



Training Accreditation Council
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Training Accreditation Council Annual Report

2012-2013

Hon Terry Redman MLA
MINISTER FOR 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 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ian C Hill', written over a horizontal line.

Ian C Hill
CHAIRMAN
TRAINING ACCREDITATION COUNCIL
12 September 2013

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report fulfils the requirements of Section 30(1) of the *Vocational Education and Training (VET) Act 1996* (the Act) by reporting on the operations of the Training Accreditation Council to the Minister for Training and Workforce Development for the period 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013.

The Annual Report aligns to the Council's Business Plan which is prepared on a financial year basis and reflects its regulatory responsibilities under the Act and the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF). Where possible, data for the 2012-2013 reporting period and both the 2011-2012 and 2010-2011 reporting periods have been provided to allow a comparative assessment of the activities and achievements of the Council.

The report comprises:

- **Executive Summary** – this report includes:
 - the Chairman's report - an overview of the operation of the Council
 - major achievements and highlights for 2012-2013
 - significant issues including current/emerging issues that impact/may impact upon the Council's workload.
- **Introduction** - Council at a glance – an overview of the Council's guiding principles, functions, membership, planning and reporting framework, context in which the Council works and fees and charges.
- **Performance against Key Priority Areas** – an overview of the Council's performance from 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013. This section of the report relates to the key areas of priority from the Council's Business Plan 2011 to 2014 and its achievements against them. The four key priority areas of the Council are identified below:
 - legislation and compliance
 - communication and evaluation
 - collaboration and engagement
 - quality processes and services.

The Council has aligned its key priority areas and guiding principles to meet the State Government's goal **of results-based service delivery: greater focus on achieving results in key service delivery areas for the benefit of all Western Australians**. In doing this, the Council demonstrates its commitment to achieving the best opportunities for current and future generations in Western Australia (WA).

1.2 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I am pleased to present to you the Training Accreditation Council's (the Council) 2012-2013 Annual Report. During the 2012-2013 reporting period, the Council continued to provide a range of services to manage the quality assurance of VET in Western Australia.

As the training sector enters a period of significant change, assurance to the community of the quality of training being offered by training organisations is essential. The robust risk based regulatory approach taken by the Council continues to ensure that the majority of training organisations are operating in accordance with the requirements for quality training provision and that areas identified as presenting a risk to the integrity of certain industries are thoroughly reviewed.

In executing its functions, the Council has risk assessed 366 applications and undertaken 315 audits of Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), endorsed 99 initial and renewal of registration applications and accredited or re-accredited 64 courses. During 2012-2013, the Council continued to focus on delivering products and services to manage and improve the quality of VET in Western Australia.

Following the establishment of the national VET regulatory arrangements in July 2011, the Council has continued to ensure the quality of training in WA is managed and regulated effectively. In 2012-13, this has involved the progress of work to ensure that there is consistency across legislative frameworks and between VET regulators.

To formalise arrangements to drive consistency with VET Regulators, in October 2012 a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for collaborative regulation of VET was signed between ASQA, the Victorian Registration & Qualifications Authority (VRQA) and the Council. Work has also commenced on the review of WA legislation to ensure consistency in regulation of the VET sector across Australia, the review also includes the current WA fees and charges model.

During 2012-2013, Council has actively worked with the Commonwealth government on a number of national reviews including the Standards for Regulation of VET, Standards for VET Accredited Courses, and the Standards for Training Packages.

Of significance for Council has been the national review of the Standards for Regulation of VET which was announced by the National Skills Standards Council (NSSC) in May 2012, and encompasses both RTO and regulator standards. Western Australia has actively participated in the review through the provision of feedback and attendance at national meetings. The review of the approach to quality assurance for the VET sector has signalled a number of proposed changes to the VET sector. In June 2013, a joint national taskforce was established for the drafting of the new standards, which will include WA's participation.

A major focus for Council has also been the NSSC review of the Standards for VET Accredited Courses. The Council has actively participated in the review with

comment provided to the NSSC in April 2013 on the draft standards including feedback on potential transition arrangements and implementation implications. The revised standards are expected to be finalised in late 2013.

In addition to the State and national reviews underway, the work of the Council in 2012 - 2013 has focused on the key areas of:

- ongoing regulation of the WA VET sector
- strengthening its relationship with industry stakeholders
- identifying risk in specific areas.

Council continued to strengthen its relationship with key industry and regulatory stakeholders in WA, with a focus on industry engagement, quality assurance outcomes, streamlining of audit processes, and promoting a consistent approach to regulation within the VET environment. Council worked with WA Training Council's and industry regulators to exchange information on current trends and training issues within their sectors, and further develop their understanding of the VET environment and Council's role. During the period a number of representatives from various regulatory authorities participated as technical advisers in Council audits.

An outcome of the work with key stakeholders has been the identification of significant areas where industry stakeholders have raised concern with the quality of VET provision. During 2012–2013, work was undertaken to progress two strategic industry audits (SIA) endorsed by the Council. The two (2) audits focus on the qualifications required for work in the Aged Care and Home and Community Care industry and the qualifications required for licensing in the Electrical industry.

During 2012-2013, the Electrical industry audit was finalised and the report including recommendations were endorsed by Council in September 2012. Work has continued on the implementation of the recommendations from the report. The SIA for the Aged Care and Home and Community Care industry has been a major undertaking by Council, with key stakeholder involvement, and has included a collaborative approach with ASQA. The findings from the SIA will be presented for consideration and the outcomes reported in the 2013-2014 reporting period.

In undertaking its regulatory functions the Council has continued to focus on improving quality in the VET sector and achieving greater efficiencies through streamlining and improving its operations. In January 2013, the Council commenced a comprehensive review of its systems and operations to ensure compliance with State and national requirements. The review has already identified improvements across a range of Council policies and processes.

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

The review of the Standards for VET regulation will provide a number of challenges for the VET sector over the next 12 months. The Council is committed to working

collaboratively with the NSSC and VET Regulators to ensure outcomes from the review are implemented and managed effectively. The Council would like to acknowledge the ongoing commitment of WA RTOs in ensuring the quality of the WA training system, and is confident that WA is well positioned to implement any new arrangements, while continuing to provide quality VET outcomes.



Ian C Hill
CHAIRMAN
TRAINING ACCREDITATION COUNCIL

12 SEPTEMBER 2013

1.3 2012-2013 HIGHLIGHTS

Major achievements for 2012-2013

The Council:

- endorsed 99 initial and renewal of registration applications and 182 extension to scope applications
- approved a total of 64 courses for accreditation and re-accreditation;
- undertook 315 audits, comprising 24 initial and 64 renewal of registration audits; 42 accreditation reviews; 57 monitoring audits and 128 extension to scope audits
- conducted 366 risk assessments of RTO applications. Of the 366, 29% (105) did not require an audit and 71% (261) required either a desktop 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 28 information sessions related to the AQTF, with participants from across WA attending. Each information session focused on the requirements of becoming an RTO and industry requirements
- finalised the Strategic Industry Audit of the Electrical Industry, with the report including recommendations endorsed by Council in September 2012. Work has continued on the implementation of the recommendations from the report
- strengthened its relationship with key industry and regulatory bodies in WA, with a focus on industry engagement, quality assurance outcomes, streamlining of audit processes, and promoting a consistent approach to regulation within the VET environment. A number of representatives from various regulatory authorities have also participated as technical advisers in Council audits
- sponsored the 2012 'Trainer of the Year Award' category of the WA Training Awards.

1.4 SIGNIFICANT ISSUES IMPACTING ON COUNCIL

A number of significant current and emerging issues exist that could impact on the Council's ability to achieve its key priorities in 2013-2014. Issues identified include:

- **Review of Standards for VET regulation** – in May 2012, a significant review of the Standards for Regulation of VET was commenced by the NSSC. The review will encompass both RTO and Regulator standards. While the standards review is not expected to be completed until the end of 2013, this project is likely to impact on the Council's resources during 2013-2014.

- **Working relationship with VET Regulators** - a key focus for the Council in 2013-2014 will be the continuation of the existing collaborative working relationship with ASQA, both at a state and national level, and the VRQA. Of particular importance will be ensuring the quality of training in WA is managed and regulated effectively, with minimal impact for WA RTOs.
- **Proposed legislative amendments** – as a result of the commitment by WA to participate in the national regulatory system as a non-referring state, WA has agreed to enact legislation that will mirror the Commonwealth arrangements creating a nationally consistent regulatory environment. Work has commenced on the review of the legislation and will be a major focus for the Council during the next reporting period. The implementation of the outcomes from the review has the potential to impact on the regulation of the WA VET sector.
- **Strategic Industry Audits (SIAs)** - Funding has been approved for an SIA of VET in Schools in WA. Planning for the SIA is anticipated to commence toward the end of 2013 and will be a major focus for Council in 2014.
- **Standards for VET Accredited Courses and Standards for Training Packages** - The review of the Standards for VET Accredited Courses commenced in March 2013, with the circulation of draft standards for comment by regulators. While the review of the standards is not expected to be completed until the end of 2013, it is likely to impact on the Council's resources during 2013-2014. In addition, the finalisation and implementation of the new Standards for Training Packages is also likely to impact on the Council's resources during the next reporting period.
- **Regulatory activity in WA** – during the 2013-2014 reporting period the Council has identified a significant number of regulatory audits to be undertaken, which has the potential to impact on existing resources. Due to the cyclic nature of registrations, 2013-2014 will see a high number of renewal of registration audits required in WA. In addition, Council has identified a range of other audits to be undertaken including post initial, monitoring, amendment to registration audits, and the SIA of VET in Schools.

2. INTRODUCTION - the Council at a glance

The Council delivers a client-focussed regulatory service for the vocational education and training sector in WA through quality assured registration and accreditation services.

2.1 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Council has developed guiding principles that communicate to the Council's stakeholders the way in which the Council intends to undertake its business. The Council's guiding principles underpin the commitment of the Council to:

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

2.2 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*. Members are selected on the basis of their expertise, qualifications and experience relevant to the Council's functions.

For the reporting period, the members were:

Mr Ian Hill, Chairman

Ms Liz Harris, Challenger Institute of Technology

Miss Janelle Dawson, Sterling Business College Pty Ltd

Dr Irene Ioannakis, Ioannakis and Associates, GE Oil and Gas

Mr Iain McDougall, Hospitality Group Training (WA) Inc

Mr Ron Dullard, Consultant

Mr Jeffrey Gunningham, Consultant (July 2012 – May 2013).

2.3 FUNCTIONS OF THE TRAINING ACCREDITATION COUNCIL

The Council's functions are detailed in Part 4 and 7A of the *Vocational Education and Training 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
- 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
- cancel qualifications.

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

2.4 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 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 Standards for Accredited Courses*
- e) *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.

2.5 VET REGULATORY ARRANGEMENTS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

From the 1 July 2011, two (2) VET Regulators operate in WA. The Training Accreditation Council and the national VET regulator (ASQA) both have responsibility for the regulation of providers. This situation results from a meeting held on 7 December 2009 where the Council of Australian Governments (COAG)

endorsed the establishment of a national regulator for the VET sector through the referral of State powers to the Commonwealth.

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 Council. The WA Government has agreed to 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 allows 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.

2.6 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 2011–2014) and reviewed annually. The framework also consists of a corresponding operational plan for the support services provided by the DES and an Annual Report on the achievements of the Council. In addition, the Council also reports on VET regulation related outcomes to the NSSC each year.

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

2.7 FEES AND CHARGES

In WA fees and charges apply for the registration of training organisations and accreditation of VET courses with the Council. In line with State Government requirements fees and charges are reviewed annually. As a result, registration fees for training organisations and course accreditation fees were increased during 2012-2013. The approved schedule of fees and charges is provided at Table 1.

Table 1: Registration and accreditation fees as at 30 June 2013

Type	Current fees (as at 30 June 2013)
Application Fee	\$655
Annual Fee	\$655
Registration Fee	\$2,290 (up to 2 industry areas) \$695 for each additional area
Amendment to Registration Fees Range of fees apply dependent on the type of application	From \$360 to \$1,405
Course Accreditation Fees	\$1,425 (from Certificate I and above) \$715 (short course)

Note: all fees exclude GST

3. KEY PRIORITY 1 – LEGISLATION AND COMPLIANCE

Outcome Indicators

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

3.1	The Council's governance requirements are met.
3.2	Council regulates training providers in accordance with the AQTF, the <i>Vocational Education and Training Act 1996</i> and <i>Vocational Education and Training (General) Regulations 2009</i> .

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

3.1 THE COUNCIL'S GOVERNANCE REQUIREMENTS ARE MET

3.1.1 Council Membership for 2012-2013

Membership of the Council continued to comply with the requirements of the VET Act during the reporting period. In December 2012, Ms Lorraine Carter completed her term of appointment and Mr Ron Dullard was appointed to the Council by the Minister in January 2013. During the reporting period Mr Jeffrey Gunningham resigned from the Council with effect from 31 May 2013.

3.1.2 Operation of the Council

The Council is supported by the Department of Education Services through the services of the 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 for consideration by the Council. The Council Secretariat also provides substantial support to the work of the Council on policy issues.

The Council formally met 17 times over the twelve months to 30 June 2013, which consisted of 16 full Council meetings and 1 Executive Committee meeting. The Council holds full meetings on a monthly basis to consider applications from organisations, with additional meetings held as required.

In July 2012, Council agreed to change the format for Executive Committee meetings, with Committee meetings to be held on an as required basis. The change in format followed a review of the registration and organisation workflow areas in early 2012. As a result of the review Council agreed to a range of measures to ensure optimum workflow and efficiencies, including full implementation of the current delegation to the Executive Officer to approve amendments to scope. The new format enables applications to be progressed as soon as possible, with minimal impact on organisations.

3.1.3 Compliance with the AQTF Standards for Registering and Course Accrediting Bodies

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 Skills Standards Council (NSSC). As part of these arrangements the 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 2012, the NSSC agreed to continue the 2011 interim reporting arrangements for regulators to report on their January to June 2012 operations. The decision from NSSC reflected the impact of the establishment of the National VET Regulator and the review of the Standards for VET Regulation.

The Council reported to the NSSC in September 2012 on the operation of the AQTF in WA which included activity data and outcomes for the January to June 2012 reporting period.

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 NSSC. The NSSC decided that given the work associated with the review of the standards for VET regulation that an independent audit was not a priority for the 2012-2013 reporting period.

To assess the Council's compliance with State and national requirements including the AQTF Standards for registering and course accrediting bodies, it was agreed that an internal review and audit of the Council's quality system would be undertaken in 2013. The review and audit will focus on a broad range of regulatory obligations including for example the AQTF Standards with regards to the requirements that registration functions are managed through a defined and documented quality system that is regularly reviewed to ensure its continuing effectiveness.

The internal review and audit of the quality system commenced in January 2013 and will focus on the system's effectiveness in supporting Council's compliance, and its approach to continuous improvement.

The internal review and audit is expected to be completed by the end of 2013, however, outcomes to date have resulted in continued improvements across a range of Council policies and procedures.

3.2 OVERVIEW OF THE REGULATORY MARKET

3.2.1 Registration of Training Organisations

As at the 30 June 2013 there were 2537 training organisations registered to deliver training in WA. A total of 346 were organisations registered with the Council, with the remaining 2191 registered to deliver in WA under national recognition arrangements. In addition, 15 of the 346 organisations registered with the Council were also delivering vocational education and training under the AQTF in countries other than Australia.

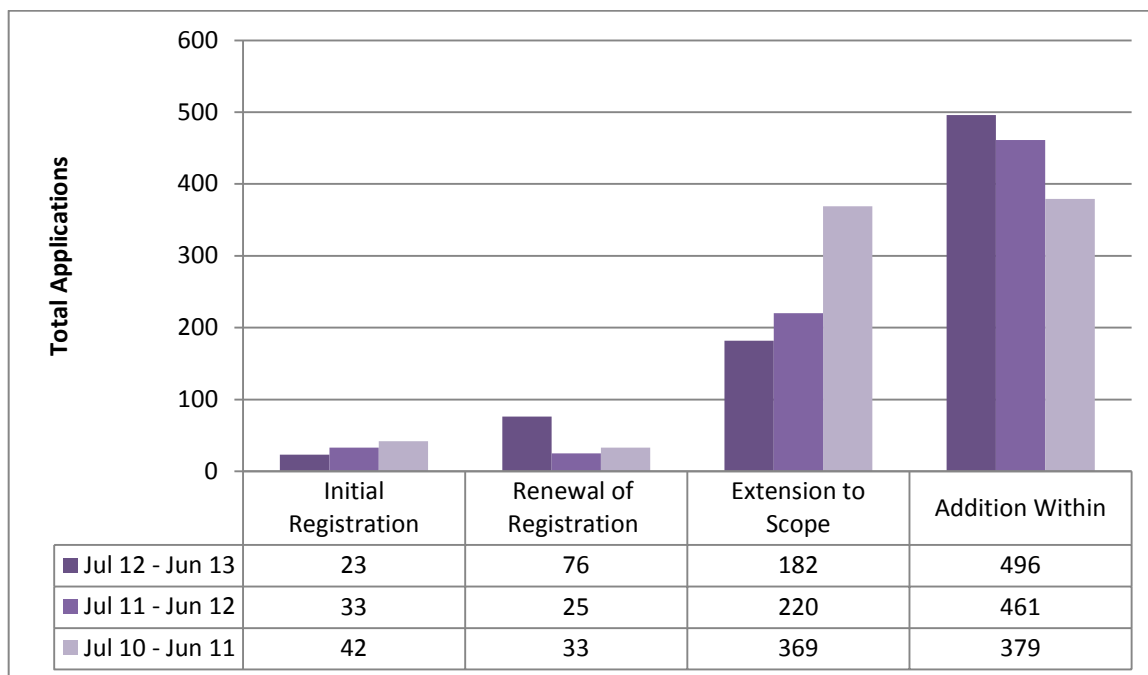
During the reporting period the overall number of organisations registered to deliver in WA has increased by 19% since the last reporting period from 2135 in 2011-2012 to 2537 in 2012-2013. The total number of WA RTOs registered by the Council has decreased by 9% since the last reporting period from 381 in 2011-2012 to 346 in 2012-2013.

During the 2012-2013 year, the Council endorsed the following applications:

- 23 initial registrations
- 76 renewal of registrations
- 182 extensions to scope
- 496 notifications received from RTOs adding courses/qualifications within their current scope.

During the reporting period three (3) RTOs had their registration cancelled by the Council. Two (2) RTOs had the sanction of suspension placed on their registration and two (2) had a condition placed on their registration.

Graph 1: Registration Activity July 2012 – June 2013 – Applications endorsed



In this reporting period, initial registrations decreased by 30% from 2011-2012; however, renewal of registrations increased by 200% and extension to scope applications decreased by 17%. There was also an 8% increase in the number of applications for addition within scope from 2011-2012. The significant increase in renewal of registrations can be attributed to the cyclic nature of the five year registration process.

3.2.2 Demographics of RTOs

The following provides an overview of the WA VET market for the 2012-2013 reporting period.

3.2.2.1 WA RTOs by type of business

Of the 346 WA RTOs registered with the Council as at 30 June 2013, 68% (236) were private RTOs. The remaining 110 RTOs were spread across a range of business types, including enterprise, non-government, community based adult education and government schools.

Table 2: WA RTOs by type of business

Type of Business	30 June 2013	30 June 2012
State Training Providers	11	11
Professional Association	2	2
Industry Association	13	15
University Government	0	2
School Government	20	21
School Independent	1	2
School Catholic	1	1
Enterprise Non-Government	23	24
Enterprise Government	13	13
Community Based Adult Education	16	20
Private RTO	236	259
Other not elsewhere classified	10	11

3.2.2.2 WA RTOs by location

Locations associated with WA RTOs are based on the location of the RTOs head office rather than delivery location.

Of the 346 WA RTOs registered with the Council 77% (265) were located in the Perth region. 8% (29) were located in the South West region and the remaining RTOs located across WA. While the number of RTOs in the Perth region declined during the 2012-2013 year, the overall percentage of RTOs in the Perth region, remained unchanged.

Table 3: WA RTOs by location

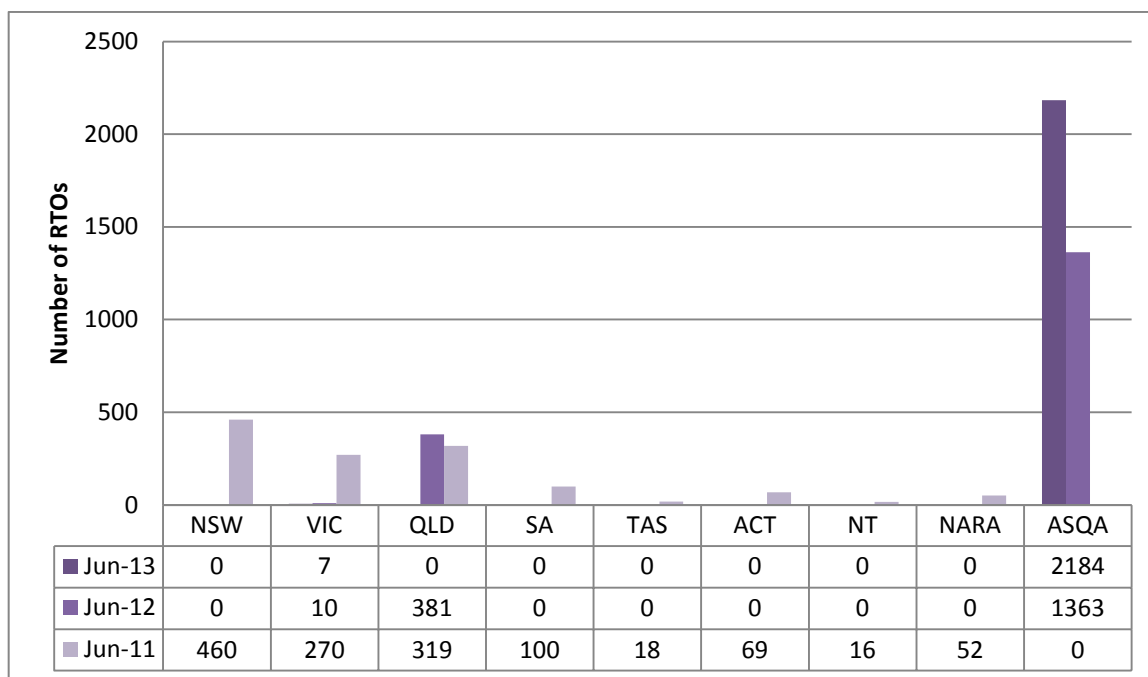
Location	30 June 2013	30 June 2012
Perth	265	294
Peel	12	13
South West	29	33
Great Southern	5	5
Goldfields/Esperance	6	5
Mid-West	7	6
Wheatbelt	4	5
Pilbara	7	8
Kimberley	8	9
Interstate	3	2
Overseas	0	1

3.2.2.3 RTOs registered to operate in WA under National recognition

In addition to the training organisations registered by the Council as at 30 June 2013, there were 2191 interstate RTOs which operate, or plan to operate, within WA. The establishment of the National VET regulator (ASQA) in July 2011 has impacted on the breakdown of the RTOs compared with previous reporting periods, with over 83% (2184) of RTOs being registered with ASQA compared with the remaining seven (7) RTOs registered with the VRQA.

The number of organisations delivering under national recognition does not reflect actual delivery by interstate RTOs in WA. Many organisations register their intent to deliver with their primary Registering Body; 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: RTOs registered to operate in WA under National Recognition as at 30 June 2013



3.2.3 Audit Strategy

The Council, as part of its on-going improvement process, implements a continuous audit strategy. This complements the national approach to risk management and enables 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 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 determine the type, scale and scope of an audit.

3.2.3.1 Risk Management of the Annual Audit Schedule

The Council is responsible for undertaking audits of training organisations and accreditation reviews 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 assessment outcome, may result in an RTO not requiring an audit.

During the 2012-2013 reporting period, a total of 366 RTO risk assessments were undertaken by the Council. This represents a decrease of 13% when compared with the 2011-2012 reporting period total of 421. The decrease in RTO risk assessments could be linked to the establishment of ASQA and training organisations reassessing their business requirements.

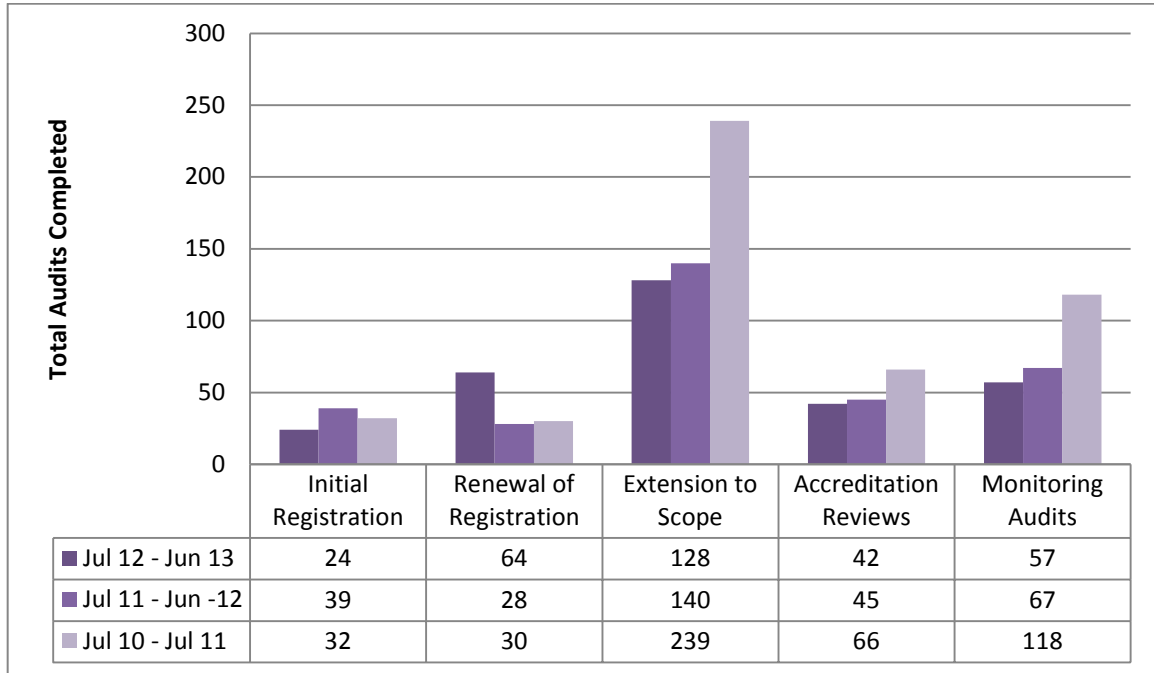
Of the 366 risk assessments undertaken in 2012-2013, 105 applications (29%) did not require an audit, while an external desk and/or site visit audit was required for the remaining 261 applications (71%). This represents a 12% increase in the number of applications requiring an audit, compared to the 2011-2012 reporting period.

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 against the Department of Training and Workforce Development's (DTWD) funding contracts with RTOs in receipt of public funding for the delivery of training services in WA.

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 2012 – June 2013



A total of 315 audits were undertaken in the twelve (12) month period ending 30 June 2013.

Most notable during the reporting period was the increase from 2011-2012 of 129% in renewal of registration audits, which can be directly attributed to the cyclic nature of the registration period.

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.

3.2.3.2 Strategic Industry Audits

During the reporting period work was undertaken to progress two (2) SIAs endorsed by the Council in 2011-2012. The SIAs included the qualifications required for licensing in the Electrical industry and for work in the Aged Care and Home and Community Care industry. The audits were endorsed following concerns raised by local industry stakeholders, relevant regulatory and licensing bodies, and in the case of Aged Care, concerns raised in the Productivity Commission Report on Aged Care Reform (June 2011).

Electrical SIA

In September 2011, the Council endorsed a SIA of qualifications which lead to an electrician's licence in WA. The SIA was initiated in response to concerns by industry about the quality of the nationally recognised training being delivered by RTOs in WA. The major industry concerns included: the appropriateness of the apprenticeship pathways; the delivery strategies; workplace assessments and validity of the Capstone Assessment, which is undertaken in the final three months of the apprenticeship.

The objectives of the SIA were to determine the level of compliance with the *AQTF Essential Standards and Conditions of Registration* by RTOs; identify key areas of compliance and non-compliance; identify key issues impacting on training and assessment outcomes; and recommend strategies to address the key issues and to improve the quality of training and assessment in this industry. The SIA was supported by a Reference Group which included senior representatives from EnergySafety, two Training Councils, employer and group training representatives, the DTWD (ApprentiCentre), and the Council's Secretariat.

The SIA was conducted during 2012 and focussed on the following qualifications:

- UEE30807 Certificate III in Electrotechnology Electrician
- MEM30405 Certificate III in Engineering – Electrical/Electronic Trade.

The audit highlighted variable levels of compliance with the *AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration*.

- 27% (3) of the RTOs were found to be fully compliant
- 18% (2) had minor non-compliances
- 46% (5) had significant non-compliances
- 9% (1) was found to have critical non-compliances.

Key issues identified at audit included:

- assessments not meeting training package requirements and lack of evidence that instruments and tools used gathered appropriate and sufficient evidence to assess competency
- the lack of systematic strategies to provide for the integration of institution based and on the job training
- the integration of the Capstone Assessment for licensing purposes with the training package qualification.

The results from the survey of employers also identified a number of issues:

- lack of job-readiness of workers who have recently graduated and completed the Capstone Assessment
- confusion with the method(s) used for gathering on-the-job evidence and communication with employers
- confusion about the relationship between the qualification and the Capstone Assessment.

A number of recommendations arising from the report were developed in consultation with the SIA Reference Group and endorsed by the Council in September 2012. Work has continued on the implementation of the recommendations from the report.

Aged Care and Home and Community Care

The Council endorsed a SIA for Aged Care and Home and Community Care qualifications in February 2012. The SIA was initiated in response to concerns by industry about the quality of nationally recognised vocational education and training being delivered in WA by RTOs. Concerns were also raised about the variable quality of training and assessment in the aged and community care industry in the Australian Government's Productivity Commission Inquiry Report "Caring for Older Australians"¹, released in August 2011.

The objectives of the SIA were to:

1. determine the level of compliance with the AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration of RTOs delivering nationally recognised Aged Care and Home and Community Care qualifications
2. identify and analyse key areas of compliance and non-compliance
3. identify key issues impacting on training and assessment outcomes and good training and assessment practice
4. comment on whether systemic issues impact on the delivery of training and assessment services within the qualifications, and
5. recommend strategies to address key issues and to improve the quality of training and assessment for qualifications in this industry area and future audit processes.

A Reference Group was established to support the SIA. The SIA focused on the following qualifications:

- Certificate III in Aged Care
- Certificate IV in Aged Care
- Certificate III in Home & Community Care
- Certificate IV in Home & Community Care.

The SIA has been a major undertaking by Council, with key stakeholder involvement, and has included a collaborative approach with ASQA. The SIA involved the audit of 24 WA RTOs against the AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards, including 19 RTOs registered with the Council and five RTOs registered with ASQA. The findings from the SIA will be presented for consideration by Council and the outcomes reported in the 2013-2014 period.

¹ Productivity Commission's Caring for Older Australians, dated 28 June 2011
<http://www.pc.gov.au/projects/inquiry/aged-care/report>

3.2.3.3 Arrangements for Auditors and Accreditation Reviewers

The current RTO Auditors and Accreditation Reviewers Panels were appointed through a public tender process and commenced on 1 September 2011. The panels were appointed for a one (1) year period with three (3) one (1) year extension options available. In addition, the panel was extended in July 2012, through a further public tender process, following a review of future work requirements. As a result of the tender process two (2) new auditors were appointed to the Panel of RTO Auditors.

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 4.

Table 4: Panel of auditors and accreditation reviewers as at 30 June 2013

PANEL	AUDITOR	COMPANY
RTO Auditors	Allison Burnett	Specialised Training Solutions
	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
	Sharon Stewart	LCN Training Solutions
	Pam Vlajsavljevich	Pam Vlajsavljevich
	Claire Werner	The Meyvn Group
Accreditation Reviewers	Mairead Dempsey	Assessment Training and Research Consultancy Services
	Russell Docking	Skills Resource Management Systems
	Cherrie Hawke	Torque Holdings Pty Ltd
	Lourdes McCleary	Lourdes McCleary Consultant

The DES, on behalf of the Council, implements a performance management model for the panel of external auditors and accreditation reviewers. Under this model, the DES 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. In addition to the scheduled forums, panel members were also invited to attend two (2) additional professional development opportunities focussing on (1) Standards for Training Packages and (2) units linked to high risk work licences and other regulatory matters.

3.2.4 Course Accreditation

Accredited courses meet training needs that are not addressed in 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 2013 there were 169 accredited courses in WA. This represents a 34% decrease in course accreditations in comparison to 2011-12. The reduction is due to the expiry of courses that were not subsequently reaccredited and the transfer of 72 courses to the ASQA. Under a Memorandum of Understanding between the Council and ASQA, it was agreed that RTOs that own courses and are registered with ASQA must transfer the recognition management of their courses to ASQA.

In the period to June 2013, 35 Course Concept Proposals were received by the Council's Secretariat. Of these, one proposal was not accepted due to insufficient evidence of industry, enterprise, educational or community need. A total of 90 courses expired during 2012-13. Of these, 51 courses (57%) were reaccredited.

During the reporting period the Council considered a total of 112 accreditation applications. These included 13 new accreditation applications, all of which were approved. 51 applications for the reaccreditation of existing courses were considered and approved. 14 applications for amendment to accredited courses were considered and approved. 34 applications for extension of accreditation were considered and approved for courses which would otherwise have expired.

Table 5 summarises accreditation activity undertaken in the reporting period.

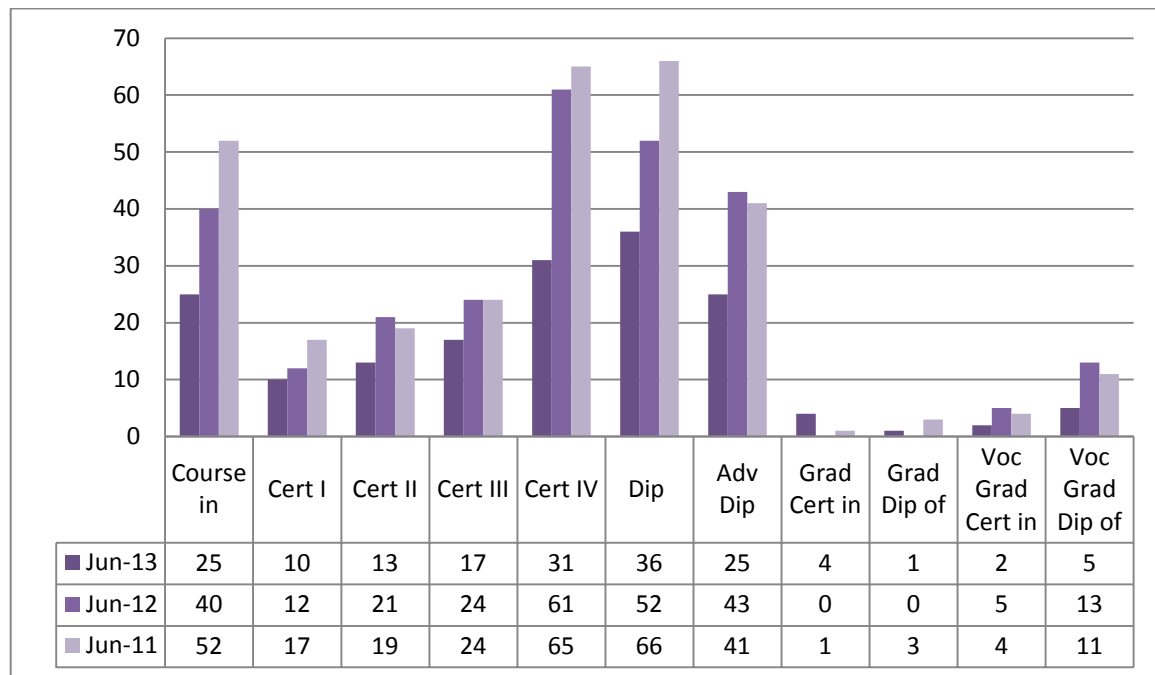
Table 5: Accreditation activity July 2012 – June 2013

Activity	Number of courses
Courses accredited	13
Courses re-accredited	51
Courses extended	34
Courses amended	14
TOTAL	112

Diploma (AQF Level 5) courses made up the highest proportion of accredited courses, at about 21% of the total. Certificate IV (AQF Level 4) courses were 18% of the total. Courses at Advanced Diploma (AQF Level 6) and courses below AQF Level 1 each constituted about 15% of the total. Certificate I (AQF Level 1) courses were the least represented, at 6% of the total of accredited courses.

Vocational Graduate Certificate and Vocational Graduate Diploma type qualifications were removed from the Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) from 1 January 2013. The new Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma qualification types are for use in both the VET and Higher Education sectors.

Graph 4: Accreditation activity by AQF Level July 2012 – June 2013



3.2.5 Complaints Management

A key function provided by the Secretariat on behalf of the Council is the investigation of complaints made by sector stakeholders. Complaints can only be investigated if they relate to the on-going compliance by RTOs with the AQTF Standards for RTOs.

Complaints are handled 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*.

A total of 72 complaint enquiries were received during 2012-2013. Of these, nine (9) complaints were formalised or substantiated; eight (8) were investigated and closed; and one (1) was still open and under consideration at 30 June 2013. The nine (9) complaints that were substantiated represents a slight increase from eight (8) in the previous reporting period.

Twenty five (25) of the 72 complaint enquiries were assessed, but not investigated further for various reasons. The reasons include that the issue was outside Council's jurisdiction, no breach of the AQTF had occurred or that the matter was resolved by the relevant parties. The remaining 38 were not assessed, either because they related to RTOs registered with another VET Regulator, or that complainants failed to provide sufficient evidence for their complaint to be assessed.

A high percentage of the complaints relate to AQTF Standard 1, and more specifically in relation to the quality of RTO assessment practices and the qualifications of delivery and assessment staff. Table 6 provides an overview of complaints received during the reporting period by AQTF Standards. Note: complaints may include issues across more than one standard or condition.

Table 6 Complaints by AQTF Standards

AQTF Condition and Standards	% of complaints received
Condition 1 - Governance	25%
Condition 5 - Financial management	12%
Condition 6 - Certificate and issuing qualifications and statements of attainment	25%
Standard 1 – the RTO provides quality training and assessment across all of its operations	100%
Standard 2 – the RTO adheres to the principles of access and equity and maximises outcomes for its clients	50%
Standard 3 – management systems are responsive to the needs of clients, staff and stakeholders and the environment in which is operates	50%

4. KEY PRIORITY 2 – COMMUNICATION AND EVALUATION

Outcome Indicators

The Council's success in achieving Key Priority 2 is demonstrated by the extent to which the following indicator has been achieved:

Outcome	The Council effectively communicates with its stakeholders and gathers appropriate information to enhance its regulatory functions.
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Work undertaken by the Council to progress this priority and to achieve Key Priority 2 is detailed as follows.

4.1 COMMUNICATION WITH CLIENTS AND STAKEHOLDERS

4.1.1 Report on Council Activities

The Snapshot of Activities report is produced by the Council every six (6) months, reporting on the previous six (6) month's activity and highlights the Council's regulatory activities in accordance with its functions under the *Vocational Education and Training Act 1996*. The report also documents the Council's activities as the WA registering and course accrediting body under the AQTF.

The report is forwarded to key stakeholders and clients including the Minister for Training and Workforce Development, government departments, Training Councils and RTOs. The report is circulated electronically to RTOs via email and included in the TAC Website.

4.1.2 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. A new website is currently under development to ensure that the Council can continue to rely on this media as its major communication portal with stakeholders.

TAC Newsletters

The Council Secretariat continues to provide the regular newsletter, the TAC Update and Special Bulletins, as required. The Updates highlight key information, policy direction, changes and on-going reminders to key stakeholders. It is emailed to key stakeholders and interested parties and is also available electronically on the Council's 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.

RTONet

RTONet is a web based database managed by the DES, 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.

DES has commissioned the development of a new electronic business tool which will replace the existing RTONet system. The new tool will be implemented in the 2013-2014 reporting period, and RTOs will continue to access information linked to their RTO and interact with the Council Secretariat via the new electronic business tool.

Support Material

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

4.2 INFORMATION SESSIONS, PRESENTATIONS, AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Information Sessions

The Council Secretariat provides information sessions to those training organisations seeking registration within the national skills framework. Information provided covers national and state policies and guidelines, as well as accreditation and registration processes.

Registration Information Sessions

During the 2012-2013 reporting period a total of 28 information sessions were held with Council Secretariat staff. Sessions are designed to be interactive, with participants meeting with staff on a 'one to one' basis.

Key areas that were discussed include:

- National Skills Framework and the new national regulatory arrangements
- rights and responsibilities of RTOs
- alternatives to registration
- the registration process
 - application processes
 - audit processes
- course accreditation (where relevant).

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

Course Accreditation Information Sessions

The Council Secretariat continued its program of course accreditation workshops for current and prospective course owners. The workshops included customised workshops for state training providers, 2 workshops for the general public and 5 one-on-one information sessions for individuals considering course accreditation.

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. The Secretariat has engaged with RTOs and other stakeholders primarily through attendance at formal and informal forums, including meetings with Training Councils and industry regulators.

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 (RPL) and self-assessment against the AQTF.

Presentations

During 2012 and 2013, the Council Secretariat on behalf of the Council was invited to make a presentation to two (2) international delegations on the WA VET sector and regulatory framework. The two (2) delegations included:

- Mongolian Study Tour to Australia (mid 2012)
- Mozambique Technical VET Study Tour to Australia (April 2013).

As part of the presentations the delegations were provided with an overview of the WA VET regulatory framework, and in particular the audit and compliance aspects of the framework. In correspondence following the presentation, the Mozambique delegation expressed their appreciation, and indicated the information provided was considered highly relevant to the delegates.

4.3 FEEDBACK FROM STAKEHOLDERS

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.

One of the Council's tools for measuring organisational effectiveness and continuous improvement is the client satisfaction survey. 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 2012- 2013 reporting period, the survey results showed that 98% of respondents found that the audit process added value to their business. This figure remains constant from the 2011-2012 reporting period. In addition, 94% of respondents indicated that the pre-audit information provided by the registering body met their needs and that they were satisfied, to very satisfied, with the overall audit process.

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

5. KEY PRIORITY 3 – COLLABORATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Outcome Indicators

The Council's success in achieving Key Priority 3 is demonstrated by the extent to which the following indicator has been achieved:

Outcome	Council collaborates with stakeholders to ensure confidence in the quality of training and consistency of quality assurance outcomes.
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Work undertaken by the Council to progress these priorities and to achieve Key Priority 3 is detailed as follows.

5.1 CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

During 2012-2013, 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 are aware of the Council's requirements and priorities with respect to the quality assurance and recognition of VET in WA.

The Council continues to engage and consult with the Department of Training and Workforce Development on local policy issues and Commonwealth government on national issues.

5.2 ENGAGEMENT WITH INDUSTRY REGULATORS

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

During 2012 and 2013, a number of representatives from different regulatory authorities have participated as technical advisers in Council audits. This included the Police Licensing branch of the Western Australia Police, the Gasfitting and Electrical branches of EnergySafety, Department of Commerce and WorkSafe.

The Council Secretariat on behalf of the Council delivered information sessions and workshops on the AQTF, audit processes and Training Packages to a number of industry regulators to assist them to better understand the VET environment and the operations of the Council.

Much of the industry regulator engagement has focussed on streamlining of AQTF audit processes and reducing the regulatory burden for RTOs where the applicant/RTO may also have coverage by other regulatory authorities.

5.3 ENGAGEMENT WITH TRAINING COUNCILS

During 2012 and 2013, the Council Secretariat on behalf of the Council engaged with a number of WA Training Councils to exchange information on current trends and training issues within their sectors, with a focus on the major training issues currently impacting Training Councils and Council's ability to respond to these.

The work undertaken promoted the strengthening of relationships between Training Councils, industry regulators and the Council to support an informed and consistent approach to regulation within the WA VET environment.

This included working in partnership with the Construction Training Council, Building Commission and EnergySafety on local training and regulatory issues and; the Logistics Training Council, Resources Industry Training Council and Department of Mines and Petroleum, on the introduction and implementation of training and regulation of the proposed National Dangerous Goods Licencing requirements.

5.4 MEETING WITH NATIONAL SKILLS STANDARDS COUNCIL

During the reporting period WA participated in one meeting with the NSSC. The meeting was attended by the Chairman, Training Accreditation Council and the Council's Executive Officer. The meeting was held in Melbourne on 24 October 2012.

Items discussed included:

- January to June 2012 National Skills Standards Council Reporting Requirements – WA
- review of the standards for regulation of VET including the NSSC issues paper 'Review of the Standards for the Regulation of VET' (October 2012)
- State specific issues, and recurring, new or emerging risks or trends arising from the application of the Standards for the regulation of VET

5.5 REVIEW OF VET REGULATORY STANDARDS

A major focus for the Council has been the national review of the Standards for Regulation of VET which was announced by the National Skills Standards Council (NSSC) in May 2012, and encompasses both RTO and regulator standards.

The review is based on the premise that the standards for the regulation of VET and the associated regulatory approach need to continue to evolve to ensure that

current and future RTOs continue to deliver high quality training and assessment services.

Western Australia has actively participated in the review including provision of feedback and submission of a number of contributions, and attendance at national meetings. The review of the approach to quality assurance for the VET sector has signalled a number of proposed changes to the VET sector. In June 2013, a joint national taskforce was established for the drafting of the new standards, which will include WA's participation.

5.6 PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL REVIEWS

During 2012-2013, the Council continued to work collaboratively with the Commonwealth government in the regulation and development of the VET sector.

- **Unique Student Identifier** – at the 13 April 2012 meeting of the COAG it was agreed to implement a Unique Student Identifier (USI) from 1 January 2014, which will be administered by a new statutory body (USI Agency).

The USI will apply to all students undertaking nationally recognised VET. The purpose of the USI is to (a) manage an individual's training information, including AVETMISS compliant data; (b) manage student entitlement/funding programs; and (c) inform VET sector policy development and research.

The Council has provided feedback on the development of the initiative and will develop a communication strategy to ensure WA registered RTOs are kept informed of the developments regarding the introduction of the USI, proposed changes to the AQTF standards and new data reporting requirements.

- **Review of the Standards for Training Package Development** – in July 2012 the NSSC consulted with the Commonwealth, state and territory governments, Industry Skills Councils, VET Regulators, TAFE Directors Australia (TDA) and the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET) to seek advice on transition issues that need to be addressed for the implementation of the Standards for Training Packages and related Policy.

A consolidated WA response was provided to the NSSC with input from the Council as the Registration and Course Accrediting Body and DTWD as the State Training Authority. The Training Package Products Policy and the

Training Package Development and Endorsement Process Policy were endorsed by COAG in November 2012.

In June 2013 the NSSC Secretariat conducted a special workshop for Council Secretariat staff and auditors to discuss implementation and regulatory issues for qualifications and units of competency written to the new Standards for Training Packages.

- **Review of the Standards for VET Accredited Courses** – in September 2012, Council Secretariat staff with responsibility for course accreditation initiated a two (2) day moderation workshop with the other course accrediting bodies, VRQA, and ASQA.

The workshop enabled the NSSC to consult with the course accrediting bodies prior to the development of draft Standards for VET Accredited Courses.

In March 2013, the NSSC circulated draft Standards for VET Accredited courses to regulators and state training authorities for comment. The AQTF Standards for Accredited Courses had not been updated since 2007, and the review was initiated following the endorsement of the Standards for Training Packages by the COAG Standing Council on Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment (SCOTESE) on 16 November 2012. The proposed new Standards for VET Accredited Courses will be synchronised with the endorsed framework for the Standards for Training Packages.

The Council subsequently provided comment to the NSSC on the draft Standards, potential transition arrangements and implementation implications in April 2013. The revised standards are expected to be submitted to SCOTESE later in 2013.

6. KEY PRIORITY 4 – QUALITY PROCESSES AND SERVICES

Outcome Indicator

The Council's success in achieving Key Priority 4 is demonstrated by the extent to which the following indicator has been achieved:

Outcome	The Council delivers consistent and transparent quality processes and services.
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Work undertaken by the Council to achieve Key Priority 4 is detailed as follows.

6.1 REVIEW OF COUNCIL OPERATIONS AND PROCESSES

As a result of the 2011 independent internal audit of Council's compliance with its legislative requirements, national standards and guidelines, a number of recommendations were made in relation to the functions of the Council and the work of the Council Secretariat. The outcomes of the internal audit have been used as a focus for work undertaken during 2012-2013 with regards to the Council's policies and processes, and work planning.

A significant body of work has been undertaken by the Council during the reporting period to progress outcomes from the report, and ensure Council's on going compliance with the AQTF Standards for Registering and Course Accrediting Bodies.

6.1.1 Review of the Quality System

The Council Secretariat on behalf of the Council has an established quality system which supports the Council's compliance with a range of State and national requirements, and provides an effective business system for the Council.

As part of its commitment to continuous improvement, periodic internal audits are conducted by the Council Secretariat to monitor the extent to which Council's quality system complies with both State and national requirements including the *Vocational Education and Training Act 1996* and the AQTF Standards.

In late 2012, it was agreed that an internal review and audit would be undertaken in 2013. The internal review and audit of the quality system commenced in January 2013 and will review the systems effectiveness in supporting Council's compliance with its legislative requirements, AQTF Standards for Registering and Course Accrediting Bodies, and its approach to continuous improvement. The project comprises of an initial review phase, which will include all Council policies and procedures, and will be followed by a comprehensive audit of the quality system.

The internal audit is expected to be completed by the end of 2013.

6.1.2 Registration and Organisation Workflow

During 2012-2013, the Council continued its focus on achieving greater efficiencies through improvements to its operations and processes. Improvements included implementation of the outcomes from the 2012 review of registration and organisation workflow, which resulted in a number of changes including the full implementation of the current delegation arrangements to the Council's Executive Officer to approve amendments to scope. The changes have directly impacted on the operation of the Council and reduced the number of Executive Committee meetings held during the reporting period. The new structure ensures applications are progressed as soon as possible, with minimal impact on organisations.

6.2 APPEALS AGAINST COUNCIL DECISIONS

During the 2012-2013 reporting period the rigour of the Council's policies and procedures were tested through the lodgement of appeals by RTOs impacted by Council decisions.

Under the requirements of the *Vocational Education and Training Act 1996* (Section 58G), RTOs can appeal against Council decisions. Appeals must be lodged with the State Training Board (STB) in line with established processes. During the reporting period, the Council in line with the national Standards and the VET legislation cancelled the registration of three (3) RTOs. In addition, two (2) RTOs had the sanction of suspension placed on their registration, and two (2) had conditions placed on their registration.

As a result of the cancellations and sanctions, one (1) appeal was lodged with the STB against the decision of the Council. The STB disallowed the appeal on the basis that it could not find any grounds for appeal or evidence that the Council had erred in its application of, or failed to apply criteria or procedures in, guidelines it was required to apply under the VET legislation.

7. 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 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 Skills Standards Council (NSSC) means a committee of the Standing Council on Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment (SCOTESE) and was established on the 1 July 2011. NSSC is one of several Standing Councils that report to the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), SCOTESE is the successor of the Ministerial Council for Tertiary Education and Employment (MCTEE). This change in structure reflects COAG's goal to strengthen Australia's vocational education and training sector.

The NSSC provides advice to SCOTESE on national standards for regulation of vocational education and training.

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.

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.gov.au (TGA) means the national database on VET in Australia. TGA is the official national register of information on Training Packages, Qualifications, Courses, Units of Competency and RTOs.

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.

8. APPENDIX 2 – Acronyms

AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
AQTF	Australian Quality Training Framework
ASQA	Australian Skills Quality Authority
COAG	Council of Australian Government
NSSC	National Skills Standards Council
NSF	National Skills Framework
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
TAC	Training Accreditation Council
VET	Vocational Education and Training