range of reasons including expectation that a Training Package qualification may replace the course in the near future or to permit an RTO reasonable changeover time from one course to another.

Table 1 and Graph 4 summarise the accreditation activity undertaken in the reporting period.

Table 1: Accreditation Activity July 2010 – June 2011

Activity	Number of courses
Courses accredited	29
Courses re-accredited	50
Courses extended	46
Courses expired	71

Graph 4: Accreditation by AQF level July 2010 – June 2011



QUALITY ASSURANCE AND COMPLIANCE – REGISTERING AND COURSE ACCREDITING BODY REPORTING

INTERNAL AUDIT

The AQTF Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies and the AQTF Standards for State and Territory Course Accrediting Bodies both require that each registering body and course accrediting body report annually to the National Quality Council (NQC). As part of these arrangements Council reports on its performance using national agreed qualitative and quantitative data. These reports inform the national VET sector on quality issues and the management of risks to sustainable quality outcomes.

During 2010-2011, work continued at a national level on the development of effective quality indicators for registering bodies and course accrediting bodies.

The Council reported to the NQC in May 2011 on the operation of the AQTF in WA and reported activity data and outcomes against the quality indicators for the 2010 calendar year.

The Council, as both a registering and course accrediting body, is also subject to ongoing monitoring and periodic independent audit of its performance against both sets of AQTF standards as determined by the NQC. The NQC decided that given the volume of associated work with the planning for and transition to the National VET Regulator that an independent audit of State and Territory Registering and Course Accrediting Bodies was not a priority for 2010-2011 reporting period.

To assess the Council's compliance with its legislative requirements, national standards and guidelines it was determined by the Department of Education Services to undertake an independent internal audit of the Council and the Council Secretariat during 2011. As at 30 June 2011, the internal audit had only recently commenced and therefore the scope and audit outcomes will be detailed in the next reporting period. As it has been for previous audits, the outcomes of this internal audit will be used to inform the Council's continuous improvement approach.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR AUDITORS

The current panels of RTO Auditors and Accreditation Reviewers were appointed through a public tender process and commenced on 1 January 2007. The panel was appointed for a one year period with three one year extension options available. The contract was extended in December 2010 to enable finalisation of a new contract commencing 2011-2012.

The primary role of the auditors is to undertake audits of RTOs to determine compliance with the AQTF. Accreditation Reviewers assist the Council to evaluate submissions for accreditation to ensure that they reflect the requirements of the national standards. In addition, audits of RTOs may determine compliance with contracts associated with receipt of public funding for training. Auditors and Accreditation Reviewers appointed to the panel are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Panel of auditors and accreditation reviewers as at 30 June 2011

PANEL	AUDITOR	COMPANY
RTO Auditors	Mairead Dempsey	Assessment Training and Research Consultancy Services
	Russell Docking	Skills Resource Management Systems
	Cherrie Hawke	Torque Holdings Pty Ltd
	Julie Large	JAL Enterprises
	Helen McCarter	Helen McCarter Consultant
	Lourdes McCleary	Lourdes McCleary Consultant
	Sharon Stewart	LCN Training Solutions
	Claire Werner	APPLIC8
Accreditation Reviewers	Russell Docking	Skills Resource Management Systems
	Cherrie Hawke	Torque Holdings Pty Ltd
	Lourdes McCleary	Lourdes McCleary Consultant

The Department of Education Services, on behalf of the Council, implements a performance management model for the panel of external auditors and accreditation reviewers. Under this model, the Department provides moderation activities to ensure consistency in the approach to RTO audits and reviews of accreditation applications. All contracted auditors and accreditation reviewers are required to attend these moderation forums.

During the reporting period four (4) auditor moderation forums and two (2) accreditation reviewers' forums were conducted. The forums provide auditors and reviewers with briefings and updates on state and national developments, moderation activities and the opportunity to network and develop an agreed approach for the conduct of audits and reviews.

FEES FOR REGISTRATION OF TRAINING PROVIDERS

Registration fees for training organisations were last updated in 2010. As a result, registration fees were reviewed and fees for training providers were increased based on a two year Consumer Price Index adjustment.

Table 3: Registration and accreditation fees as at 30 June 2011

Type	Current fees (as at 30 June 2011)
Application Fee	\$495
Annual Fee	\$495
Registration Fee	\$1730 (up to 2 industry areas) \$525 for each additional area
Extension to Scope of Registration Fees	\$1060 (\$525 for each additional area)
Course Accreditation Fee	\$1080 (from Certificate I above) \$540 (short course)

OUTCOME 2 – The Council communicates effectively with clients and stakeholders

Outcome Indicators

The Council's success in achieving Outcome 2 is demonstrated by the extent to which the following indicators have been achieved:

- Council's communication strategy is implemented;
- the client survey is reviewed to encourage clear and constructive feedback is gained from clients; and
- Council considers feedback from clients and implements strategies for continuous improvement.

Work undertaken by the Council to progress these priorities and to achieve Outcome 2 is detailed as follows.

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCESS

One of the important functions provided by the Department of Education Services on behalf of the Council is the investigation of complaints made by sector stakeholders. Complaints may result in RTOs being audited; however, most of the complaints are resolved through discussion with the affected parties. The management of complaints is in accordance with the Council's established policy, which is published and available on the Council's website www.tac.wa.gov.au and the *National Guideline for Responding to Complaints about Vocational Education and Training Quality*.

During the 2010-2011 reporting period 54 complaints were received by the Council, six (6) more than for the previous reporting period. Of these, 32 were investigated and closed whilst the remaining 22 were still open and under investigation as at 30 June 2011. A high percentage of the complaints were related to Standard 1 and more specifically the quality of assessment procedures for RTOs offering fast track courses.

A review of the Council's complaint handling process is currently being finalised and will be a focus for the next reporting period.

Table 4 shows an overview of the complaints received during the reporting period by the AQTF Standards.

Table 4 Complaints by AQTF Standards

AQTF Standard	% of complaints received
Standard 1 – the RTO provides quality training and assessment across all of its operations	59%
Standard 2 – the RTO adheres to the principles of access and equity and maximises outcomes for its clients	33%
Standard 3 – management systems are responsive to the needs of clients, staff and stakeholders, and the environment in which the RTO operates	19%

MEETING OF STATE AND TERRITORY REGISTERING BODIES

During the reporting period WA participated in one meeting of State and Territory Registering Bodies. The meeting was attended by the Chairman, Training Accreditation Council and held in Sydney on 19 November 2010.

Agenda items discussed included:

- establishment of the National VET Regulator and development of legislative arrangements;
- re-registration process for Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students providers;
- transition to the National Skills Standards Council; and
- State and Territory specific issues.

These meetings provide States and Territories with the opportunity to discuss a range of matters relating to their functions, developments within the VET sector both at a national level and State level, and initiatives to ensure and promote national consistency.

PROVISION OF CONSUMER INFORMATION

The Council actively provides information to its clients and stakeholders, including material to promote and support the delivery of quality services in the sector.

TAC Website

The Council's most frequently accessed electronic communication media is the TAC website. The website houses all Council Policy, AQTF documentation and other key information that is relevant to the sector. The website is regularly updated and is the major communication portal between the Council and stakeholders.

TAC Newsletters

The Council Secretariat continues to provide the regular newsletter, the TAC Update. The Update highlights key information, policy direction, changes and on-going reminders to key stakeholders. It is emailed to the key stakeholders and interested parties and is available for reference on the Council website.

WA Training Awards

The Council continues to support the WA Training Awards through its sponsorship of the 'Trainer of the Year Award'. Given the Council's functions under the Act, sponsorship of this award reinforces the Council's on-going commitment to recognising quality training and assessment in the VET sector.

Training Forum

The Department of Education Services provided an information booth on behalf of the Council at the May 2011 Training Providers' Forum hosted by the Department of Training and Workforce Development. The Forum is a key event for the sector and is well attended by organisations involved in training. The Council booth was well attended and many of the visitors enquired about the establishment of the National VET Regulator and its impact on WA training providers.

RTOnet

RTOnet is a web based database managed by the Department of Education Services, which provides RTOs with direct access to information linked to their registration.

RTOs can view their registration details with the Council including their contact details and scope of delivery. RTOs can submit applications for registration via RTOnet and track the progress of their application. RTOs also use this system to apply for tenders as well as accessing information about traineeships and apprenticeships to which they are party.

RTOnet is the mechanism through which the RTOs register statements of attainment and qualifications they have issued to their students (Client Qualifications Register) as well as the system where the Quality Indicator data for each organisation is recorded.

Support Material

A range of material is provided by the Department of Education Services to assist training providers that may be seeking registration or amending an existing registration, including guides and application forms. This information is generally provided electronically via the Council website.

Information Sessions For RTOs

The Department of Education Services provides information sessions to assist and guide training organisations as they work within the national skills framework. Information provided covers national and state policies and guidelines, competency based training and assessment, training packages as well as accreditation and registration processes.

Registration Information Sessions

During the 2010-2011 reporting period the Council Secretariat updated the format of the information sessions to organisations or individuals that were considering becoming an RTO. The sessions included a formal presentation component, followed by an informal one-to-one meeting with secretariat staff. A total of 11 group sessions and 25 one on one sessions were held.

Key areas that were discussed include:

- National Skills Framework;
- rights and responsibilities of RTOs;
- alternatives to registration;
- the Registration process;
 - Application processes
 - Audit processes
- course accreditation (where relevant); and
- the next steps in the registration process.

Feedback from the participants has indicated that these sessions are a positive contribution to the information provision of the Council.

Other RTO Information Sessions

The Council Secretariat on behalf of the Council regularly attends meetings with peak industry bodies to provide information and answer questions from participants. With the implementation of the new AQTF from 1 July 2010 the Council Secretariat engaged with RTOs and other stakeholders primarily through attendance at formal and informal forums and meetings with Training Councils.

Other Professional Development Opportunities For Training Organisations

To assist the Council, the Department of Training and Workforce Development also provides professional development opportunities for training organisations and practitioners. These sessions provide information about the VET Sector, as well as workshops for practitioners around key concepts, such as Recognition of Prior Learning and self-assessment against the AQTF.

OUTCOME 3 – The Council effectively engages with relevant bodies

Outcome Indicators

The Council's success in achieving Outcome 3 is demonstrated by the extent to which the following indicators have been achieved:

- the Council engages with industry in the audit process; and
- the Council develops mutually beneficial working arrangements with other regulatory bodies.

Work undertaken by the Council to progress these priorities and to achieve Outcome 3 is detailed as follows.

CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

During 2010-2011, the Council continued to actively consult with a range of stakeholders including government departments, training councils, RTOs, provider associations and industry bodies. Discussions focused on various training related issues and ensuring stakeholders were aware of the Council's requirements and priorities with respect to the quality assurance and recognition of VET in WA.

This year the Council's consultative processes focused on the revised AQTF implemented on 1 July 2010, RTO Quality Indicators, the Client Qualifications Register, assessment practice, Training Package related requirements, and negotiations regarding to the National VET Regulator.

The Council also focused on ensuring stakeholders were provided with relevant information on registration and accreditation requirements.

Organisations that the Council consulted with include: the Australian Council for Private Education and Training, all WA Training Councils, Department of Commerce, EnergySafety Branch, WA Police, Department of Transport, Department of Mines and Petroleum, Technical and Vocational Education and Training Australia; the Department of Training and Workforce Development and the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

ENGAGEMENT WITH INDUSTRY REGULATORS

The engagement between industry regulators and registering bodies is a key component of the AQTF aimed at ensuring that training and assessment leading to a licensed outcome meets licensing and regulatory requirements.

During 2010, a number of senior representatives from the WA security industry were involved as technical advisers in the strategic industry audit of security training. As a result, the Council Secretariat and the industry gained a deeper appreciation of their mutual roles in the quality assurance of training. A Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) is also being developed with the WA Police Licensing Enforcement Division for ongoing participation in audits of RTOs in the security industry.

The Council also established new MOUs in relation to Taxi Driver Licensing (Department of Transport) and Shotfirer Licensing (Department of Mines and Petroleum). Cooperation with WorkSafe, EnergySafety WA, Marine Safety, the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department and the Passenger Services Business Unit (Department of Transport) has been maintained and strengthened.

The Council Secretariat continues to build on the success of existing cooperative relationships with industry regulators through ongoing informal liaison with other licensing agencies with the aim of establishing formal collaborative arrangements in the future.

NEW REGULATORY ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE VET SECTOR

From the 1 July 2011 two VET Regulators will operate in WA. This situation results from a meeting held on 7 December 2009, where the Council of Australian Governments endorsed the establishment of a national regulator for the VET sector. The national regulator will be established under Commonwealth legislation and will be responsible for the registration and audit of registered training providers and accreditation of courses.

WA has adopted an approach that differs to that of other jurisdictions. Whilst WA is committed to ensuring effective national regulation of the VET sector and will participate in the national system, it will continue to regulate those providers who operate only in this State (the majority of providers in WA) through the Training Accreditation Council. The WA Government will enact legislation that will mirror the Commonwealth arrangements creating a nationally consistent regulatory environment.

The WA Government considers it important to maintain a balance between national consistency and State responsibility. The arrangement in WA will allow the State to be responsive to State based priorities and risks, and to receive on-going reports on the health of VET providers operating in WA. It also allows intervention in line with public expectations and within a timely manner on matters relating to sub-standard performance of providers.

Western Australia was provided with the opportunity to have input into the new national legislation and participated in the working group developing the legislation and Inter Governmental Agreement for national regulation. To date WA has not signed the inter-Governmental Agreement as it is not considered to reflect the agreement at Council of Australian Governments.

The Council has worked closely with the Interim National VET Regulator Taskforce to ensure that a co-operative working relationship exists and that processes used between the regulators will align where possible.

Under the new arrangements, students will retain the high level of flexibility and mobility that the national training system offers. Qualifications will continue to be transportable and fully recognised in any part of Australia. Under the new arrangements students can be assured that the quality of providers delivering in WA is consistent with providers located anywhere in Australia.

No students will be disadvantaged under the new arrangements.

The WA Government is committed to ensuring that WA providers are not disadvantaged, and WA's participation in the national system will be as seamless as possible.

A national standards council will also be established to provide advice to the Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment on national standards for regulation, including registration, quality assurance, performance monitoring, reporting, risk, audit, review and renewal of providers, and accreditation of VET qualifications.

REVIEW OF AUSTRALIAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

A major review of the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) commenced in 2009 was completed in April 2011. The strengthened AQF is designed to improve national consistency and contemporary relevance as well as national and international portability. The main changes include:

- a 10 level structure defined by learning outcomes-based criteria;
- specifications for 16 defined qualifications;
- a *Qualifications Issuance Policy* which outlines the requirements for certification documentation and qualification titles;
- a *Qualifications Pathways Policy* for the articulation, credit transfer and recognition of prior learning (RPL) for all education sectors;
- a *Qualifications Register Policy* which specifies requirements for registers for all AQF qualifications issued and the agreed credit and pathway arrangements; and
- a new Qualification Addition and Removal Policy to add new or remove redundant qualification types.

The AQF Council has outlined national implementation arrangements commencing July 2011 to December 2014. From 1 January 2015, all new AQF requirements are expected to be fully implemented.

The Council is developing a WA plan to communicate the changes to the AQF through information via the Council website and newsletter and workshops for course owners and developers.

OUTCOME 4 – The Council’s clients are satisfied or very satisfied with the services provided by the Council

Outcome Indicators

The Council’s success in achieving Outcome 4 is demonstrated by the extent to which the following indicators have been achieved:

- feedback from clients through surveys, focus groups, workshops etc. reflect satisfaction with the Council’s services; and
- suggested improvements are acted on where relevant.

Work undertaken by the Council to achieve Outcome 4 is detailed as follows.

FEEDBACK FROM RTOs

The Council collects feedback from RTOs following completion of audits during the initial and renewal of registration process. The feedback is incorporated into the Council’s continuous improvement processes and is reported on a biannual basis.

During the 2010-2011 reporting period, the survey results showed that 95% of respondents found that the audit process added value to their business. This is a slight increase from 2009-2010. In addition, 99% of respondents indicated that the pre-audit information provided by the registering body met their needs whilst 98% of respondents were satisfied to very satisfied with the overall audit process.

Stakeholder feedback is collected from a number of sources including that received from RTOs via the audit survey, through direct contact with the Council Secretariat, through the Council’s complaints handling process, and auditor feedback. This feedback is incorporated within the Council’s review and improvement process.

Processes for gaining feedback will be reviewed by the Council Secretariat to ensure relevance and appropriateness for the Council’s purpose and functions.

APPENDIX 1 - Glossary of Terms

Accredited course means a structured sequence of vocational education and training that has been accredited by a state and territory course accrediting body that leads to an Australian Qualifications Framework qualification or Statement of Attainment.

Apprenticeship/traineeship means a structured training arrangement for a person employed under an apprenticeship/traineeship training contract. It usually involves the person receiving training and being assessed both on and off the job.

Assessment means a process of collecting evidence and making judgments on whether competency has been achieved, to confirm that an individual can perform to the standard expected in the workplace, as expressed in the relevant endorsed industry/enterprise competency standards of a Training Package or by the learning outcomes of an accredited course.

Audit means a planned, systematic and documented process used to assess an RTO's compliance with the AQTF. Registering bodies conduct audits as a condition of registration. RTOs can conduct internal audits to assess their compliance with the standards and their own policies and procedures as part of their continuous improvement process.

Auditor means an independent person recognised by the Training Accreditation Council to ensure that the AQTF standards for registration/accreditation have been adequately addressed by an RTO.

Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) means the policy framework that defines all qualifications recognised nationally in post-compulsory education and training in Australia. The AQF comprises titles and guidelines that define each qualification, as well as the principles and protocols covering cross-sectoral qualification links and the issuing of qualifications and statements of attainment.

Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) means a set of nationally agreed quality assurance arrangements for training and assessment services delivered by training organisations.

Complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with an action product or service of an education and training provider (or of the registering body) made to the registering body.

Complaints process means a process by which a client of an RTO, or other interested parties, may raise a concern about the RTO's policies, procedures, services or products with a view to having them changed and improved.

Course accrediting body means the authority responsible, under the VET legislation and decision-making framework of a particular State or Territory, for accrediting courses for delivery both inside and outside Australia.

Internal audit means audits conducted by, or on behalf of, the organisation itself for internal purposes.

National Quality Council (NQC) means a committee of the Ministerial Council for Vocational and Technical Education. The NQC has a role in:

- (a) providing the Ministerial Council with advice on the operation of the AQTF and any changes to it that are considered necessary.
- (b) providing the State and Territory registering and course-accrediting bodies with information and advice on implementation of the AQTF.
- (c) providing the Ministerial Council with information and advice on the operation of the AQTF in each state and territory, including advice on their registration, audit and related processes, and on the Commonwealth processes that support the AQTF 2007.

National recognition means the recognition by an RTO of the AQF qualifications and statements of attainment issued by all other RTOs, thereby enabling national recognition of the qualifications and statements of attainment issued to any person.

Recognition by each state and territory's registering body of the training organisations registered by any other state or territory's registering body and of its registration decisions.

Recognition by all state and territory course accrediting bodies and registering bodies of each other's accredited courses and accreditation decisions.

National Skills Framework (NSF) means the system of VET that sets out the system's requirements for quality and national consistency in terms of qualifications and the delivery of training. The NSF applies nationally, and has been endorsed by the Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment.

National Training Information Service (NTIS) means the national register for recording information about RTOs, Training Packages and accredited courses. NTIS is part of the National Skills Framework.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) means an assessment process that assesses an individual's non-formal and informal learning to determine the extent to which that individual has achieved the required learning outcomes, competency outcomes, or standards for entry to, and/or partial or total completion of, a qualification.

Registering body means the authority responsible, under the VET legislation and decision-making framework, and in accordance with the *AQTF Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies*, for registering training organisations, including all the processes relating to registration and the imposition of sanctions on RTOs.

Registration means the formal recognition by a State or Territory registering body, in accordance with the *AQTF Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies*, that a training organisation meets the requirements of the *AQTF Essential Standards for Registration*. A training organisation must be registered in order to deliver and assess nationally recognised training and issue nationally recognised qualifications.

Registered Training Organisation (RTO) means a training organisation registered by a jurisdiction registering body in accordance with the AQTF within a defined scope of registration. See also Scope of registration.

Scope of registration means the particular services and products an RTO is registered to provide. The RTO's scope defines the specific AQF qualifications, units of competency and accredited courses it is registered to provide, and whether it is registered to provide:

- both training delivery and assessment services, and to issue the relevant AQF qualifications and statements of attainment, or
- only assessment services, and to issue AQF qualifications and statements of attainment.

Statement of Attainment is issued by an RTO when an individual has completed one or more units of competency/modules from nationally recognised qualification(s)/course(s).

Strategic Industry Audit means where a specific area of risk has been identified, a strategic industry audit is conducted to confirm that a RTO's training and assessment services are meeting the requirements of a particular industry or licensing authority.

Training Package means a nationally endorsed, integrated set of competency standards, assessment guidelines and AQF qualifications for a specific industry, industry sector or enterprise.

Training products means Training Packages qualifications and accredited courses.

APPENDIX 2 – Acronyms

AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
AQTF	Australian Quality Training Framework
NQC	National Quality Council
NSF	National Skills Framework
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
TAC	Training Accreditation Council
VET	Vocational Education and Training