



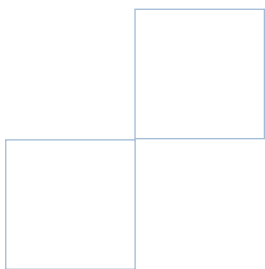
NSW Vocational
Education & Training
Accreditation Board



Achieving Quality Training

VETAB Annual Report 2007 – 08

NEW SOUTH WALES VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
AND TRAINING ACCREDITATION BOARD





The Hon Verity Firth MP
Minister for Education and Training
Minister for Women
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Minister

It is with pleasure that we submit the annual report of the NSW Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board for the financial year 2007 – 2008. The report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Act 1984 and is submitted to you for presentation to Parliament.

The report outlines the details of the Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board's performance in strengthening the quality of the vocational education and training system in NSW. The Board will continue to build on these achievements during the year ahead.



Bert Evans AO
Chairman



Margaret Willis
Director

30 October 2008

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Bert Evans, AO
Chairman

Chairman's Overview

I am pleased to introduce the 2007-2008 annual report of the Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board (VETAB). Throughout 2007-2008 the Board continued to support and promote high quality vocational education and training (VET) in NSW.

Introduction of the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) 2007 and the National Code 2007

The year in review has been one of considerable change following the introduction of the new standards of the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) and the National Code 2007 on 1 July 2007. In July 2007 the Board issued the following standards as guidelines under the *Vocational Education and Training Act 2005*:

- ☐ AQTF 2007 – *Essential Standards for Registration*;
- ☐ AQTF 2007 – *Standards for Registering Bodies*; and
- ☐ new standards for the implementation of the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act (ESOS)* (National Code 2007).

The introduction of the AQTF 2007 meant considerable

change for the VET sector. The framework under which both the Board and Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) operated changed. VETAB assisted RTOs with the implementation of the new standards by conducting a number of workshops highlighting the changes between the new and previous standards.

This new framework meant that the Board faced a number of challenges as it was required to reassess its operations and implement a new outcomes-focused approach to regulation. In response, VETAB has streamlined its management systems and implemented risk management for all applications. The Board has strengthened its relationships with other regulators such as WorkCover and the NSW Police Security Industry Registry.

In addition to the introduction of AQTF 2007, VETAB was faced with challenges posed by the introduction of the National Code 2007, the standards that support the delivery of VET to overseas students.

NSW's export income from international students in all education and training sectors was \$4.72 billion in 2007, representing 39 per cent of Australia's total income from onshore students.

In 2007 there were 121,422 international student enrolments

in the VET sector in Australia and NSW recorded 58,840 or just over 48 per cent of those enrolments.

As with the implementation of the AQTF, VETAB held a number of workshops to help providers understand the National Code 2007.

VETAB deals with complex issues that arise in regulating providers who are approved for the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS). Tri-partite meetings between VETAB, the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and the Department of Immigration and Citizenship aim to ensure Commonwealth and state responsibilities for regulating this sector are carried out efficiently.

VETAB has forged strong cooperative links with other states and territories to improve the quality delivery of VET qualifications by CRICOS providers. In late 2007 the states, territories and the Commonwealth adopted the Shared Responsibility Framework. The Board is determined that all parties to this Framework work together to strengthen the quality of training provided for overseas students in NSW.

In addition to the introduction of the new standards, Quality Assurance Services experienced a

“Continuous improvement is an underpinning principle of AQTF 2007 including the Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies.”

large increase in its workload. In 2007-2008 VETAB saw a 73 per cent increase in the number of applications to renew registration. Similarly, the number of revisions processed increased by 88 per cent. Despite these increases, staff worked tirelessly to process applications within timeframes prescribed in the Customer Service Standards.

During the year in review, the Board was responsible for regulating over 966 training organisations in NSW. VETAB also ensured the compliance of 335 CRICOS providers in the state. Some of the key highlights of the Board's activities for the year under review are outlined below.

Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Certification Guideline

In February, the Board issued a new *Guideline on AQF Certification to be Issued by RTOs* to provide RTOs with clear and up-to-date advice about:

- ☐ new Australian Qualifications Framework protocols defining the form of nationally recognised VET qualifications and Statements of Attainment;
- ☐ relevant AQTF 2007 Conditions of Registration; and
- ☐ VETAB's requirements.

The new guideline takes account of the new AQF protocols outlined in the *AQF Implementation Handbook 2007*,

including decisions made by the National Quality Council, and the current requirements of the Board, such as the use on testamurs of the name of the legal entity registered by VETAB, the RTO's trading name, and its Australian Company Number (ACN) or Australian Business Number (ABN).

The AQF protocols outline the form of words required by the National Quality Council to be used on Statements of Attainment. In addition, the AQF protocols now allow a Statement of Attainment to be issued that recognises a Skill Set identified in a training package as meeting a licence requirement, a regulatory requirement or a defined industry need.

RTOs may also now issue a Statement of Attainment recognising completion of a combination of units of competency from different qualifications, including different qualifications from different training packages.

Continuous Improvement

Continuous improvement is an underpinning principle of the AQTF 2007, including the *Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies*. In keeping with that principle, VETAB examined options to strengthen the customer focus of the activities of Quality Assurance Services.

In late 2006, the National Centre Vocational Education Research was commissioned to conduct an

internal review of the operations of Quality Assurance Services in its implementation of requirements under the AQTF Standards for Registered Training Organisations and the *Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act*.

As a result of the review Quality Assurance Services:

- ☐ fully implemented e-lodgement of registration applications;
- ☐ developed and piloted a risk assessment framework for CRICOS applications with a view to full implementation as soon as practicable;
- ☐ allocated increased resources to its complaints processing function to better manage low level grievances, thereby significantly reducing the number of formal complaints
- ☐ short-circuited the registration application process by piloting a system whereby initial applications are pre-assessed and applicants contacted if their applications are found to be of insufficient quality for audit; and
- ☐ implemented the AQTF 2007 National Guideline for Risk Management in a new risk based re-registration model.

Quality Assurance Services also opened dialogue with a number of other government agencies who operate under similar regulatory frameworks to learn about their customer focused compliance systems and will be examining options to implement further improvements in the future.

State Plan Targets

The NSW State Plan has set targets to assist in meeting current and impending skills shortages in NSW. Targets include:

- ☐ increasing the proportion of the population aged 15-64 participating in VET from 11.7 per cent in 2005 to 16 per cent by 2016
- ☐ increasing the proportion of students completing Year 12 or vocational training from 82.7 per cent in 2005 to 90 per cent by 2026 and
- ☐ increasing to 250,000 the number of people in regional areas participating in VET by 2012 with an aim of 300,000 by 2016.

VETAB plays a vital role in underpinning this key area of the State Plan. The value of VET participation and its acceptance and applicability in the workplace, and how it contributes to the State's economic wellbeing depends on that training being of high quality, and recognised as such by industry.

The strong and effective regulatory framework provided by VETAB is critical to the achievement of State Plan targets by facilitating a vibrant, high quality training industry through the timely processing of registration and accreditation applications for RTOs including those in regional areas.

100th Meeting of the Board

In April 2008 VETAB marked its 100th meeting with a small celebration focusing on its contribution to quality VET delivery in NSW. Since the *Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Act* was proclaimed in July 1991, the Board has

remained committed to its inaugural Mission Statement:

To foster vocational education and training of the highest possible quality and with the widest possible community access, through a firm commitment to excellence, integrity and community partnership in its accreditation.

The late 1990s saw the establishment of the National Training Framework, which comprised the Australian Recognition Framework and nationally endorsed training packages. This Framework set national standards for providers of VET, and in NSW those that met the standards were eligible to be registered by VETAB. Moreover, training packages became the basic architecture of VET, specifying the competencies to be achieved, industry requirements for assessing competence and the qualifications to be awarded.

2001 saw the introduction of the AQTF which reflected the increased emphasis on quality in the national VET system. The AQTF introduced a clearer set of standards for RTOs and a new set of standards for the registering/course accrediting bodies such as VETAB. In 2003-04, VETAB contributed to the national review of the AQTF standards and encouraged changes to provide greater clarity in interpretation of the standards and greater focus on the quality of training outcomes.

In the years since 2003, VETAB has participated in the national strategic audit of the transport and hospitality industries and conducted strategic audits of the NSW security industry, the meat processing industry and the taxi driver training industries. The Board's operations are supported by a Quality Management System, published customer

service standards and case management for new RTOs – all in the interests of continuing to improve the services it provides to its customers.

As the training system has evolved, VETAB has demonstrated it can also evolve to meet emerging challenges. We will continue to be faced by challenges but whether they are generated by international, national or state trends, VETAB is well equipped to continue to provide strong leadership to training providers and other registering bodies in its focus on ensuring the quality of the NSW training system.

It has been a pleasure to work with the former Minister for Education and Training, the Hon John Della Bosca MLC, and the former Acting Minister, the Hon John Hatzistergos MLC, over this past year. Their interest and knowledge about the importance of strong regulatory frameworks has provided a strong platform for VETAB and we welcome their support and continued interest.

During 2007-08 Professor Gordon Stanley resigned from the Board to take up a position at Oxford University. Five other Board members had their terms extended until 31 December 2008.

I am grateful to my fellow Board members for their contributions to the quality assurance of VET during the year. On behalf of the Board I would like to thank the Department's Quality Assurance Services team for their continued hard work.



Bert Evans AO
Chairman

The Role of VETAB

Mission Statement

NSW VETAB is a statutory body established by the *NSW Vocational Education and Training Act 2005* (the VET Act).

VETAB's mission is to foster VET of the highest possible quality and with the widest possible community access, through a firm commitment to excellence, integrity and partnership. VETAB is committed to providing quality services to all our customers.

The day-to-day operations of VETAB are undertaken by staff of Quality Assurance Services, NSW Department of Education and Training. The Director of VETAB is also the Director, Quality Assurance Services Directorate of the State Training Services Portfolio of the Department.

Objectives and functions

VETAB carries out its functions under the provisions of the VET Act.

VETAB's objectives under section 6 of the VET Act are as follows:

- a) to register training organisations
- b) to accredit vocational courses
- c) to approve persons to provide courses for overseas students
- d) to issue guidelines in relation to the registration of training organisations, the accreditation of vocational courses and the approval of persons to provide courses for overseas students
- e) to advise the Minister on matters concerning the registration of training organisations, the accreditation of vocational courses and the approval of persons to provide courses for overseas students
- f) to liaise with authorities and other bodies (both in NSW and elsewhere) in connection with the registration of training organisations, the accreditation of vocational courses and the approval of persons to provide courses for overseas students
- g) to investigate, and report on, matters concerning the registration of training organisations, the accreditation of vocational courses and the approval of persons to provide courses for overseas students.

In addition to its legislated responsibilities, VETAB plays a leading role in the development of national VET policy. VETAB's commitment to enhancing the quality of the national and state training systems is reflected in the Board's introduction of national quality assurance initiatives and, at a state level, best practice business processes and customer service standards.

“VETAB's mission is to foster VET of the highest possible quality and with the widest possible community access, through a firm commitment to excellence, integrity and partnership.”

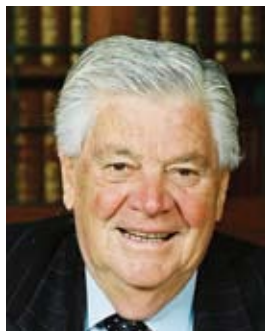
About the Board

NSW VETAB consists of eleven members appointed under the VET Act to represent a range of key stakeholders in VET.

The Board meets at least six times each year to discuss national and NSW VET policy, to develop advice and recommendations for the Minister and to decide on registration, accreditation and approval applications.

The Board comprises the Director and ten part-time members appointed by the Minister for Education and Training:

- ☐ a nominee of the NSW TAFE Commission Board
- ☐ a nominee of the Minister for Education and Training
- ☐ three members with qualifications or experience in the provision or accreditation of vocational education and training in general
- ☐ two members with qualifications or experience in industry, commerce or industrial relations
- ☐ two members to represent vocational education and training for students with special needs
- ☐ one member to represent education or training for overseas students.



Bert Evans



Catherine Chaffey



Pam Christie



David Collins



Pam Gill



Paolo Totaro



Kevin Power



Gordon Stanley



Helen Zimmerman



Margaret Willis



Doug Wright

Membership

The Board met seven times during 2007 – 2008. Members of the Board during 2007 – 2008 were:

Bert Evans AO

**DSEc (Hon)
Chairman, VETAB**

Representing industry, commerce or industrial relations

Term expires: 14 January 2009

Bert Evans was appointed Chairman of the Board in January 1997, following his retirement as Chief Executive of the Metal Trades Industry Association. Mr Evans is also Chairman of the NSW Board of Vocational Education and Training (BVET) and Chairman of the NSW Public Purpose Fund.

Mr Evans is a dedicated advocate of the social and economic benefits of quality training for all.

Catherine Chaffey, BA (Psych)

Representing the provision or accreditation of vocational education and training

Term expires: 31 May 2009

Catherine Chaffey was appointed to the Board in June 2004. Ms Chaffey's career has involved 12 years of senior marketing roles in a range of organisations including a medium-sized privately-owned RTO and employment services company.

As Chief Executive Officer of the National Finance Industry Training Advisory Body (ITAB) she led industry research and the development of training standards, liaising with both industry and the national regulatory body (Australian

Securities and Investments Commission). This work continued with her leadership of the Financial Services Education Agency Australia Ltd. Ms Chaffey has participated in a wide variety of national vocational and technical education training forums and specific projects and has provided advice to the Innovation and Business Skills Council on Financial Services education. She has also undertaken a number of private consulting projects in strategic development.

Currently Catherine is the General Manager, Workforce Solutions for ASX listed education provider Navitas Ltd.

Pam Christie

BA, DipEd, GradDipEdStud
Nominee of the NSW TAFE Commission Board

Term Expires: 31 May 2009

Pam Christie was appointed to the Board in June 2004. Ms Christie is currently the Director of TAFE NSW – Sydney Institute, one of the largest and most respected vocational training providers in Australia. She makes a strong contribution to vocational education and training in Australia through a wide range of national and state Boards and committees.

Prior to her experience in VET, her background was in teaching and adult migrant education, with overseas teaching experience in Malaysia, Nigeria and Zambia.

Ms Christie has a keen interest in strategic relationship building with industry, and has a strong commitment to strengthening the flexibility and responsiveness of public education and training.

David Collins

BA (Comm)

Nominee of the Minister for Education and Training

Term Expires: 31 May 2009

David Collins was appointed to the Board in June 2007. Mr Collins is General Manager of State Training Services for the Department with responsibility for NSW VETAB, BVET, regulation of apprenticeships and traineeships and implementation of Industry Programs.

Pam Gill, PSM DipTeach, GradDipEdStud, MEd, MACE

Representing the provision of vocational education and training for students with special needs

Term expires: 31 December 2008

Pam Gill was appointed to the Board in June 2002. Ms Gill's experience includes NSW representation on the national Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs working groups, the Conference of Education Systems Chief Executive Officers Indigenous working group, and the Australian National Training Authority's Australian Indigenous Training Advisory Council (AITAC).

Ms Gill provides consultancy services on Aboriginal and management projects and has expertise in the provision of vocational education and training for students with special needs.

Kevin Power AM **DipAcc, FAIM**

Representing industry, commerce or industrial relations

Term expires: 31 December 2008

Kevin Power was appointed to the Board in June 1991. He is a Director of the Australian Training Company and was formerly the Executive Director of the ACTU-Lend Lease Foundation, and former Deputy Secretary of the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training.

Mr Power also serves as a member of the NSW BVET and is a Director of the Indonesian Skills Foundation. In addition to being a member of the Hong Kong Council for the Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications, Mr Power is also a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Management.

Mr Power is Special Adviser to the National Aboriginal Sports Corporation, Australia, and is committed to enhancing education and work options for young Indigenous people. Mr Power chairs BVET's State Advisory Committee on Work Placements and the Skills Centres Steering Committee.

Gordon Stanley **BA, PhD, FAPS, FACE**

Professor Stanley represented the provision or accreditation of vocational education and training. Professor Stanley resigned from his position on the Board on 1 April 2008 to take up a position at Oxford University.

Gordon Stanley was appointed to the Board in June 1997. During his time as a member, Professor Stanley was also President of the NSW Board of Studies and Adjunct Professor of Education

at the University of Sydney. His career has involved teaching and research in cognition and learning, management and policy advising in education and higher education.

Professor Stanley has held a number of senior university academic positions, including Chair of the Western Australia Higher Education Council and Chief Executive Officer of the Western Australia Education Policy Coordination Bureau, responsible for the education and training portfolio's coordination and policy. He was also Chair of the National Board of Employment Education and Training and Chair of the Higher Education Council. Professor Stanley was also a consultant to the World Bank education reform project in Vietnam.

Paolo Totaro AM **DottGiurisp (Naples), DipMusic (Naples)**

Representing the provision of vocational education and training for students with special needs

Term expires: 31 December 2008

Paolo Totaro has been a member of the Board since July 1996. During the year he also continued to serve as a member of the NSW BVET. Dr Totaro was foundation Chairman of the Ethnic Affairs Commission from 1977 to 1989, and is a former Pro-Chancellor of the University of Technology, Sydney, and former Commissioner of the Australian Law Reform Commission.

Dr Totaro has a passionate interest in making VET a vehicle for giving better prospects in life to youth-at-risk among Indigenous and immigrant minorities.

Margaret Willis **BA, DipEd, DipMigT, DipContEd, MEd, MBA**

Director, VETAB

Appointed 16 February 2004

Margaret Willis was appointed Director of the Board in February 2004. As Director Ms Willis has responsibility in NSW for the registration of training organisations and accreditation of courses against the national AQTF standards and for approval of providers delivering to overseas students.

Ms Willis has had a lifetime of experience in the field of education and has held senior positions at the Adult Migrant English Service and TAFE NSW.

Before joining VETAB, Ms Willis worked in a number of areas of the State Training Services Directorate of the Department managing programs to support the developing training market and to improve the quality of training delivery.

Doug Wright AM **BEd, BA**

Representing the provision or accreditation of vocational education and training

Term expires: 31 December 2008

Doug Wright has been a member of the Board since June 1996. Mr Wright is an advisor, advocate and mentor for the Australian Industry Group and a Director of the TAFE Commission Board of NSW, WorkCover Authority of NSW, Hunter Valley Training Co and Commonwealth Study Conferences Incorporated.

Mr Wright has previously held positions as Chair of the Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services ITAB, Chair of the National Selection Committee of the Duke of Edinburgh's

8th Commonwealth Study Conference and as a member of the (now replaced) Australian National Training Authority Board Advisory Committee on New Apprenticeships.

Mr Wright is an alternate Director of World Skills and a member of the Appeals Committee of the Building and Construction Industry Long Service Corporation.

Helen Zimmerman
BA (Hons), DipEd,
GradDipAdultEd, FAICD

Representing the provision, accreditation or evaluation of education or training for overseas students

Term expires: 31 December 2008

Helen Zimmerman was appointed to the Board in June 2002. She is currently Group Managing Director of ACL Pty Ltd and Executive General Manager of the English and Workforce Divisions of IBT Education Ltd.

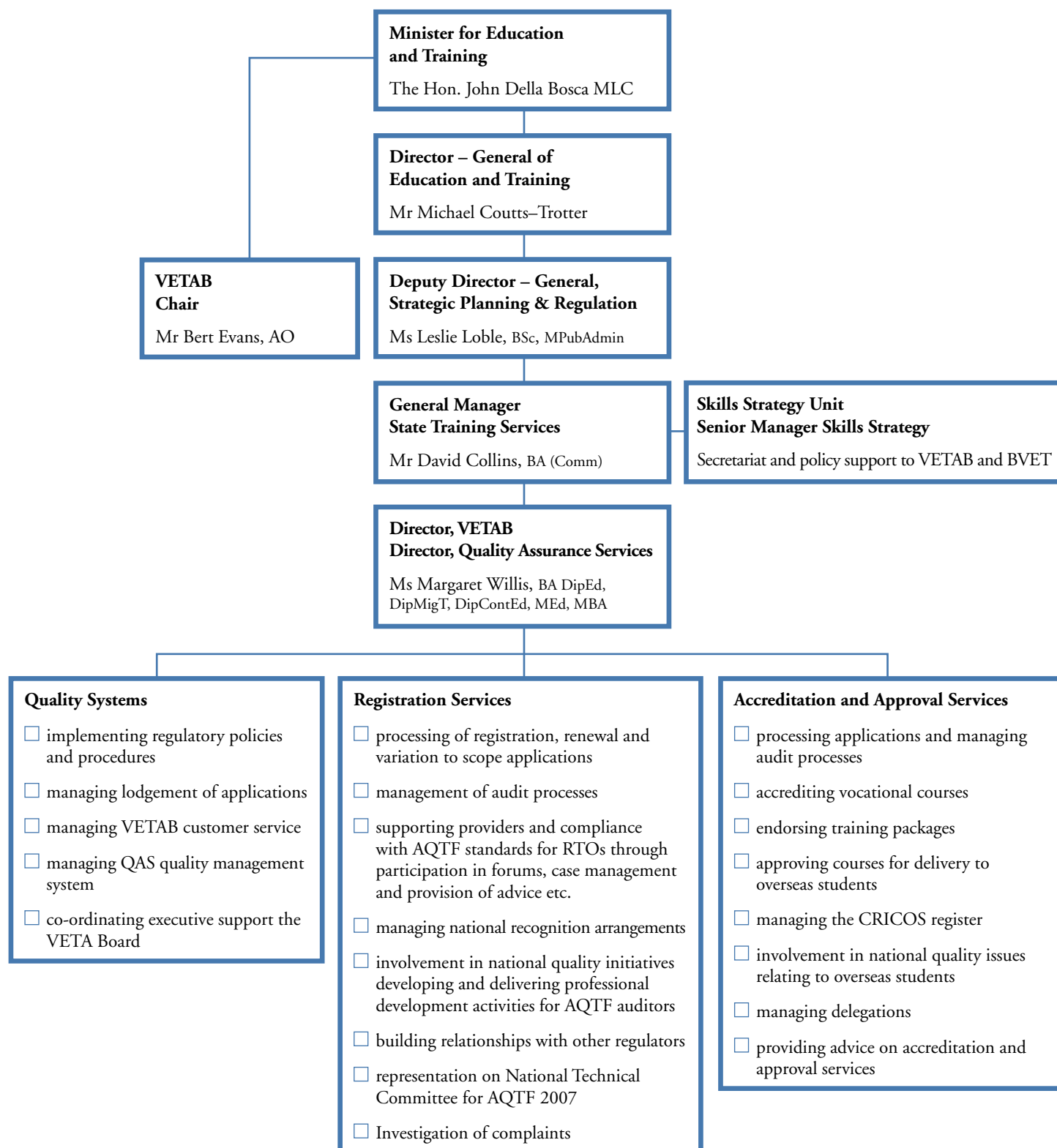
Ms Zimmerman has a strong and passionate interest in English Language Training (ELT) and has written and presented, nationally and internationally, on ELT management and on the future of the Australian ELT industry. She has been involved in the delivery of international education since 1994.

Ms Zimmerman also has held positions as an independent member of the NSW Accreditation Advisory Committee and the National ELICOS Accreditation Scheme (NEAS). She has been a member of English Australia, the national association for accredited public and private English language colleges in Australia. Ms Zimmerman is a former winner of the Telstra NSW Businesswoman of the Year (private sector) award.

Members' attendance at Board meetings
1 July 2007 – 30 June 2008

Member	Meetings eligible to attend	Meetings attended
Bert Evans AO (Chairman)	9	9
Catherine Chaffey	9	7
Pam Christie	9	8
Pam Gill	9	8
Kevin Power AM	9	9
Gordon Stanley	7	4
Paolo Totaro AM	9	9
Margaret Willis	9	9
Doug Wright	9	4
Helen Zimmerman	9	7
David Collins	9	9

Organisation Chart



Year in Review

AQTF 2007

Under the AQTF 2007, any training organisation that wishes to issue nationally recognised qualifications in NSW must be registered with VETAB or another state or territory registering body.

In February 2006, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to review and amend the AQTF Standards for RTOs. In order to improve the quality of training and assessment in the VET sector, the review identified a need to place a stronger focus on outcomes rather than on inputs and process. Consequently, 1 July 2007 saw the introduction of the AQTF 2007.

The AQTF 2007 comprises the Essential Standards for Registration and the Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies. The AQTF 2007 saw a move away from the prescriptive Standards of the AQTF to the more outcomes focussed standards and conditions of the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration*. Consequently, more emphasis was placed on the quality of services and outcomes being achieved, rather than the inputs and processes used to achieve these outcomes. To this end, the *AQTF 2007 Audit Handbook* was developed to help registering bodies and auditors plan, conduct and report on the outcomes-focussed audits of RTOs.

Two other new features of the AQTF 2007 still to be introduced include the Excellence Criteria and Quality Indicators. By building on aspects such as high quality learning and assessment and the engagement of industry and communities, the Excellence Criteria focus on fostering and

acknowledging high performance in training providers. Quality Indicators, on the other hand, will measure employer satisfaction, learner satisfaction and competency completion rates. These features are due to be implemented in early 2009.

One principle underpinning the new standards is that of reducing the regulatory burden. As such, the *AQTF 2007 National Guideline for Risk Management* was developed to help registering bodies apply risk management principles in undertaking its operations. The new standards and the focus on risk management gave VETAB an opportunity to streamline many of its processes. Application of VETAB's risk management criteria mean that all applications submitted are risk assessed and processed.

Another principle underpinning the new standards is national consistency. The National Registration and Accreditation Technical Committee (NRATC) was formed to ensure the consistent implementation of the new standards across Australia. NSW VETAB, along with the registering bodies from the other states and territories, underlined its commitment to supporting the new standards by its active involvement in the technical committee. VETAB is represented at NRATC's regular meetings by the Manager, Registration Services.

AQTF 2007

Project Manager

NSW BVET funded a one year position for a Project Manager, AQTF 2007 Implementation. The funding was to enable the Project Manager to facilitate the changes resulting from two new

regulatory frameworks that came into effect on 1 July 2007. Thus the position played a pivotal role in the implementation of the new AQTF 2007 standards for the regulation of providers of VET and the *National Code for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students (National Code) 2007*, governing approval to deliver services to overseas students.

Implementation of the AQTF 2007 identified priorities to support and extend work already being undertaken by QAS in implementing the new frameworks. Professional development for QAS staff was a major component of the project as well as the identification of new opportunities for continuous improvement to maximise the change process.

Professional development of VETAB auditors

The new national arrangements for registration and approval posed significant extra professional development needs for NSW VETAB auditors who are at the forefront in implementing the new regulatory standards. The change in AQTF 2007 from a reference based and compliance approach to a focus on outcomes and continuous improvement required a strong commitment to the professional development of VETAB auditors.

For the first time since the establishment of the national training framework the AQTF 2007 prescribed national auditor qualifications, specified in the *AQTF 2007 Audit Handbook* as competencies. The new standards required auditors to

hold or be able to demonstrate competencies equivalent to six units of competency from the Training and Assessment Training Package (TAA04) by 1 July 2008. In response to this requirement a program was implemented for VETAB auditors to have their considerable competence formally recognised to meet the qualification requirements. The requirements are stated in two parts, the first for auditors to have their skills in training and assessment formally recognised and the second to have their skills in quality auditing recognised.

TAFE NSW, Sydney Institute was contracted to deliver a recognition program for auditors to demonstrate competence in six units from the Training and Assessment Training Package (TAA04), as specified in the *AQTF Audit Handbook*. Sixteen auditors participated in the program the majority of whom were near to completing, or had completed, the recognition process. The next part of the

recognition program is for auditors to gain recognition for their skills and experience in quality auditing through certification as Quality Auditors with the International Register of Certified Auditors.

Throughout the period auditors continued to attend industry workshops on training packages and other issues across a wide range of Industry Skill Council areas. VETAB auditors also responded to requests from DEEWR to assist in the NSW workshops for education providers on the new regulatory arrangements.

Auditor moderation has been an important avenue for professional development with VETAB auditors participating in one of the key strategies in implementing the AQTF 2007. In order to facilitate consistent implementation of the AQTF 2007 VETAB auditors attended two of the national moderation meetings, the first of which was held in Adelaide in April 2007

and the second in Darwin in May 2008.

In addition, a series of targeted AQTF 2007 monthly meetings was established to address issues surrounding the implementation of the new standards, for instance, the reporting of audit recommendations and outcomes. Further, the AQTF 2007 meetings provided a forum for auditors to exchange information on implementing the new system. Through these meetings and broader moderation activities, such as facilitated state and national moderation days, an audit report writing guide was drafted to support auditors to use the new audit tools and standards. The purpose of the guide was to maintain consistency amongst auditors and ensure the quality of AQTF 2007 audit reports produced by VETAB auditors.

Another professional development opportunity that VETAB auditors will soon be a part of is an auditor exchange program. In order to support consistent audit



“This workshop has explained the process of RTO Registration and dispelled some of the unknown fear factor”

*Michael Meyer (Sydney Training Institute)
Workshop – Applying to be an RTO*

“Professionally conducted to ensure good understanding”

Frank Yap (PCYC).

Workshop – How to conduct an internal audit

practice and decision making across jurisdictions this activity will provide the opportunity for auditors to attend audits in other jurisdictions. Visiting auditors will prepare written observations for benchmarking purposes.

Professional Development for RTOs

In 2007– 2008 a range of professional development workshops were conducted for RTOs. In order to aid RTOs with the implementation of the new national arrangements, VETAB commissioned the delivery of a number of workshops. These workshops were developed and conducted by VETAB auditors and explained, in detail, the AQTF 2007 and how the new standards would affect RTOs. In 2007 – 2008 VETAB conducted 13 workshops titled *The AQTF Explained*, with 378 participants. Feedback from the workshop was excellent with 92 per cent of participants informed VETAB that the information they gained was valuable. Amongst other feedback, participants informed VETAB that “Information was delivered well throughout the session” that “the workshop format, while tiring, was far better than just a presentation” and “It was very refreshing to be actively part of the session instead of having to sit through 4 or 5 speakers and just listen – well done!”

In addition to seminars explaining the AQTF 2007, VETAB continued to deliver a number of regulatory and compliance workshops. These workshops cover aspects such as, the decision to become an RTO, lodging an application and the application and audit process.

In total, 15 such workshops were conducted, throughout this period, with a total of 272 participants. Feedback has indicated that participants find these types of workshops a excellent way of familiarising them with a complex process.

VETAB also conducts workshops to assist RTOs maintain their registration and meet their obligations under the AQTF 2007. Eight workshops, with 144 participants, were held dealing with issues such as, conducting an internal audit and risk management. Once again, feedback from all of the workshops indicates that RTOs find them to be informative and an excellent forum in which to engage with other training.

As part of VETAB’s professional development program, VETAB auditors also conducted 3 workshops in relation to providing courses to overseas students. With a total of 39 participants, these workshops enabled potential providers to better understand the application process and the regulatory requirements for delivering courses to overseas students.

New audit processes to improve risk management and client service

The implementation of the AQTF 2007 introduced a more active approach to risk management. As a result of national discussions and in line with the AQTF 2007 *National Guideline for Risk Management*, VETAB investigated ways to risk assess and manage all applications submitted. This resulted in a risk rating screen in VETAB’s application management system (VIP), allowing for a more efficient risk rating system.

For instance, qualifications and industry areas can now be attributed with a risk rating, thereby allowing for a more strategic approach to auditing.

The implementation of the AQTF 2007 has also led to the development of additional processes and tools to streamline the application process for AQTF 2007 and National Code 2007 applications. Strategies have been implemented to provide early feedback to organisations lodging incomplete applications with VETAB, resulting in a more streamlined approach to processing applications. Applications must be complete before an audit can be scheduled.

In relation to initial applications for registration under the AQTF 2007, a pre-assessment process was successfully piloted for both AQTF 2007 only and AQTF 2007/National Code 2007 integrated applications. Following the pre-assessment, VETAB informs the applicant if their application is not yet of sufficient quality to be audited. The applicant is given clear advice on what evidence is missing from the application. The applicant is also advised of the timeline and steps to be taken in order for the application to be re-submitted or withdrawn.

Early findings in trialling this new strategy affirmed its effectiveness as a more active risk management approach to the audit process. Findings have also indicated that the strategy allows timely and effective advice to applicants thereby improving the quality of applications, enhancing efficiency and reducing audit processing time.

In relation to the implementation of the National Code 2007,

“Very Informative and a good networking opportunity”

*Shana Rodgers (Access Training)
Workshop – Applying to be an RTO*

VETAB has also been busy developing a new audit model involving a staged audit process. The process involves a desk audit of the application against the AQTF 2007 Standards, with a site audit against the National Code only taking place when the applicant has demonstrated compliance with the Standards.

VETAB Online Services

A very high proportion of VETAB's dealings with its customers involve their application for registration or amendment to scope. In the past a partial electronic lodgement system was available but only about 40 per cent of applicants used the system. The introduction of AQTF 2007 and the new national registration application forms provided the opportunity to re-engineer the application lodgement facility and process. A great deal of effort and resources were devoted to the development of a new VETAB Online Services facility which was tested by a number of volunteer training organisations prior to its launch in October 2007.

The Online Services provide a full electronic lodgement facility to existing RTOs and new applicants to VETAB. It simplifies the lodgement process and reduces application time for customers as well as processing time for VETAB which results in more efficient application processing in the initial stages.

VETAB's Online Services facility offers a range of features to assist RTOs in maintaining their registration. For example, RTOs can use the facility to:

- ☐ view their current scope of registration

- ☐ update their contact details and changes to delivery sites onto the VETAB system
- ☐ view all email alerts from VETAB from the previous six months to keep track of important information
- ☐ use the fees calculator to work out cost of planned changes to RTO scope of operations
- ☐ view a listing of their directors and associates.

VETAB received very positive feedback from customers regarding the Online Services facility. Its user friendly features and time-saving devices have been highly praised.

VETAB Communications

As a result of the AQTF 2007 all information on the VETAB internet site was reviewed and updated. This review was the precursor to the re-development of the VETAB website, see www.vetab.nsw.gov.au.

Over a period of months VETAB staff, responding to client feedback, established the foundations of the new site. VETAB's new website was finally launched in July 2008. Feedback indicates that clients find the site easier to navigate and therefore more user-friendly.

Relationship with regulators

VETAB has continued to develop and expand its working relationships with a number of industry regulatory authorities in response to the Council of Australian Governments (COAGs) and in accordance with the AQTF 2007 National Guideline for Industry Regulator Engagement. These relationships

are helping to support attempts to have national licensing systems matched to the national VET system.

VETAB worked closely with NSW WorkCover as it gradually moves its training requirements into the VET sector. Margaret Willis, Director QAS took part in four workshops in November 2007 to provide support and assistance to WorkCover accredited assessors to ensure their smooth transition to the VET sector. The Director presented at each workshop giving information or issues such as the process for forming partnership arrangements with RTOs.

Negotiations have been taking place in 2008 to establish Memoranda of Understanding with NSW WorkCover and the NSW Office of Fair Trading. A similar memoranda with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) was signed in July 2008. Regular meetings have been held to provide a forum for discussion and clarification of current issues relating to the coordination of training in the VET system and NSW and Commonwealth licensing requirements.

VETAB and the NSW Police Security Industry Registry (SIR) continued to work closely together under the *Guideline for the Management of RTOs delivering security training in NSW for licensing purposes*. VETAB and SIR staff were in regular communication and provided each other with updates regarding issues arising in security training. Regular meetings were also held to discuss emerging issues and develop strategies to deal with them. Collaborative

workshops or information sessions that incorporate both training and licensing matters are held for RTOs as required. SIR staff participated in a number of VETAB audits of NSW RTOs delivering training in the security industry as technical advisers. This collaboration is ensuring a more effective and efficient administration of training in the security industry in NSW.

VETAB also made contact with a number of other regulatory authorities including the Department of Environment and Conservation NSW, the NSW Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing, the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority and the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government. Meetings were held to discuss and develop strategies to deal with common issues.

VETAB continued to collaborate and strengthen its relationship with DEEWR, and DIAC. This tri-partite co-operation resulted in regular scheduled meetings which dealt with, amongst other issues, the implementation of the Shared Responsibility Framework (SRF) and the revised National Code 2007.

The National Registration and Accreditation Technical Committee (NRATC)

The national implementation of the AQTF 2007 is overseen by a national committee (NRATC), the members of which have a direct responsibility for registration. VETAB is represented on the committee by the Manager, Registration Services. NRATC has had regular scheduled meetings since July 2007 and also held a number of teleconferences.

NRATC supports the operation of a nationally consistent regulatory system, administered through state and territory registering and course accrediting bodies. It ensures that at an operational level, the quality issues identified by the NQC Quality Standing Committee are interpreted and applied consistently. NRATC also analyses client and stakeholder feedback, including that from industry regulators and VETAB plays an important role and ensures that this feedback is fed directly into its practices as a registering body.

NRATC's work focuses on achieving nationally consistent

implementation of the AQTF 2007 standards and guidelines. VETAB works with NRATC to enable the Quality Standing Committee to monitor the implementation of AQTF 2007 by:

- ☐ benchmarking operations nationally to identify good practice and any significant inconsistencies, and by driving improvements; and
- ☐ building the capacity of auditors and course accreditation officers and supporting the continuous improvement of the operation of registering and course accrediting bodies through highlighting issues of inconsistency or risk to quality and recommending actions to the Quality Standing Committee.

Areas of focus in NRATC's benchmarking and continuous improvement plan for 2007 – 2008 included: risk assessment, managing non-compliance, audit reporting, analysis of audit feedback forms from RTOs, complaints management, client service standards, and addressing issues arising from audit and course accreditation moderation meetings. A second day scheduled after each technical

“Professionally presented, the facilitator was approachable and knowledgeable. Informative and interesting”

*Michael Radcliffe (Greenwich College)
Workshop – How to conduct an internal audit*

“A great introduction to a most complicated process”

*Robert Evans (East Sail)
Workshop – Applying to be an RTO*

“Excellent, very thorough”

*Shana Rodgers (Access Training)
Workshop – Applying to be an RTO*

committee meeting, is dedicated to benchmarking /continuous improvement activities.

VETAB auditors have played an active role in the implementation of the AQTF. In order to facilitate consistent implementation of AQFT, 2007 VETAB auditors have attended both of the national moderation meetings that have so far been held. The first in April 2007 was held in Adelaide and the second in May 2008 took place in Darwin. This is a critical activity to support the new outcomes-based approach to audit and implementation of revised standards for registration and course accreditation. Consistent decision making across jurisdictions is enhanced through the discussion of case studies in relation to the application of standards and guidelines. All jurisdictions contributed to the development and presentation of the moderation program. NSW facilitated a session related to continuous improvement and auditing of Essential Standards for Registration 1.1, 2.1 and 3.1. Other sessions included some best practice case studies of RTOs in the Northern Territory and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) practices.

As a member of NRATC, the Manager, Registration Services, is part of the team tasked with preparing a consolidated annual report for the NQC on outcomes

achieved against agreed quality indicators. The indicators will support registering and course accrediting bodies in achieving continuous improvement against the AQTF 2007 Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies and Standards for State and Territory Course Accrediting Bodies.

Finally, VETAB is part of a benchmarking exercise that has been undertaken by NRATC to evaluate the implementation of the National Guidelines for Risk Management. The exercise and results provided indicate that jurisdictions are approaching risk assessment and RTO risk profiling in a consistent manner, highlighting the value of the moderation exercises.

Evaluation of the AQTF 2007

In line with the emphasis placed on continuous improvement, VETAB recently took part in a formative evaluation of the AQTF 2007. In early 2008 DEEWR engaged KPMG on behalf of the National Quality Council's Quality Standing Committee to undertake a formative evaluation of the implementation of the AQTF 2007 Essential Standards for RTOs.

KPMG Consultations for the DEEWR Formative Evaluation of the AQTF 2007 were conducted in Sydney on 6, 7 and

“Well paced and informative”

*Vanessa Armstrong
(TAFE NSW South Western Sydney Institute)
Workshop – How to conduct an internal audit*

8 May 2008. Focus groups and individual interviews were held with David Collins as the NQC Quality Standing Committee representative, the Director of QAS and managers and auditors from QAS.

Focus groups were also held at KPMG offices with representatives from private RTOs that had been audited under both the AQTF 2005 and the AQTF 2007, RTO associations, and ITAB and licensing authority representatives. Twelve NSW RTOs and five stakeholders took part in the focus groups and interviews.

The key areas of enquiry included:

- ☐ the implementation arrangements
- ☐ capacity building
- ☐ industry regulator engagement
- ☐ risk management and audit arrangements
- ☐ consistency of implementation, and outcome focus
- ☐ collaborative arrangements.

Comments were varied but on the whole, the AQTF 2007 was seen as an improvement on the AQTF 2005 although it was felt it would take a few years for the full effect of the AQTF 2007 to be realised. The final report on the national evaluation will be available in the next reporting period.

The National Code 2007

One of the biggest challenges facing VETAB is the regulation of the delivery of VET to overseas students. The VET sector for overseas students is the fastest growing sector nationally, increasing by 46 per cent from 2006 to 2007. NSW is the state of choice for overseas students studying in Australia. NSW has over 48 per cent of all enrolments in Australia in this sector making it the state with the highest number of international students undertaking some form of vocational training.

The period under review saw the introduction on 1 July 2007 of the revised National Code of Practice for Registering Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2007 (the National Code).

The new National Code standards are more prescriptive when detailing the policies and procedures which providers must have in place to ensure that students can successfully complete a course in the specified duration than those it replaced. Standards 9 to 11 of the National Code relate to documenting of a student's progress through a course. The standards explicitly state that registered providers must have procedures in place that allows them to identify students at risk of not completing a course within the duration specified in the student's Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE). This section of the Annual Report highlights the ways VETAB has implemented the new legislation and audit practices.

Compliance auditing

Organisations that provide courses or education services for overseas students must comply with the provisions of the ESOS legislation and be approved by the approving authority of that state or territory. In NSW the authority for approving delivery of VET courses to overseas students, school and ELICOS courses is VETAB.

In addition to participating in an audit process to assure quality delivery of training and assessment under the AQTF 2007, RTOs delivering to overseas students must also demonstrate compliance with the National Code.

The National Code provides standards established under the Commonwealth *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* (the ESOS Act), comprising nationally consistent standards for the conduct of registered providers and the registration of their courses. The ESOS framework includes the ESOS Act, the ESOS Regulations, the *Education Services for Overseas Students (Registration Charges) Act 1997* and the National Code. The National Code identifies the roles and responsibilities of the Australian and state and territory governments in discharging their regulatory functions. The Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and VETAB have developed a cooperative relationship to implement the National Code standards in NSW.

The audit process involves both desk and site audits. Audits for providers delivering to overseas students in NSW are conducted when a complete application is received by VETAB and include

an initial application, a renewal application for registration and/or approval, adding a delivery site, adding qualifications to be delivered, increasing the number of students the RTO wishes to enrol.

VETAB employs a small group of auditors and also engages auditors under contract as required. In June 2008 additional staff were engaged to assist in the provision of more timely processing of applications.

CRICOS Risk Management

In the year under review, QAS staff worked to streamline the processing of the large volume of applications it received. During the 2007 – 2008 year, VETAB received 221 applications from both NSW and interstate providers for approval to deliver training to overseas students in NSW. Also included in this number were 95 applications from organisations wishing to increase their student capacity and establish or relocate to a new delivery site. In addition, VETAB receives applications from schools which wish to teach overseas students and 13 applications for either initial approval or re-approval were received from schools in this reporting period.

Together with one of the NSW Department of Education and Training's Senior Business Risk Analysts from the Audit and Risk Management Directorate, VETAB developed a risk matrix to assist in the assessment and audit of applications. This risk matrix is currently undergoing trial. Factors which can contribute to a higher risk rating include courses leading

to occupational licences, or requiring specialist facilities, RTOs with partnership agreements, or delivering courses listed on the Australian government's Migration Occupations in Demand List (MODL), as well as those providers with open complaints. The trial should be finalised and evaluated in the second half of 2008. It is intended that according to sound regulatory practice, more VETAB resources would be devoted to managing providers with a higher risk rating. A project to upgrade the computer systems used to manage VETAB's processes is underway, and will lead to further efficiencies in management, including CRICOS risk management.

VETAB has also conducted a trial process of preliminary checking of applications. Once the preliminary check is complete VETAB will inform the applicant if their application is not yet of sufficient quality to be audited. The applicant is given clear advice on what evidence is missing from the application and steps to be taken in order for the application to be either completed or withdrawn. This process has been successful in both assisting providers complete their applications and auditors to streamline the audit process.

During the period under review, VETAB began a trial for initial applications for CRICOS approval which first involves a desk audit being conducted for the application against the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration*. A site audit for compliance with the National Code standards is then scheduled when the applicant has demonstrated compliance with the AQTF standards.

The Accreditation and Approval Services unit will continue to build on these streamlined approaches for applications, with the intention to provide better customer service for providers,

and to ensure a high standard of training outcomes for overseas students in NSW is achieved.

The Shared Responsibility Framework

Both NSW State and Commonwealth legislation and regulations apply to the provision of training to overseas students. The Australian, state and territory governments and providers share responsibility for maintaining and enhancing Australia's international reputation as a provider of high quality education and training for overseas students. In collaboration with state and territory governments through the ESOS Implementation Group (ESOS IG) and the Australian Education Systems Officials' Committee (AESOC) National Code Action Group, the Shared Responsibility Framework (SRF) was developed and implemented on 24 August 2007. The SRF sets out the respective roles of the Commonwealth and state and territory governments in administering the ESOS legislative arrangements and indicates the commitment of state and territory and Commonwealth regulators to work together to ensure the quality and consistency of training. The Joint Committee on International Education (JCIE) continues to oversee the strategic direction of the SRF while the ESOS IG, comprising representatives from all parties, continues to manage the ongoing operation and implementation of the framework. The latest meeting of the ESOS IG was held in Perth on 26-27 June 2008. It was characterised by the sharing of a wealth of experience and robust discussions.

A number of national conferences were held to improve understanding of the National Code, and to ensure its provisions are clear to providers. The most recent conference, to which VETAB sent two participants,

was held in Melbourne on 27 – 28 May 2008.

These conferences develop and maintain strong cooperative links between VETAB, other states and territories, and the Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) and DEEWR. These relationships have been further enhanced in the 2007 – 2008 year.

VETAB also participated in workshops in July 2007 in NSW which were held to introduce providers to the new National Code and in June 2008 in follow-up workshops. The purpose of these workshops was to explain the respective roles of providers, the Australian government and VETAB, as the designated state authority in NSW, in compliance and the administration of the ESOS legislative arrangements.

VETAB also participated in tripartite meetings with DIAC and DEEWR, to discuss cooperative regulation of providers with approval to deliver training to overseas students in NSW. A useful development from these meetings has been involvement in joint audit activity with these Commonwealth departments when necessary.

Self Assessment Tool

To assist providers better understand and comply with the National Code, VETAB has developed a CRICOS National Code Self Assessment Tool, which is available from the VETAB website. By completing the Self Assessment Tool providers are better able to understand their responsibilities to demonstrate compliance with the legislation and standards, prepare for audit activity and provide quality education and training to overseas students. Providers have welcomed the Self Assessment Tool and initial feedback has been positive.

Strategic Audit of the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment

Since its introduction, stakeholders in the VET sector have raised a number of concerns about the delivery of the TAA40104 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. As part of VETAB's commitment to this benchmark qualification, and the continuous improvement of the quality of vocational training in NSW, a decision was made to undertake a strategic audit of RTOs delivering the TAA40104. Audits were carried out between July and October 2007 and currently all but one audit process has been completed.

The aim of the strategic audit was to obtain a broad picture of the issues RTOs were grappling with in the training and assessment area and what strategies they had developed to manage the implementation of the TAA40104 qualification.

The strategic audit involved a number of phases including the completion and analysis of an online RTO Survey; determination of an audit sample; conduct of site audits; and preparation of the Strategic Audit Report. All RTOs delivering the TAA40104 in NSW were required to complete the RTO Survey.

The strategic audit encompassed the NSW delivery of TAA40104 by both RTOs registered in NSW and RTOs registered in other

jurisdictions and delivering the TAA40104 in NSW. A sample of 18 RTOs (approximately 10 per cent) was selected for audit, approximately half were registered in NSW and half registered in other jurisdictions.

The key findings of the Strategic Audit were that:

- ☐ there are still varying degrees of understanding of the TAA40104 qualification and the TAA04 Training and Assessment Training Package itself
- ☐ there is still a general perception in the VET sector that everyone who has the BSZ40198 needs the TAA40104 qualification
- ☐ there are still concerns about the recognition only pathway meeting the requirements of the training package
- ☐ there is little evidence of customisation of purchased training and assessment materials to meet the needs of specific target groups and modes of delivery
- ☐ advertisements of training in the TAA40104 do not always convey accurate information to prospective students
- ☐ RTOs offering an educationally sound training program find it difficult to

compete with RTOs offering short, cheap courses

- ☐ initial learning and assessment strategies often did not meet the needs of emerging client groups and had to be revised
- ☐ assessment tools often failed to comply with training package assessment guidelines and specific evidence requirements
- ☐ there is little ongoing liaison with industry.

The recommendations of the Strategic Audit were that:

- ☐ the Department and VETAB continue to research the Professional Development needs of RTOs identified in this report and offer appropriate programs on a state-wide basis
- ☐ RTOs, associated bodies and contract trainers collaborate to establish more networks to create opportunities for information exchange, benchmarking, professional development and mentoring/coaching activities
- ☐ VETAB clarifies for RTOs current AQTF requirements regarding the planning, implementation and reporting of continuous improvement processes

- ☐ RTOs consult IBSA to research the option of skill sets for specific target groups within the TAA40104 qualification and, where feasible, incorporate relevant skill set options into their overall program

- ☐ NSW VETAB continues to liaise with all other registering bodies about audit approaches to this qualification, in accordance with NRATC's agreed position that the TAA40104 is a high risk qualification

- ☐ RTOs that wish to provide the TAA40104 qualification through an outsourced arrangement in NSW must submit details of each arrangement prior to approval

- ☐ this report be presented at NRATC for discussion and national actions if required.

The Strategic Audit identified areas of good practice as well as matters that need to be addressed through the continuous improvement process which is an integral part of the AQTF 2007 Essential Standards for RTOs.

Operational Matters

Managing Applications

The management of applications is dealt with across the three units of Quality Assurance Services. Quality Systems manages the initial processing of all applications for registration, renewal of registration and amendment to scope. Both the Registration Services and Accreditation and Approval Services units were responsible for the processing and auditing of training organisations against the relevant standards and legislation.

Accreditation and Approval Services has specific responsibility for those organisations seeking registration as both training organisations and approval as providers of courses to overseas students. This team also manages audits of TAFE NSW institutes, schools, and English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) colleges.

Registration as a training organisation

Following an AQTF audit, the registration of a training organisation is approved by VETAB for up to five years for a defined scope (set) of qualifications from training packages and/or accredited courses. RTOs undergo a further follow-up audit against the

AQTF standards at the end of their first year of operation. An RTO may add qualifications or courses during its registration period by applying to VETAB to amend its scope. RTOs are also audited if they seek to amend the scope of their registration, are the subject of a complaint or involved in a national strategic audit. The registration cycle is highlighted in figure 1.

Other than in exceptional circumstances and as part of VETAB's risk management strategy, from 1 January 2005 new RTOs have been limited to having a maximum of eight qualifications on their scope during their first year of operation. This limit recognises that establishing an RTO requires considerable expertise, commitment and resources. By limiting the number of qualifications, new RTOs will be better able to focus on quality delivery.

Application activity 2007 – 2008

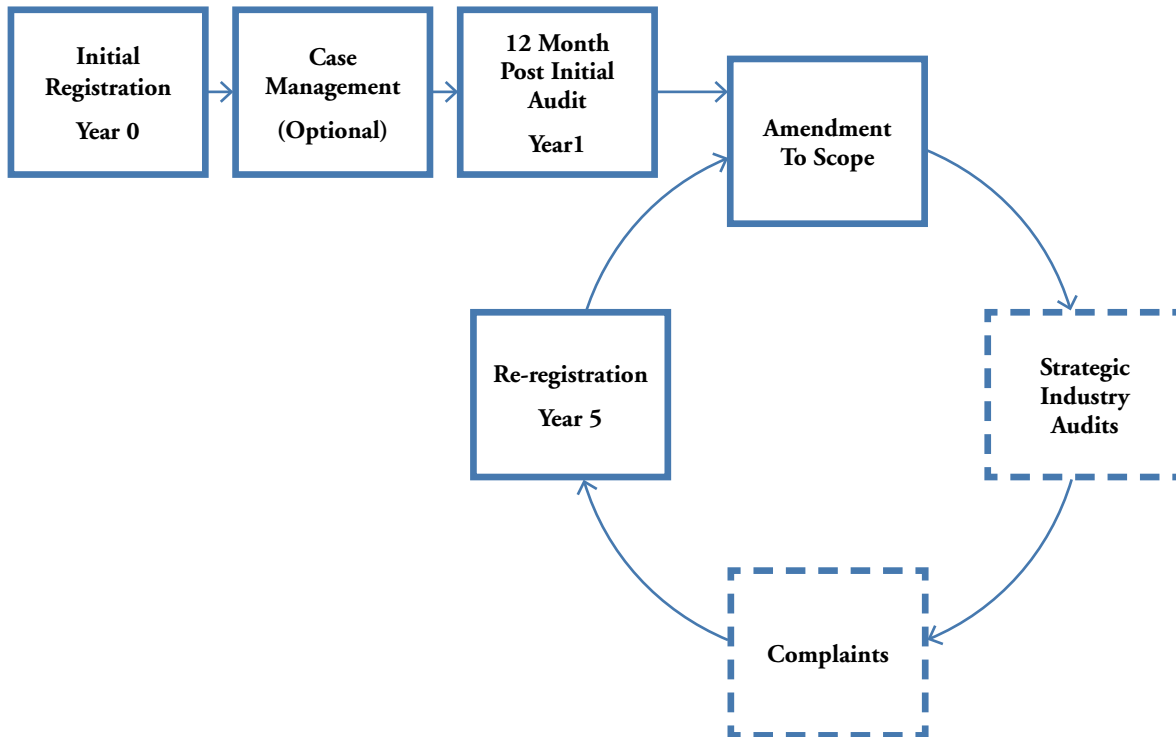
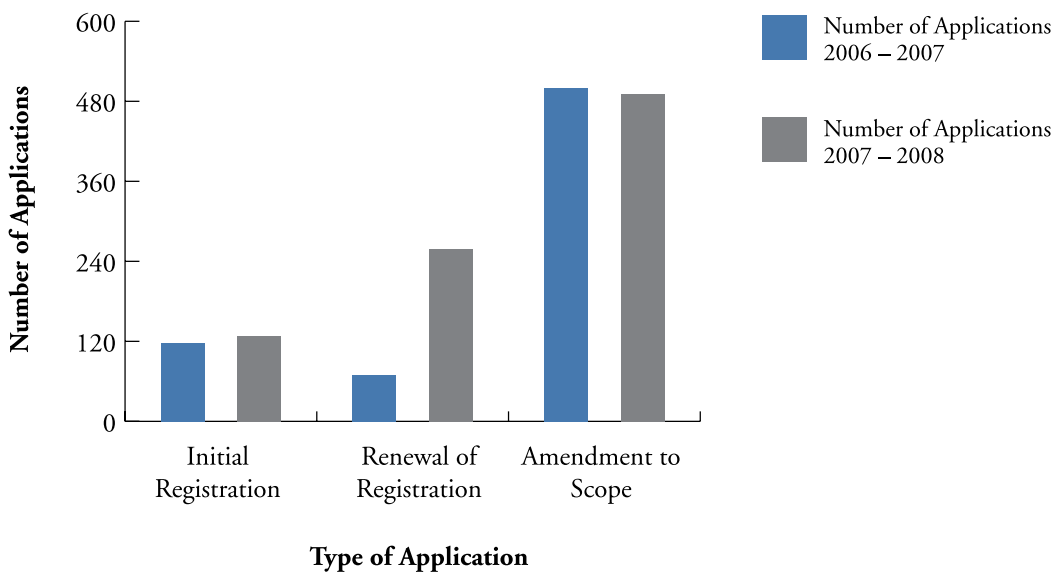
This section of the report details application activity for VETAB for the reporting period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008 and each sub-section details activity for each type of application lodged. Figure 2, however, offers

a comparison over the last two years of the types and numbers of applications received by VETAB.

Initial Registration activity 2007– 2008

At the end of the year in review, there were 966 training organisations registered in NSW, 14 more than during 2006 – 2007. VETAB experienced an increase in the number of applications for initial registration. In total VETAB received 128 applications for initial registration, an increase of almost 9 per cent on the previous reporting period (fig.2). These applications include integrated AQTF and CRICOS applications submitted by organisations who wish to deliver training to students from overseas. Of the 128 applications received VETAB registered 86 new training organisations.

During this period VETAB expanded its services in checking applications for completeness. Following a pre-assessment of the application, VETAB informs the applicant if their application is not yet of sufficient quality to be audited. The applicant is given clear advice on what evidence is missing from the application. The applicant is also advised of the timeline and steps to be taken in order for the application to be re-submitted or withdrawn.

Figure 1: VETAB Registration Process*The Five Year Cycle**Support Mechanisms for RTOs***Figure 2: Type and number of AQTF applications received 2006 – 2007 and 2007 – 2008**

“In 2007 – 2008 VETAB received 258 renewal applications, an increase of more than 73 per cent on the previous reporting period”

Renewal of Registration activity 2007– 2008

Between 1 July 2007 and 30 June 2008 VETAB saw a rise in the number of applications to renew registration.

In order to ensure that applications were lodged in the required timeframe VETAB implemented an email reminder system. RTOs are automatically notified, by email, reminding them that their registration will soon expire and that they must lodge their application for renewal of registration. These emails are sent 6 and 3 months prior to the RTO's registration expiring. Using VETAB's Online Services facility, RTOs then go online and lodge their application to renew registration.

In 2007 – 2008 VETAB received 258 renewal applications, an increase of more than 73 per cent on the previous reporting period (fig.2). Of these 126 were approved in the period. The increase in the number of RTOs seeking to renew their registration in 2007 – 2008 reflected the peak period in the RTO renewal cycle (see figure 3a). The peak in the cycle can be attributed to the introduction of the AQTF in 2001. When the AQTF was introduced in 2001, all existing RTOs were required to register under the new standards. The majority of applications to register under the AQTF were processed during 2002 – 2003. All successful organisations were registered for a period of 5 years (see figure 1). Consequently, it is now time for all RTOs registered during that period to renew their registration.

VETAB expects the number of RTO applications for renewal of registration to peak in mid-2008 (see Figure 3b). Audit activity relating to RTOs seeking renewal of registration between 2007 and 2011 does not take into account additional audit activity for new applications, one year follow up audits, amendments to scope and/or strategic audits. Total projected audit activity is reflected in Figure 4.

Figure 3a: RTO Renewal Activity 2003 – 2010

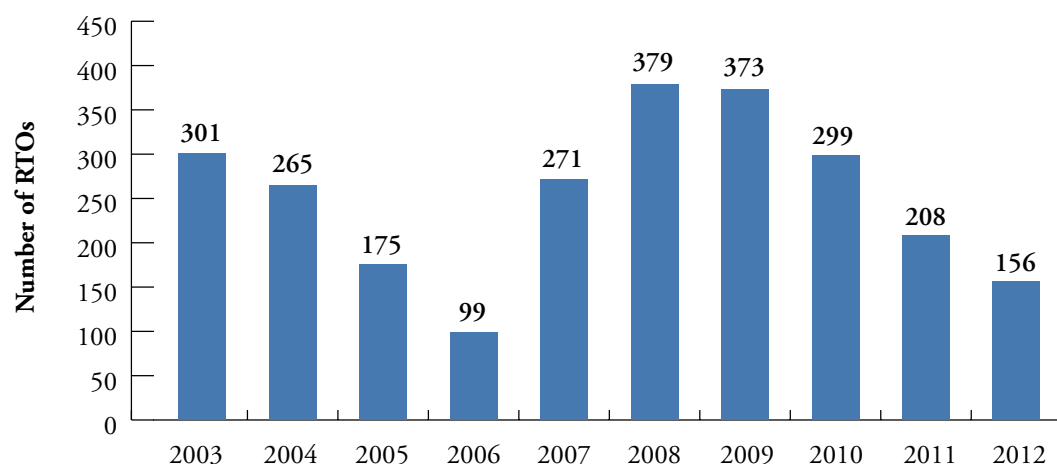
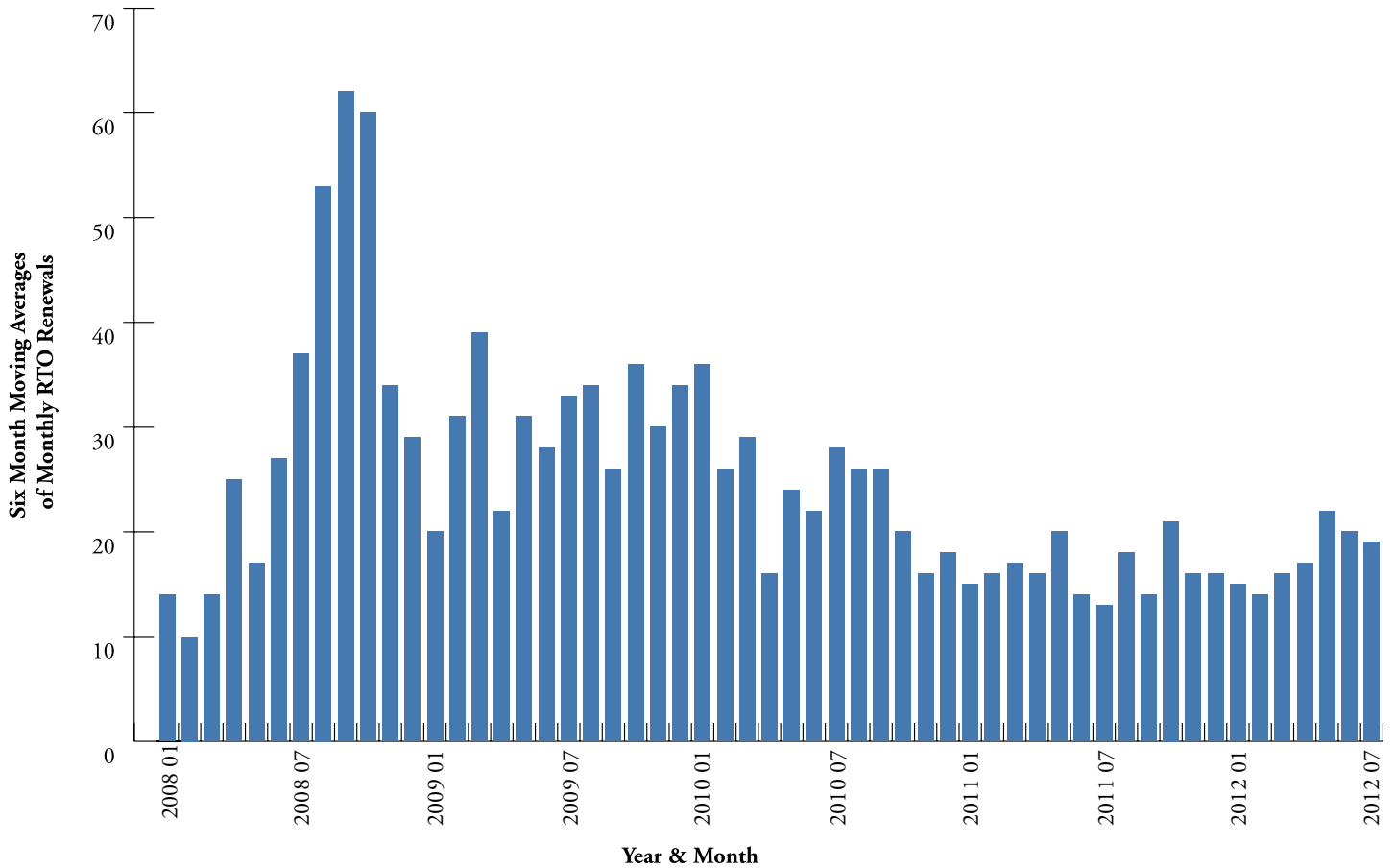
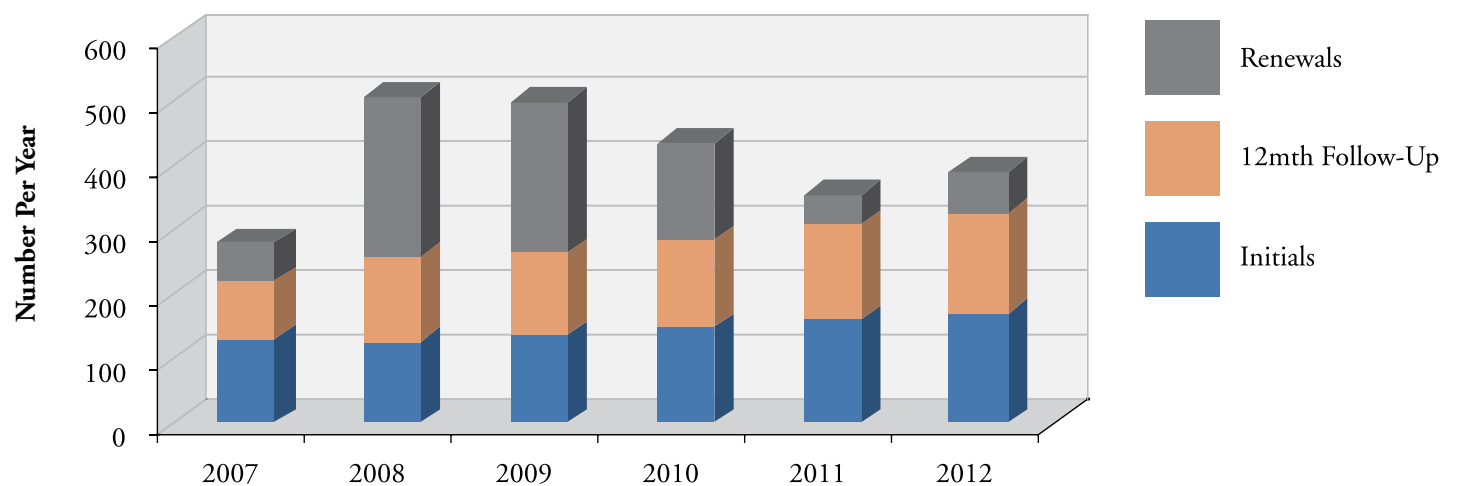


Figure 3b: RTO Renewal January 2008 – July 2012**Figure 4: RTO Renewals, Follow-Up and Initials 2007 to 2012**

RTOs by location

The location of RTOs across NSW is shown in Table A. The spread of RTOs has remained steady since the last reporting period. The areas of growth have been in the Hunter region with an additional 21 RTOs from the last period.

Table A: Number of RTOs at 30 June 2008 by region*

Region	Number of RTOs	Percentage of Total
Hunter	136	14.1
Illawarra	71	7.3
New England	18	1.9
North Coast	54	5.6
Northern Sydney	360	37.2
Riverina	20	2.1
Southern Sydney	106	11
Western	27	2.8
Western Sydney	174	18.0
Total	966	100

* Based on the regions serviced by each of the Department's Industry Training Centres

Types of RTO

Table B shows RTOs by their type as defined by the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standards (AVETMISS) reporting categories. AVETMISS provides a national framework for the collection and dissemination of VET information considered necessary for its consistent and accurate measurement in Australia.

The new RTO types, as identified in AVETMISS 6, were introduced into the VETAB database in August 2007, with the main differences being to the way delivery modes and the types of RTOs are described. For instance, under AVETMISS 5 RTOs were divided into 7 categories compared to the current 14 categories. These new categories have had an effect the types of RTOs registered with VETAB. There has been an 11 per cent rise in the number of RTOs which are now categorised as a private provider. Conversely, the number of Community based adult education providers has declined by 11 per cent.

Table B: RTOs by type at 30 June 2008

Type	Number of RTOs	Percentage of Total
Community - based adult education provider	106	11
Enterprise – Government	33	3.4
Enterprise – Non-government	46	4.7
Industry association	29	3.0
Other – not classified elsewhere	23	2.4
Private provider	690	71.4
Professional association	6	0.6
School – Australian Technical College	1	0.1
School – Catholic	8	1.0
School – Government	10	1.0
School – Independent	3	0.3
Technical and Further Education (TAFE)	11	1.1
University – Government	0	0
University – Non-Government Independent	0	0
Total	966	

Amendment to scope activities 2007 – 2008

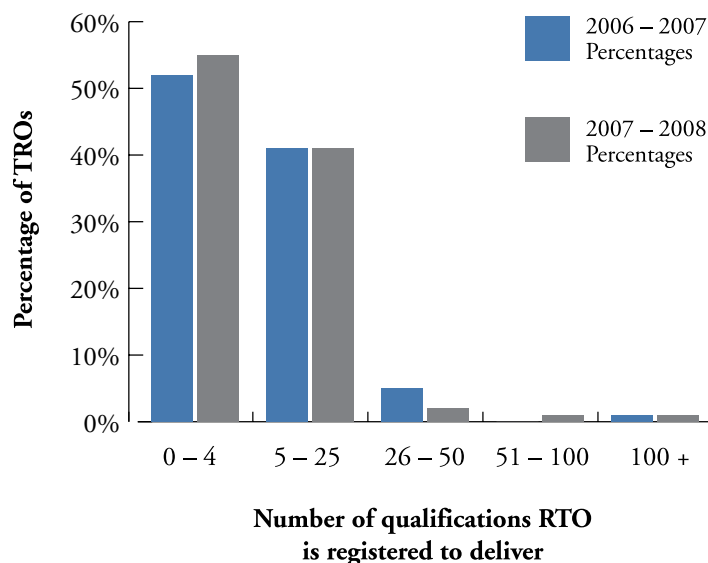
The vast majority of applications lodged with VETAB were from RTOs wishing to amend their scope of registration. In addition to processing requests to reduce an organisations scope of registration, VETAB audits all applications to increase scope of registration. RTOs seek to amend their scope for a number of reasons, including changes in the focus of their business or in market conditions, or the introduction of new or revised training packages.

As with the number of registered providers, which has remained relatively constant in recent

years, the number of amendment applications has also remained steady. In this reporting period 491 applications to amend scope of registration were lodged with VETAB, 9 less than the previous reporting period (fig.2). Of the applications lodged 284 or 57 per cent were approved.

The number of qualifications or courses that each RTO has on scope has also remained steady. Figure 5 shows a slight increase in the number of RTOs with fewer than 5 qualifications on their scope of registration. There has been a slight decrease in the number of RTOs delivering 5 to 25 and 26 to 50 qualifications.

Figure 5: NSW RTO Qualifications Profile



Audit Activity 2007 – 2008

The increase in the number of applications submitted to VETAB during 2007 – 2008 resulted in an increase in the number of audits conducted. Audits are conducted for a number of reasons:

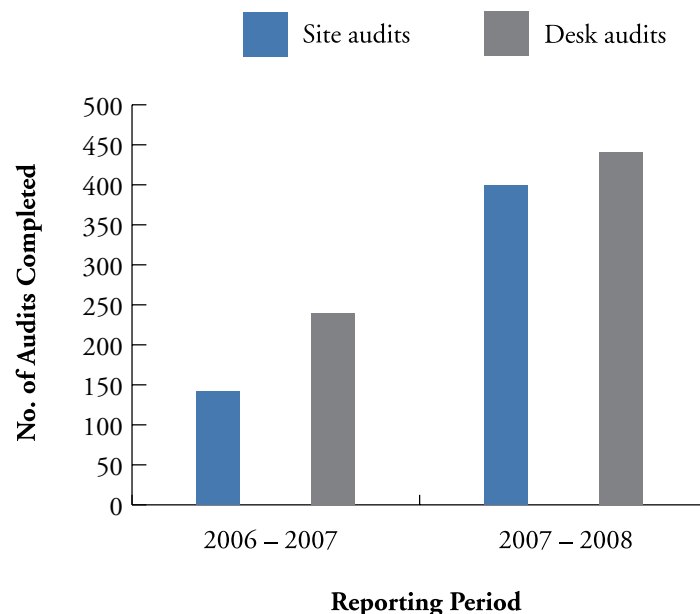
- ☐ when an organisation applies for initial registration
- ☐ a 12 month post-initial audit
- ☐ when an organisation applies to renew registration
- ☐ when an organisation applies to amend scope of registration
- ☐ as part of a national strategic audit
- ☐ a monitoring audit as part of a complaint investigation process.

Over this period the number of audits conducted by VETAB increased to 680, which includes 441 desk audits and 239 site audits. This figure compares to

a total of 541 audits, (399 desk and 142 site) and represents an increase of 20 per cent on the previous reporting period (see Figure 6).

When training organisations undergo an audit they are asked to complete an audit evaluation form. VETAB believes in the importance of client feedback as a valuable tool in the process of continuous improvement. As part of this process, client feedback is analysed and acted upon. Figures for this reporting period indicate that over 95 per cent of respondents indicated that the information they received from VETAB enabled them to adequately prepare for their audit. Moreover, 97 per cent stated that they were happy with the way the audit was conducted and 100 per cent indicated that the audit was conducted in a professional manner.

Figure 6: Number of Audits Completed



Examples of audit feedback

The 'auditor had a consultative approach and the audit was a very open and transparent process'. Unique International College

'The auditors were knowledgeable and organised, they had a collaborative approach in conducting the audit; they clearly explained the process'. 'The provided constructive and practical feedback'. NSW Family Day Care Association.

The auditor 'approached the audit in a collaborative manner, not with an us and them attitude. Comments and feedback were taken on board, welcomed and respected.' Pinnacle Financial Services Academy.

'Our auditor was very clear, helpful and professional'. Actors Centre Australia.

Managing national recognition arrangements

National recognition is a key feature of the AQTF that allows an RTO registered in any of the Australian states or territories to operate elsewhere in Australia without having to undergo further registration processes. It also means that the qualifications and statements of attainment issued by any RTO are accepted and recognised by all other RTOs. However, in some industries and trades, licensing and other legislative requirements can limit recognition of qualifications issued in other states or territories.

Section 13 (4) (b) of the VET Act 2005 and Condition 2 of the AQTF 2007 *Essential Standards for Registration*, state that RTOs must also notify the Board and their registering body respectively of significant changes to their operations. This includes delivery of training in other states and territories. Once the Board has been notified of the delivery of training in another state or territory, VETAB then notifies

the relevant state and territory training authorities. The process is complete when VETAB amends its database, VIP, to reflect the national recognition requirements of the RTO. This information is automatically uploaded to the national register – the National Training Information Service (NTIS).

At 30 June 2008, there were 443 training organisations registered in NSW delivering training in other states under national recognition arrangements, an increase of 27 from the previous reporting period. The number of interstate registered RTOs recognised in NSW has increased by 67 from 778 in 2006 – 2007 to 845 in 2007 – 2008, an increase of 7 per cent.

The *VET Act 2005* which came into effect in April 2006 includes model clauses (that have also been incorporated into comparative State and Territory legislation of other registering bodies). These model clauses allow VETAB to audit or sanction RTOs that are registered interstate and delivering training in NSW.

Offshore Delivery

As with national recognition, an RTO can also provide training overseas. If a NSW RTO wishes to deliver training overseas they must first advise VETAB of their intentions in writing. In order to ensure the quality of the training to be delivered, the Director, VETAB may meet with the RTO. The RTO is required to supply information regarding, for instance, the quality assurance processes in place to ensure ongoing compliance and the learning and assessment strategies for the qualifications the RTO wishes to deliver. At 30 June 2008, 38 NSW RTOs had advised VETAB that they were delivering or intending to deliver training and/or assessment overseas.

Registering providers of courses for overseas students

To offer VET qualifications and/or courses to overseas students in NSW, a provider must have approval from VETAB to be listed on the CRICOS register. VETAB grants this approval and recommends registration to DEEWR which is responsible for CRICOS.

During the 2007 – 2008 year VETAB received 221 applications for CRICOS approval. This number includes 53 applications to increase student capacity and 42 applications to relocate or establish a new delivery site, both of which require a site audit. VETAB also receives applications from existing RTOs either registered in NSW or in another State or Territory, which want to gain CRICOS approval in NSW. One such application was received during 2007 – 2008. Additionally, 13 applications were lodged with VETAB from schools wishing to be re-approved or gain initial CRICOS approval.

On 30 June 2008, there were 371 CRICOS approvals in NSW. VETAB was responsible for overseeing 335 of these approvals, with the remainder being higher education institutions. A provider may operate across multiple sectors, for example, as a school, an RTO and an ELICOS college. Such an organisation has only one CRICOS registration. Several agencies may be involved in regulating different aspects of such an organisation's activities, with the Board of Studies NSW responsible for the organisation's registration as a school; NEAS approving the ELICOS providers listing on CRICOS and VETAB auditing the RTO's compliance with the AQTF Standards.

VETAB is also responsible for approving the listing of interstate RTOs on CRICOS in NSW, as approval is required in each state

Table C: Snapshot of NSW CRICOS activity 1 July 2007 – 30 June 2008**NSW CRICOS approvals at 30 June 2008**

ELICOS providers (approved by NEAS)	86
Schools	129
NSW Registered Training Organisations	144
Interstate Registered Training Organisations	12
Total	371*
Total CRICOS applications for initial approval	26

CRICOS approval activity 2007 – 2008**New CRICOS approvals (including NEAS)**

School	6
ELICOS providers	8
RTOs	21
Total	35*

CRICOS cancellations

Approval cancelled by VETAB	1
Approval cancelled by Commonwealth	0
Approval voluntarily cancelled by provider	25
Total	26

* The total figures in the table represent the number of CRICOS approvals for the year to 30 June 2008. The breakdowns above the total reflect the cross-sectoral nature of providers listed on CRICOS. A provider approved on CRICOS can be both a school and an ELICOS provider therefore the number of providers by sector need not equal the total. These figures do not include applications from organisations to increase student capacity or to add or relocate to a new site.

or territory in which an RTO is delivering courses to overseas students. At 30 June 2008, there were twelve interstate RTOs approved for CRICOS in NSW.

The majority of providers on the CRICOS register deliver VET courses. Some also deliver a schools program, and may have an English language or ELICOS courses as well.

Accrediting vocational courses

Accreditation means the formal recognition of a course by a course accrediting body – VETAB, in accordance with the AQTF 2007 *Standards for State and Territory Course Accrediting*

Bodies and the AQTF 2007 Standards for Accredited Courses. This means that the course:

- ☐ Meets industry, enterprise or community needs
- ☐ Provides appropriate competency outcomes and a satisfactory basis for assessment
- ☐ Meets national quality assurance requirements and
- ☐ Is aligned to the appropriate level of the AQF.

In 2007 – 2008, VETAB accredited 13 courses (see Table D). The course accreditation process is a collaborative one; in order to ensure the quality of the proposed course and that it

meets all the relevant standards, VETAB works in partnership with industry bodies and other stakeholders. VETAB works with ITABs and ISCs to ensure that the applicant's course meets industry requirements. Moreover, VETAB works with the applicant providing feedback throughout the process on the quality of the potential course. As such, the course accreditation process is an involved and lengthy one.

The 2007 – 2008 reporting period saw the introduction of the *AQTF Users' Guide to the Standards for Accredited Courses* which was published in April 2008 by DEEWR. VETAB developed a guide to assist course proponents in NSW, called

Table D: Courses accredited by VETAB: 1 July 2007 – 30 June 2008

Course Title	Proponent	Accreditation Date
Course in Design, Installation, Use and Maintenance of Beverage Gas Installations	Gas Safety Solutions Pty Ltd	11 Jul 2007
Diploma of Ministry (Korean Medium)	Southern Cross College	7 Aug 2007
Advanced Diploma of Ministry (Korean Medium)	Southern Cross College	7 Aug 2007
Diploma of Ministry	Southern Cross College	7 Aug 2007
Advanced Diploma of Ministry	Southern Cross College	7 Aug 2007
Certificate I in Spoken and Written English	Adult Migrant English Service	24 Jan 2008
Certificate II in Spoken and Written English	Adult Migrant English Service	24 Jan 2008
Certificate III in Spoken and Written English	Adult Migrant English Service	24 Jan 2008
Course in Preliminary Spoken and Written English	Adult Migrant English Service	24 Jan 2008
Certificate IV in Spoken and Written English – Further Studies	Adult Migrant English Service	24 Jan 2008
Certificate IV in Spoken and Written English – Employment	Adult Migrant English Service	24 Jan 2008
Diploma of Community Cultural Development	Community Cultural Development	8 Apr 2008
Diploma of Applied Gemmology (Valuation)	National Council of Jewellery Valuers Inc	13 Jun 2008

Accrediting Vocational Courses in NSW. This document was largely developed in the 2006 – 2007 period, and finalised on 4 July 2008. It is now available on the VETAB website.

As is VETAB's practice, workshops for interested course proponents are currently being re-developed in line with the new standards and will focus on assisting proponents understand the new Standards and the NSW guidelines. However, due to the introduction of the new standards, no such workshops were conducted during this reporting period.

In 2007 – 2008, VETAB and TAFE NSW accredited 42 courses, 38 less than in 2006 – 2007. VETAB accredited 13 courses (compared to 36 in 2006 – 2007) with 29 accredited by TAFE NSW (compared to 44 in the previous period). Courses accredited by VETAB continue to meet training needs in a range of industry areas. They increasingly comprise units of competency developed for a specific job

role as well as relevant units of competency from existing Training Packages.

At 30 June 2008, there were 415 (VETAB) accredited courses available for delivery in NSW, 75 less than in 2006 – 2007. The decrease in the overall number of accredited courses reflects the national policy of not duplicating training packages, as well as the fact that training packages have become the basis for the majority of vocational training delivered throughout Australia.

Accreditation of training packages

Training packages contain nationally endorsed competency standards and qualifications that RTOs use for training and assessing students' skills. Industry Skills Councils develop training packages to meet the specific training needs of different industries.

Following approval by the National Quality Council (NQC) and Ministers, VETAB formally

accredits the qualifications in a training package in accordance with the VET Act. RTOs can then apply to VETAB to have qualifications from a new training package added to their scope of registration in order to provide training and/or assessment and issue qualifications from it.

As of 30 June 2008, there were over 1600 qualifications in 83 Training Packages available for delivery in NSW.

During the period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008, 448 qualifications from 28 endorsed Training Packages were submitted for formal accreditation by VETAB, compared to 277 qualifications from 14 training packages in the previous period. Details of these training packages are provided in Table E.

Revisions to scope

VETAB has adopted a risk management approach to deal with implementation of new or revised Training Packages. A revision to scope consists of the replacement of superseded qualifications with

those relevant qualifications from the new or revised training package. Many revisions are conditional upon the RTOs attendance at a workshop. These workshops outline the features of the new training package, with a particular focus on the development of learning and assessment strategies. Due to the large number of new training packages implemented in this period, 35 workshops were conducted with a total of 920 participants (Table F).

With the implementation of 28 new, revised or amended training packages such as Business Services and Tourism Hospitality and Events, there has been an 88 per cent increase in the number of revisions processed in this period. In 2007 – 2008, VETAB processed 710 revisions compared to 86 in the previous period.

VETAB believes its training package workshops to be an extremely important tool in underpinning the delivery of quality VET in NSW. The workshops enable

Table E: Training Packages accredited by VETAB: 1 July 2007 – 30 June 2008**Training Package Qualifications Accredited from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008**

Training Package Code	Training Package Title	Number of Qualifications Accredited
MEA07	Aeroskills (revised)	14
AGF07	Agrifood (new)	1
MTM07	Australian Meat (revised)	22
TDA03	Aviation (amendments)	2
AVI08	Aviation (revised)	13
BSB01	Business Services (amendments)	4
BSB07	Business Services (revised)	63
BCC03	Civil Construction (amendments)	13
MNC04	Coal (amendments)	3
CHC02	Community Services (amendments)	8
CSC07	Corrective Services (revised)	7
UEE07	Electrotechnology (revised)	80
FNS04	Financial Services (amendments)	7
MSA07	Manufacturing (new)	4
TDM07	Maritime (revised)	21
MNM05	Metalliferous (amendments)	7
PMB07	Plastics, Rubber and Cablemaking (revised)	5
CPP07	Property Services (amendments)	8
CPP07	Property Services (revised)	17
PUA00	Public Safety (amendments)	3
PSP04	Public Sector (amendments)	1
SIR07	Retail Services (revised)	11
CUF07	Screen and Media (revised)	18
LMF07	Textile, Clothing and Footwear (revised)	47
SIT07	Tourism, Hospitality and Events (revised)	31
TLI07	Transport and Logistics (revised)	30
CUV03	Visual Arts, Craft and Design (amendments)	2
NWP07	Water (revised)	6
Number of new, revised and amended qualifications within 28 Training Packages accredited by VETAB from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008		448

RTOs to develop a thorough understanding of a broad range of training package requirements relevant to the qualification(s) they are seeking to deliver. To ensure that all stakeholder needs are met, VETAB works in partnership with a number of industry stakeholders to develop well structured and informative workshops. The scale of the changes to a training package also determines the length of the workshop with both full and half day workshops conducted. Full day workshops consist of an overview session of the revised or amended training package combined with a hands-on professional development session targeted to the needs of the industry area as advised by the ISC and the state ITAB. Half day workshops, on the other hand, cover changes to the training package and the implications for delivery of training.

Mindful of client needs, VETAB's flexible approach means that VETAB can adapt its processes to ensure that RTOs who have difficulty travelling to workshop locations do not miss out on vital information relating to the new training package. For instance, with the introduction of the revised Aeroskills Training Package VETAB identified that the number of RTOs affected by the new training package was low. In addition, VETAB recognised that the majority of these RTOs are located in rural or regional areas and VETAB was able to organise a teleconference to explain the changes relating to the new package.

Case management

As well as managing AQTF audit processes, VETAB provides support to RTOs in a number of ways.

Since January 2005, new RTOs have been offered one-to-one support from a VETAB case manager during their first year of operation. Acting on audit feedback received, VETAB was aware that new RTOs were finding their first year of operation quite challenging, and, as such the case management model was introduced. Case Management is available to all newly registered training organisations (RTOs). While not compulsory this is offered as an additional service to new RTOs. Case Management is an educative process to assist RTOs in their first year of registration. The AQTF 2007 provides the framework for discussions and assistance.

A VETAB case manager is available to RTOs for 12 months following registration. During this time a newly registered RTO will have access to 20 hours of

Table F: VETAB RTO Workshops and Information sessions held from July 2007 to June 2008

Training Package	Number of Workshops	Number of Participants
UEE06 Electrotechnology	1	4
MNM05 Metalliferous Mining	1	5
FNS04 Financial Services	2	35
TDA03 Aviation*	1	8
MTM07 Australian Meat Industry	2	8
SIR07 Retail	5	112
TDM07 Maritime	1	6
TLI07 Transport & Logistics	3	77
SIT07 Tourism Hospitality & Events	8	252
MEA07 Aeroskills*	1	1
BCC03 Civil Construction	1	20
PMB07 Plastics Rubber & Cablemaking	1	8
LMT07 Textiles Clothing & Footwear*	1	3
BSB07 Business Services	6	368
UEE07 Electrotechnology	1	13
	35	920

* by teleconference



Superintendent Selwyn Mathias (middle front) and the NSW Fire Brigades' ComSafe team
NSW Fire Brigades, Comsafe Training Services

case management. While the case management model will vary according to the different needs of new RTOs, support from case managers means a single point of contact for new RTOs with access to expert advice on the interpretation of and compliance with the AQTF Standards. Case managers also assist new RTOs with other information relating to the delivery of VET, particularly professional development opportunities.

During the period 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008, 55 RTOs accepted the offer to participate in the case management program, 34 more than in the same reporting period for 2006 – 2007. This figure means that 63 per cent of all new RTOs accepted the offer of case management and feedback from participating RTOs has been extremely positive.

“As a new RTO, I found case management extremely helpful. As a new RTO it was comforting to know that assistance was only a phone call away. Anne (our case manager) was very patient and a

great help to myself and the rest of the team. I would recommend case management to other new RTOs - case management provides the team and the person responsible for maintaining the RTO with an immediate contact point for issues arising with operating and managing an RTO. To know you have someone with complete knowledge of the subject that you can clarify things with is reassuring – (and) the whole process certainly helped to re-assure us that we were on the right track.” said Superintendent Selwyn Mathias, NSW Fire Brigades' ComSafe team.

Managing VETAB Customer Service

VETAB remains focused on customer service, an essential part of which is communication between VETAB and its stakeholders. Throughout 2007 – 2008 VETAB continued to focus on improving and developing its communication with RTOs and industry stakeholders.

Improving Communication

VETAB uses a number of channels to communicate with RTOs and other VET stakeholders, one of which is email. VETAB regularly sends emails to RTOs and in 2007 – 2008 VETAB sent 104 email alerts regarding issues such as Training Package rollovers and developments in the VET sector. RTOs are able to view past email alerts using VETAB's Online Services facility.

A key aspect of VETAB's communication with its clients is the VETAB website. June 2008 saw the launch of the new VETAB website. An enormous amount of effort went into re-developing the site which is now more user friendly and easier to navigate. In building the new website VETAB responded to client feedback, which resulted in the new site including comprehensive information about the audit process for those organisations wishing to gain CRICOS approval and a new section for information regarding

Training Packages including the latest information relating to new Training Packages. There is also a fees section, in which the various VETAB fees have been split into categories making them easier to access and read.

In addition, the website now contains a dedicated page for all the various forms used when dealing with VETAB including forms relating to gaining approval for the Commonwealth Register of Institutes and Courses for Overseas Students. Initial feedback indicates that users feel the site to be more intuitive and easier to access. Client feedback also indicates that 78 per cent of organisations preparing to lodge an application access the VETAB website. Of these, a further 78 per cent found the information they required on the website. While these figures are encouraging VETAB continues to strive to improve its website, with an interactive Question and Answer section currently in development.

VETAB's online enquiry service, the VETAB inbox, continued to be a popular way for customers to seek information and advice from VETAB. VETAB responds to enquiries from its customers which include RTOs, teachers, VET students, industry bodies and members of the public on a wide range of issues related the VET sector. VETAB has seen an increase and now responds to an average of 90 enquiries per week, an increase of 5 per cent from the previous reporting period.

A key method of communication between VETAB and its clients is VETAB's newsletter *VETAB News*. This reporting period saw 2 issues of *VETAB News*. With the needs of VETAB's clients and the continuing implementation of the AQTF 2007 in mind, the June

2008 edition of *VETAB News* led with an article by a VETAB auditor regarding 'Continuous Improvement and the AQTF 2007'. The article gave detailed information on the requirements of continuous improvement and what an RTO should focus on. Amongst other topics, VETAB was able to use its newsletter to communicate the recent findings of the strategic audit of the TAA40104 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment and give information on transitioning from a superseded to a new training package. As in previous years, as part of the editorial team, VETAB continued to contribute to the national VET newsletter *Training Packages @ Work*, which is published 10 times a year by the Queensland Department of Education and Training. At 30 June 2008, the online newsletter had more than 5507 subscribers in NSW, an increase of 977 from the previous year.

A key source of information for VET stakeholders is the National Training Information Service (NTIS), which serves as the national registry for RTOs and VET courses. During the year in review VETAB's national contribution to the VET sector is evident in the role we are playing in the redevelopment of NTIS. VETAB is currently represented on the committee charged with re-developing the website. As part of the 'Navigation Project' VETAB continues to act in partnership with other state and territory registering bodies to ensure a more user friendly website that will meet all stakeholders' needs.

Responding to complaints

In line with its customer service standards VETAB responds to complaints about services provided by RTOs and about VETAB's services.

The number of complaints received by VETAB in 2007 – 2008 has remained steady. VETAB received and investigated 223 complaints about RTOs. No complaints were made against VETAB or about its audit processes during the year.

In 2007 – 2008, complaints about RTOs were recorded against each of the three AQTF 2007 Standards and the nine Conditions of Registration for RTOs. Some complaints involved allegations of non-compliance against more than one AQTF Standard and Condition (hence the total of 252 recorded in Table G). In 2007 – 2008, almost a third of all complaints related to Standard 1 – Quality training and assessment and almost a quarter of complaints related to Condition 8 – Accuracy and integrity of marketing; fourteen per cent of complaints were received about Standard 2 – Principles of access and equity and outcomes for clients; and almost 13 per cent of complaints related to certification and issuing of qualifications and statements of attainment.

All complaints are acknowledged within 10 working days. Complainants receive feedback about the progress of the complaint investigation and are informed of the outcomes in writing. Some remedies for complainants included follow-up audits by VETAB, application of sanctions on RTOs and voluntary withdrawal of registration by RTOs.

Performance against the Customer Service Standards

As previously stated, in 2007 – 2008 VETAB saw an increase in the number of applications received with the number of applications to renew registration up by 73 per cent on the previous year. Despite this increase, VETAB's performance against the Customer Service Standards has remained steady. Under these standards, an application for registration as a training organisation is processed within twelve weeks, while a variation to scope application (requiring a desk audit) is processed within six weeks.

For the 2007 – 2008 year, VETAB processed an average of 83 per cent of applications for initial registration within twelve weeks. VETAB processed 79 per cent of all applications to renew registration within the twelve week standard. During the same period, VETAB processed 77 per cent of variation to scope applications (involving site audits) within twelve weeks and 63 per cent of variation to scope applications (involving desk audits) within six weeks.

Quality Management System

QAS's business operations are underpinned by its quality management system. The majority of procedures and processes have undergone significant change in the year in review owing to major changes to the national quality arrangements since July 2007. These include the introduction of AQTF 2007, the National Code 2007, the Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies and Standards for State and Territory Course Accrediting Bodies.

The changing environment has presented challenges and opportunities to VETAB. While

Table G: Complaints about RTOs: 1 July 2007 – 30 June 2008 Number and nature of complaints received by VETAB

Complaint	Status/Nature	Number	%
Standards			
	1. Quality training and assessment	75	29.8
	2. Principles of access and equity and outcomes for client	35	13.9
	3. Management systems are responsive to the needs of clients, staff and students	24	9.5
Conditions of Registration			
	1. Governance	6	2.4
	2. Interactions with registering body	2	0.8
	3. Compliance with legislation	14	5.5
	4. Insurance	0	0
	5. Financial management	3	1.2
	6. Certification and issuing of qualifications and statements of attainment	32	12.7
	7. Recognition of qualifications issued by other RTOs	2	0.8
	8. Accuracy and integrity of marketing	59	23.4
	9. Transition to training packages/expiry of accredited courses	0	0
Total against AQTF Standards and Conditions of Registration for RTOs		252*	100%

* Some complaints involved allegations of non-compliance against more than one AQTF Standard

procedures and processes are continually changing to meet VETAB's operational and customer service challenges, the existing quality management system developed in 2004 required a major review. A high level review of the system was undertaken in the final quarter of 2007. Stage 1 is complete resulting in all operational processes and procedures being identified in order to develop a basis for a realignment of the system.

The quality management system is subjected to regular internal audits. QAS engaged the Department's Audit Directorate to conduct an internal audit of its system in the past year. The audit was part of the system's continuous improvement and led to a new format to document procedures. The process provided a valuable opportunity to improve the operations of the system and to ensure that processes comply with the Department's internal requirements.

Managing delegations

To assist the management of its responsibilities under state and federal legislation, VETAB has delegated some responsibilities to other agencies, as authorised in Section 9 of the VET Act 2005. The parties listed below ensure that provisions of the National Code, the ESOS Act, the VET Act and the AQTF 2007 Standards as relevant to their area of responsibility, are implemented.

TAFE NSW holds a delegation to accredit courses and vary its scope of registration. This delegation is current until December 2008.

The National ELT Accreditation Scheme (NEAS) holds a delegation to approve providers

of English Language Intensive Course for Overseas Students (ELICOS) which operate in NSW. This delegation is current until 31 March 2009. It is anticipated that the new national system for the regulation of ELICOS providers will be implemented in 2009.

Supporting the Board

During the period 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008, the VETA Board met seven times.

Guideline on AQF Certification to be issued by RTOs

In February 2008, under sections 32 and 40 of the VET Act the Board revised its Guideline on AQF Certification to be issued by RTOs.

The guideline was produced to clarify for RTOs the requirements of the AQF, the AQTF and the NSW VETAB relating to the issuing of nationally recognised AQF qualifications and Statements of Attainment.

Implementation of ICAC Report

In 2004, the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) began an investigation (Operation Ambrosia) into a scheme to fraudulently obtain building licences. The investigation focused on the authenticity of professional trade and educational qualifications to obtain building licences, and involved the role of the Australian College of Technology (ACT), a training organisation registered with NSW VETAB.

The ICAC report required VETAB to provide the Commission with an implementation plan for addressing its recommendations, with regular progress reports. The recommendations focused on strengthening the link between qualifications and licensing, mechanisms for risk management and greater audit scrutiny on RTOs' Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) activities.

QAS was required to address seven recommendations of the Independent Commission Against Corruption's (ICAC) December 2005 report into building licences which relate to VETAB's operations. In the past year, a new records management policy and procedure have been developed as the result of an independent consultant's review. A functional disposal authority has also been developed to cover RTO specific files for the approval of the States Records Board.

Procedures and guidelines have been developed to ensure that staff bring crucial issues relating to RTO operations to the attention of the Director, Quality Assurance Services, and the Board.

In February 2008, a 24 month progress report was submitted to ICAC informing them of VETAB's progress in meeting the report's recommendations. VETAB has subsequently received correspondence from ICAC advising that the commission will no longer be pursuing this matter. Further, ICAC has recognised and thanked the Board for its efforts in implementing the report's recommendations.

Table H: VETAB's performance against the customer service standard – 1 July 2007 – 30 June 2008

	Initial registration (12 weeks)	Re-registration (every 5 years) (12 weeks)	Variation (site audit) (12 weeks)	Variation (desk audit) (6 weeks)
Jul/Aug 2007				
No of applications being processed*	36	25	13	92
No of applications within standard	33	22	9	48
% of applications within standard	91.67%	88%	69.23%	52.17%
Sep/Oct 2007				
No of applications being processed*	33	78	13	76
No of applications within standard	30	74	12	49
% of applications within standard	90.91%	94.87%	92.31%	64.47%
Nov/Dec 2007				
No of applications being processed*	47	114	10	120
No of applications within standard	39	105	7	86
% of applications within standard	82.98%	92.11%	70%	71.67%
Jan/Feb 2008				
No of applications being processed*	57	133	13	106
No of applications within standard	46	109	9	71
% of applications within standard	80.70%	81.95%	69.23%	66.98%
Mar/Apr 2008				
No of applications being processed*	57	144	16	107
No of applications within standard	44	108	14	64
% of applications within standard	77.19%	75%	87.50%	59.81%
May/Jun 2008				
No of applications being processed*	65	146	19	130
No of applications within standard	53	89	14	80
% of applications within standard	81.54%	60.96%	73.68%	61.54%

* The figures under "no of applications being processed" are cumulative and include applications submitted in previous months that are at various stages of the audit process.

Financial Statements

For the year ended 30 June 2008

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Independent Audit Report

GPO BOX 12
Sydney NSW 2001

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

NSW Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board

To Members of the New South Wales Parliament

I have audited the accompanying financial report of the NSW Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board (the Board), which comprises the balance sheet as at 30 June 2008, the income statement, statement of recognised income and expense and cash flow statement for the year then ended, a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes.

Auditor's Opinion

In my opinion, the financial report:

- presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Board as at 30 June 2008, and of its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards (including the Australian Accounting Interpretations)
- is in accordance with section 41B of the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983* (the PF&A Act) and the Public Finance and Audit Regulation 2005.

My opinion should be read in conjunction with the rest of this report.

Board's Responsibility for the Financial Report

The members of the Board are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards (including the Australian Accounting Interpretations) and the PF&A Act. This responsibility includes establishing and maintaining internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies; and making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances.

Auditor's Responsibility

My responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on my audit. I conducted my audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. These Auditing Standards require that I comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the Board's preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Board's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the members of the Board, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my audit opinion.

My opinion does not provide assurance:

- about the future viability of the Board,
- that they have carried out their activities effectively, efficiently and economically, or
- about the effectiveness of their internal controls.

Independence

In conducting this audit, the Audit Office has complied with the independence requirements of the Australian Auditing Standards and other relevant ethical requirements. The PF&A Act further promotes independence by:

- providing that only Parliament, and not the executive government, can remove an Auditor-General, and
- mandating the Auditor-General as auditor of public sector agencies but precluding the provision of non-audit services, thus ensuring the Auditor-General and the Audit Office are not compromised in their role by the possibility of losing clients or income.

P J Boulous CA
Director, Financial Audit Services

20 October 2008
SYDNEY

Start of Audited Financial Statements

Statement by Members of the Board

Pursuant to Section 41C (1C) of the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983*, and in accordance with a resolution of Members of the Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board, we declare on behalf of the Board that in our opinion:

1. The accompanying financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the *Public Finance and Audit Act, 1983*, the applicable clauses of the Public Finance and Audit Regulation 2005 and the Treasurer's Directions.
2. The statements exhibit a true and fair view of the financial position and transactions of the Board.
3. There are no circumstances, which would render any particulars included in the financial statements to be misleading or inaccurate.



Bert Evans AO
Chairman



Margaret Willis
Director

Income Statement for the Year Ended 30 June 2008

	Notes	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
Revenue			
Application and assessment fees		3,984	3,142
Interest income		153	82
Other revenue		33	27
State government contribution		—	635
Grants and contributions		345	335
Total revenue	1(j)	4,515	4,221
Expenses			
Corporate service support charge	1(k)	345	335
Secretariat and operational services	1(l)	2,657	2,415
Board member fees	2	171	171
Accommodation		94	94
Audit fees	8	18	18
Fees and charges		969	887
Printing, postage and freight		40	58
Travel and motor vehicles		84	64
Utilities and stores		81	176
Total expenses		4,460	4,218
Surplus for the year	7	55	3

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements

Statement of Recognised Income and Expense for the Year Ended 30 June 2008

	Notes	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
Total Income and expense recognised directly in equity		1,495	1,492
Surplus for the Year		55	3
Total Income and expense recognised for the year	7	1,550	1,495

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements

Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2008

	Notes	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
Current Assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	3	992	1,001
Investments	4	1,096	1,026
Receivables	5	64	358
Total Current Assets		2,152	2,385
TOTAL ASSETS		2,152	2,385
Current Liabilities			
Payables	6	602	890
Total Current Liabilities		602	890
TOTAL LIABILITIES		602	890
NET ASSETS		1,550	1,495
Equity			
Accumulated funds	7	1,550	1,495
TOTAL EQUITY		1,550	1,495

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements

Cash Flow Statement for the Year Ended 30 June 2008

	Notes	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Payments			
Operating payments		(4,748)	(3,249)
Total Payments		(4,748)	(3,249)
Receipts			
Application and assessment fees		4,257	3,142
Interest received		153	82
Other		398	447
Total Receipts		4,808	3,671
Net cash flows from operating activities	9 (a)	60	422
Cash flows from investing activities			
Proceeds from sale of investments		—	—
Net cash flows from investing activities		—	—
Cash flows from financing activities			
Net increase/(decrease) in cash		61	422
Opening cash and cash equivalents		2,027	1,605
Closing cash and cash equivalents	9 (b)	2,088	2,027

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements

Notes to and forming part of this financial report for the Year Ended 30 June 2008

1. Summary of significant accounting policies

a) Reporting Entity

The Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board ('the Board') is a not-for-profit entity and is responsible for the accreditation of vocational courses, the registration of entities to conduct vocational courses and approval of entities to conduct vocational courses to overseas students. The Board also investigates matters concerning registration and accreditation of vocational training organisations and courses and advises the Minister on matters related to vocational training. The Board is constituted by the *Vocational Education and Training Act 2005*. This financial report for the year ended 30 June 2008 has been authorised for issue by the Board on 20 October 2008.

b) Basis of Preparation

The Board's financial report is a general-purpose financial report, which has been prepared on an accrual basis in accordance with:

- ☐ applicable Australian Accounting Standards (which include Australian Accounting Interpretations); and
- ☐ the requirements of the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983* and Regulation.

Investment property, assets (or disposal groups) held for sale and financial assets at 'fair value through profit or loss' and available for sale are measured at fair value. Other financial report items are prepared in accordance with the historical cost convention.

Judgements, key assumptions and estimations management has made are disclosed in the relevant notes to the financial report.

All amounts are rounded to the nearest one thousand dollars and are expressed in Australian currency.

c) Statement of Compliance

The financial statements notes comply with Australian Accounting Standards, which include Australian Accounting Interpretations..

d) Going Concern

The Board's financial report has been prepared on a going-concern basis. The Board has received a guarantee from the Department of Education and Training of continued financial support in the event of any shortfall. This financial support has been made available until October 2009.

e) Classification by nature

In the Income Statement all revenue and expenses from ordinary activities have been classified by nature rather than by function. The Board uses its income to fund its registration and accreditation activities. It is considered that classifying operating expenses by nature, provides the most relevant information about the Board's financial performance.

f) Board Member fees

Board member fees include superannuation, workers' compensation and payroll tax. Board members are not entitled to annual leave or long service leave.

g) Non-current assets (property, plant & equipment)

The cost method of accounting is used for all acquisitions of assets controlled by the Board. Cost is determined as the fair value of the assets given up at the date of acquisition plus costs incidental to the acquisition. Assets are determined to be any item with a useful life exceeding twelve months and with a cost in excess of \$5K. The Board does not currently have any non-current assets under its control.

h) Cash and Cash Equivalents

For the purposes of the Cash Flow Statement, cash includes cash at bank, cash in hand and investments in the Tcorp's Hour Glass Investment facilities as at 30 June 2008.

i) Comparatives

Where required, comparative figures have been adjusted to conform to changes in presentation for the current financial year.

j) Revenue recognition

Sale of Services and Application and Assessment Fees

Sales revenue and revenue from application and assessment fees is recognised when it is received.

Project Grant

Project grant revenue is recognised when the related expenditure is incurred.

Interest Income

Interest revenue is recognised using the effective interest method as set out in AASB 139 Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement.

k) Corporate service support charge

Historically, corporate service support was provided to the Board free of charge by the NSW Department of Education and Training. From the 2002 financial year, a charge for this support equal to 9 per cent of forecast recurrent expenditure (exclusive of property management) has been brought to account. This charge is an estimate based on studies of corporate services made by the Council on the Quality and Cost of Government. The estimate is meant to cover the costs associated with normal operations. Based on support provided to the Board in the current year, the 9 per cent charge remains unchanged. The Department waived this charge for the year ended 30 June 2008 and 2007.

l) Secretariat and operational support

Secretariat and operational support represents the salaries and wages of NSW Department of Education and Training employees that were allocated to the Board during the year to provide a range of support services. These costs were incurred by the Department and have been subsequently recharged to the Board as a fee for services rendered when incurred. All related on-costs of these Department employees, such as workers' compensation and superannuation have also been included in this fee.

m) Accounting for the Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Revenues and expenses are recognised net of the amount of GST, except:

- (i) the amount of GST incurred by the Board as a purchaser that is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office is recognised as part of an item of expense; and
- (ii) receivables and payables are stated with the amount of GST included.

Cash flows are included in the Cash Flow Statement on a gross basis. The GST components of cash flows arising from investing and financing activities that are recoverable from, or payable to, the Australian Taxation Office are classified as operating cash flows.

(n) New Australian Accounting Standards issued but not effective

The following new Accounting Standards have not been applied and are not yet effective. The possible impact of these Standards in the period of initial application (2008/09) will not be significant.

AASB 3 (March 2008), AASB 127 and AASB 2008-3 regarding business combinations;
AASB 8 & AASB 2007-3 regarding operating segments;
AASB 101 (Sep 2007) and AASB 2007-8 regarding presentation of financial statements;
AASB 123 (June 2007) and AASB 2007-6 regarding borrowing costs;
AASB 1004 (Dec 2007) regarding contributions;
AASB 1049 (Oct 2007) regarding the whole of government and general government sector financial reporting;
AASB 1050 (Dec 2007) regarding administered items;
AASB 1051 (Dec 2007) regarding land under roads;
AASB 1052 (Dec 2007) regarding disaggregated disclosures;
AASB 2007-9 regarding amendments arising from the review of AASs 27, 29 and 31;
AASB 2008-1 regarding share based payments;
AASB 2008-2 regarding puttable financial instruments;
Interpretation 1 (Jun 2007) re restoration and similar liabilities;
Interpretation 4 (Feb 2007) regarding determining whether an arrangement contains a lease;
Interpretation 12 (Jan 2009) & AASB 2007-2 regarding service concession arrangements;
Interpretation 13 (July 2008) on customer loyalty programmes;
Interpretation 14 (Jan 2008) regarding the limit on a defined benefit assets;
Interpretation 129 (Feb 2007) regarding service concession disclosures;
Interpretation 1038 (Dec 2007) regarding contributions by owners;

It is expected that the impact of the application of the new Standards on the financial report in the period of initial application (2008/09) will not be significant.

(o) Address of the registered office

The registered address of The Board is 35 Bridge Street, Sydney NSW 2000.

2. Board Member Fees

At 30 June 2008, the Board did not have any obligation to provide recreation leave or long service leave entitlements to the Members of the Board.

	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
Board member fees	145	145
Workers' compensation insurance	3	3
Superannuation contributions / payroll tax	23	23
	171	171

3. Current Assets – Cash and cash equivalents

The Board does not maintain an operating bank account. During the year, all cash receipts earned and cash payments made were managed through the Department of Education and Training's operating bank account. At 30 June 2008, the Department held \$992K on behalf of the Board (\$1,001K as at 30 June 2007), which represents net cash surplus of the Board's operating activities. Commencing 1 July 2004, interest is earned on these funds. The cash fund position will vary at any stage during the year depending on the timing of all operating receipts and payments.

4. Current Assets – Investments

Under the *Vocational Education and Training Act 2005* the Board is authorised to invest money held. Funds invested with NSW Treasury Corporation in the cash facility are used towards meeting operating expenses as required. The balance of this investment is as follows:

	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
Opening balance	1,026	964
Interest earned in the year	70	62
Closing balance 30 June	1,096	1,026

5. Current Assets – Receivables

	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
Australian Tax Office	14	3
Other Receivables	50	355
	64	358

6. Current Liabilities – Payables

	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
Accrued Salaries & Wages	–	419
Other Payables	602	471
	602	890

7. Changes in Equity

	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
Balance at the beginning of the financial year	1,495	1,492
Surplus for the year	55	3
Balance at the end of the financial year	1,550	1,495

8. Audit Fee

An audit fee of \$18.5K excluding GST has been charged to the Board for the 2008 financial year (\$17.85K in 2007). The auditors received no other benefits.

9. Cash Flow Statement Reconciliation

a) Reconciliation of Net Cash used in Operating Activities to surplus for the year.

	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
Net cash used on operating activities	60	422
Decrease / (Increase) in payables	288	(764)
Increase / (Decrease) in receivables	(293)	345
Surplus for the year	55	3

b) Reconciliation of Cash at end of the reporting period is as follows:

	2008 \$'000	2007 \$'000
Current Assets – Cash (note 3)	992	1,001
Current Assets – Investments (note 4)	1,096	1,026
	2,088	2,027

10. Contingent Liabilities

The Board is not aware of any contingent liabilities in existence as at 30 June 2008 (Nil in 2007).

11. Financial Instruments

The Board's principal financial instruments are outlined below. These financial instruments arise directly from The Board's operations or are to finance the operations. The Board does not enter into or trade financial instruments, including derivative financial instruments, for speculative purposes. The Board does not use financial derivatives.

The Board's main risks arising from financial instruments are outlined below, together with the Board's objectives, policies and processes for measuring and managing risk. Further quantitative and qualitative disclosures are included throughout this financial report.

The Members of the Board have overall responsibility for the establishment and oversight of risk management and reviews and agrees policies for managing each of these risks. Risk management policies are established to identify and analyse the risks faced the Board, to set risk limits and controls and to monitor risks. Compliance with policies is reviewed by the Audit Committee/Internal auditors of the Department on a continuous basis.

a) Financial instrument categories

	Note	Category	Carrying Amount \$'000 2008	Carrying Amount \$'000 2007
Financial Assets Class				
Cash and cash equivalents	3	N/A	992	1,001
Investments	4	N/A	1,096	1,026
Receivables ¹	5	Loans and receivables (at amortised cost)	64	358
Financial Liabilities Class				
Payables ²	6	Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost	602	890

Notes

¹ Excludes statutory receivables and prepayments (ie. not within scope of AASB 7)

² Excludes statutory payables and unearned revenue (ie not within scope of AASB 7)

b) Credit Risk

Credit risk arises when there is the possibility of the Board's debtors defaulting on their contractual obligations, resulting in financial loss. The maximum exposure to credit risk is generally represented by the carrying amount of the financial assets (net of any allowance for impairment).

Cash

Cash comprises cash on hand and interest is earned on daily bank balances at the monthly average NSW Treasury Corporation (Tcorp) 11 am unofficial cash rate, adjusted for a management fee to NSW Treasury. The Tcorp Hour Glass cash facility is discussed in para (d) below.

Receivables – trade debtors

All trade debtors are recognised as amounts receivable at balance date. Collectability of trade debtors is reviewed on an ongoing basis. Procedures as established in the Treasurer's Directions are followed to recover outstanding amounts, including letters of demand. Debts which are known to be uncollectible are written off. An allowance for impairment is raised when there is objective evidence that the entity will not be able to collect all amounts due. This evidence includes past experience, and current and expected changes in economic conditions and debtor credit ratings. No interest is earned on trade debtors. Sales are made on 30-60 day terms.

There are no debtors which are currently not past due or impaired whose terms have been renegotiated.

	Total \$'000	Past due but not impaired \$'000	Considered impaired \$'000
2008			
< 3 months overdue	—	—	—
3 months – 6 months overdue	—	—	—
> 6 months overdue	—	—	—
2007			
< 3 months overdue	—	—	—
3 months – 6 months overdue	—	—	—
> 6 months overdue	—	—	—

(c) Liquidity risk

Liquidity risk is the risk that the Board will be unable to meet its payment obligations when they fall due. The Board continuously manages risk through monitoring future cash flows and maturities planning to ensure adequate holding of high quality liquid assets. The objective is to maintain a balance between continuity of funding and flexibility.

The liabilities are recognised for amounts due to be paid in the future for goods or services received, whether or not invoiced. Amounts owing to suppliers (which are unsecured) are settled in accordance with the policy set out in Treasurer's Direction 219.01. If trade terms are not specified, payment is made no later than the end of the month following the month in which an invoice or a statement is received. Treasurer's Direction 219.01 allows the Minister to award interest for late payment.

The table below summarises the maturity profile of the Board's financial liabilities, together with the interest rate exposure.

	Weighted Average Effective Int Rate \$'000	Nominal Amount ¹ \$'000	Fixed Interest Rate \$'000	Variable Interest Rate \$'000	Interest Rate Exposure		Maturity Dates	
					Non- interest bearing \$'000	<1yr \$'000	1–5yrs \$'000	> 5yrs \$'000
2008								
<i>Payables:</i>								
Accrued Salaries and wages	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Other Payables	–	602	–	–	602	602	–	–
2007								
<i>Payables:</i>								
Accrued Salaries and wages	–	419	–	–	419	419	–	–
Other Payables	–	471	–	–	471	471	–	–

Notes

¹ The amounts disclosed are the contractual undiscounted cash flows of each class of financial liabilities, and therefore the amounts disclosed above will not reconcile to the balance sheet.

(d) Market risk

Market risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market prices. The Board has no exposure to foreign currency risk and does not enter into commodity contracts.

The effect on profit and equity due to a reasonably possible change in risk variable is outlined in the information below, for interest rate risk and other price risk. A reasonably possible change in risk variable has been determined after taking into account the economic environment in which The Board operates and the time frame for the assessment (i.e. until the end of the next annual reporting period). The sensitivity analysis is based on risk exposures in existence at the balance sheet date. The analysis is performed on the same basis for 2007. The analysis assumes that all other variables remain constant.

The Board's exposure to interest rate risk is set out below.

		-1%		+1%	
	Carrying Amount \$'000	Profit \$'000	Equity \$'000	Profit \$'000	Equity \$'000
2008					
<i>Financial assets:</i>					
Cash and cash equivalents	992	(10)	(10)	10	10
Receivables	64	(1)	(1)	1	1
Investments	1,096	(11)	(11)	11	11
<i>Financial liabilities:</i>					
Payables	602	6	6	(6)	(6)
2007					
<i>Financial assets:</i>					
Cash and cash equivalents	1,001	(10)	(10)	10	10
Receivables	358	(4)	(4)	4	4
Investments	1,026	(10)	(10)	10	10
<i>Financial liabilities:</i>					
Payables	890	9	9	(9)	(9)

12. After Balance Date Events

There has not arisen in the interval between the end of the financial year and the date of this report any item, transaction or event of a material and unusual nature likely to affect significantly the operations of the Board, the results of those operations or the state of affairs of the Board in subsequent financial years.

End of Audited Financial Statements

Appendix 1

Board members' and VETAB officers' Code of Conduct

Under Schedule 1 of the *VET Act 2005*, Board members are required to disclose any direct or indirect pecuniary interest in a matter being considered or about to be considered at a meeting of the Board, that appears to raise a conflict with the proper performance of the member's duties in relation to the consideration of the matter.

A formal code of conduct for Board members and officers was approved by VETAB in 1992. It has subsequently been changed to take account of the particular department providing support services for VETAB.

1. Members and officers shall perform their duties impartially, uninfluenced by fear or favour, and shall be honest and straightforward in their official dealings with their colleagues and the public.
2. Members shall be diligent, attend Board meetings, be available to participate in advisory committee deliberations (including assessment panels) and make themselves knowledgeable about the business of VETAB and the environment in which it operates. Members shall not delegate attendance at Board meetings to substitutes.
3. Officers shall follow the Code of Conduct of the Department of Education and Training.*
4. Members shall disclose any pecuniary interest they may have in a commercial provider institution prior to that institution's accreditation application being assessed. The member shall not play any role in the accreditation of courses offered by that institution.
5. Officers shall inform the Director if a matter is likely to involve the officer in a conflict of interest and the officer shall withdraw from any discussion and take no part in the preparation of advice on the matter.
6. Members and officers shall not use information obtained in the course of their official duties to gain a pecuniary or other advantage for themselves or any other person.

7. Members and officers shall be independent in their judgements and actions and shall act at all times in the interests of VETAB rather than any sectional interest.

8. Members and officers shall not solicit or accept from any person any remuneration or benefit for discharging the duties of their office, and they shall avoid all situations in which it may appear that any person or body, by providing hospitality or benefits of any kind, could appear to gain or be trying to gain influence or favour.

Members and officers shall treat all Board papers, discussions and decisions as confidential and shall not disclose any Board deliberations or decisions other than in the circumstances provided and in the manner authorised under the *VET Act 2005* and the *Freedom of Information Act 1989*.

9. In order to be eligible for the protection available under the *Protected Disclosures Act*, officers reporting corruption, maladministration or serious and substantial waste shall do so in accordance with the internal procedure established for the purpose of the *Protected Disclosures Act*.

* The Department of Education and Training's Code of Conduct applies to all staff who provide assistance to the Board.

Appendix 2

Auditors' Code of Practice

Prior to auditing any registered training organisation, staff of the Department and external auditors undertaking an audit for VETAB or the Department, as well as personnel assisting with an audit, are required to sign a declaration stating that they have no financial or other interest in the business of the organisation.

The declaration requires the auditors to follow an AQTF Auditor Code of Practice (below) and return to the Department all documents and copies of documents they use during the audit.

AQTF Auditor Code of Practice

Preamble

All personnel who conduct audits on behalf of NSW VETAB of an organisation's compliance with the AQTF, as well as any other personnel participating in, organising or involved in reporting on an audit (all of whom are referred to in this Code as "auditors"), are duty bound to observe this Code.

Professional conduct

Auditors must act in a professional and ethical manner, protecting the rights of the organisations they audit and meeting the needs of their clients. In doing so, auditors must be objective, independent, honest, constructive and diligent.

Conflict of interest

Auditors must disclose in advance any information that may limit their capacity to make unbiased audit judgements, and potential conflicts of interest must be managed. Potential conflicting or competing interests that should be declared include past or present financial, professional or personal relationships with the organisation being audited, its employees or competitors. Auditors should never accept gifts or benefits from any organisation being audited except modest hospitality.

Confidentiality

Auditors must not discuss or disclose any information relating to an audit except where they are reporting to VETAB or agencies approved by VETAB on a "need to know" basis, under applicable laws, or where authorised in writing by the organisation being audited.

Intellectual property

Auditors must take all reasonable steps to protect the intellectual property and any commercial-in-confidence material or information disclosed during the course of an audit.

Responsibility to be informed

Auditors must be informed about the AQTF, including nationally agreed training delivery and assessment products, policies and practices.

Client focus

Auditors must ensure that the official representatives of the organisation being audited fully understand the audit process and the organisation's rights in that process. At all times when dealing with an organisation being audited, auditors will be polite, respectful, considerate and non-discriminatory.

Accountability

Auditors must not act in any way that may prejudice the reputation of VETAB or the integrity of the audit process and must cooperate fully with any inquiry into any alleged breach of this Code.

Appendix 3

Access and equity report

Commitment to access and equity in VET

VETAB is committed to supporting access and equity in vocational education and training. As a NSW statutory body, it supports the *Charter for Equity in Education and Training* (the charter), which expresses the NSW Government's commitment to the provision of high quality education and training programs that allow all students to achieve their potential.

The charter was attached to the tender guidelines for the 2006 Approved Provider List contract for The Department's Training Market. One criterion for the purchasing of training under the 2006 Strategic Skills Program was a RTO's capacity to meet equity in vocational education and training.

In terms of future directions for supporting access and equity in the VET sector, the objectives of the Strategic Skills Program (SSP) for 2007 – 2008 (for which RTOs can tender their services) include the development of skills to support labour market participation by those facing barriers in the VET sector, including Aboriginal people, mature aged people, people with a disability, disadvantaged youth and those from rural and remote communities. As in 2006, the Department's purchasing process for the Strategic Skills Program will give consideration to a RTO's capacity to meet equity in vocational education and training, as well as to RTO strategies for achieving positive employment and training outcomes for participants.

During 2007 – 2008, VETAB continued to support national initiatives to achieve equitable outcomes in vocational education and training, one of the agreed goals of the national VET system. Groups facing particular disadvantage in the VET sector include people with a disability and Indigenous people. Two national five-year strategies with implementation blueprints have underpinned initiatives for two of these groups. *Bridging Pathways* (in force until the end of 2005), which aimed to increase opportunities for people with a disability in VET and *Partners in a Learning Culture – the way forward* aims to increase opportunities for Indigenous people in VET.

As the Registering and Course Accrediting Body in NSW, VETAB is responsible for ensuring that RTOs and course developers comply with the AQTF standards for RTOs, including those standards that support principles of access and equity in vocational education and training.

The AQTF 2007 Standards for RTOs were introduced on 1 July 2007. Element 2.2 means that RTOs must provide clear information to clients prior to enrolment about provision for language, literacy and numeracy assistance. This element of Standard 2 requires RTOs to provide information about language, literacy and numeracy assessment.

Under Part 2 of the *NSW Vocational Education and Training Act 2005*, two members of the Board are appointed to represent the vocational education and training interests of students with special needs. Pam Gill represents Indigenous students and Dr Paolo Totaro, AM represents students from language backgrounds other than English.

During the year in review, VETAB continued to promote access and equity in vocational education and training through its communications. *VETAB News* published news of equity-focused events and training products, including national resources to assist training organisations to integrate access and equity principles into training delivery, assessment and management.

Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

During the year in review, VETAB continued to support implementation of *Partners in a Learning Culture*, the 2002-2005 national strategy for increasing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in vocational education and training. The strategy was reviewed in 2004 with a revised blueprint - *Partners in a Learning Culture – the way forward* – launched in 2005. The review identified six priorities to frame the Indigenous VET agenda for the future, namely:

- ☐ Building the capacity of the VET sector
- ☐ Creating more pathways
- ☐ Improving funding frameworks
- ☐ Culturally appropriate product development, design and delivery
- ☐ Links to employment, and
- ☐ Growing VET sector partnerships.

These priority areas are linked to the objective focused on Indigenous people in *Shaping Our Future – Australia's National Strategy for VET (2004-2010)*. The objective states that "Indigenous Australians will have skills for viable jobs and their learning culture will be shared."

The 2006 Annual Report of The Department reported on progress made in implementing the recommendations of the 2004 Report of the Aboriginal Education Review, in collaboration with NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc (AECG) and other key stakeholders. A key initiative with implications for the VET sector was the *NSW Aboriginal Education and Training Strategy 2006-2008* and its goal that by 2012 Aboriginal student outcomes will match or better outcomes of the broader student population.

Disability plans

VETAB adheres to the Department of Education and Training's *Disability Action Plan 2004-2006*, developed as part of the NSW Disability Policy Framework.

During the year in review, VETAB continued to support the implementation of *Bridging Pathways*, the 2000-2005 national strategy for increasing opportunities for people with a disability in vocational education and training. *Bridging Pathways* aims to make it easier for people with a disability to get information about training and access to training. The strategy also aims to provide training staff with the skills they need to support students with a disability and increase collaboration between private and public sector agencies.

The strategy was wrapped up at the end of 2005.

In March 2005, national Disability Standards for Education formulated under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* were tabled in the Parliament. The standards came into effect in August 2005. They clarify the obligations of education and training providers to ensure that students with disabilities are able to access and participate in education without experiencing discrimination, and cover the following areas:

- ☐ Enrolment
- ☐ Participation
- ☐ Curriculum development, accreditation and delivery
- ☐ Student support services
- ☐ Harassment and victimisation.

VETAB publicised the standards through *VETAB News* and promoted guidance notes available through the Department of Science, Education and Training website.

Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statement

As a NSW statutory authority, VETAB is guided by, and committed to, the Principles of Multiculturalism described in Section 3 of the *NSW Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000*.

As VETAB is supported by the QAS Directorate of the Department of Education and Training, updates on Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statement initiatives affecting VETAB customers are included in the Department's annual report.

NSW Government Action Plan for Women

The *NSW Government Action Plan for Women 2003-2005* concluded at the end of 2005. The NSW Office for Women is currently drafting the new NSW policy document *State Plan of Action for Women 2006-2010 – Our Commitment to Women* which aims to continue to extend and advance the position of women and girls in our society. The principles of equity, access, rights and participation outlined in the action plan are reflected in a number of Department of Education and Training initiatives within the VET sector.

Updates on the progress of Departmental EEO initiatives are outlined in its EEO annual report. This report integrates the EEO outcomes and program initiatives for EEO groups in the Department which resulted from the implementation of strategies contained in the *EEO Management Plan 2005-2008*.

Women in vocational education and training

One of the nationally agreed objectives of the VET system is to achieve equitable outcomes for disadvantaged groups including women. VETAB has provided ongoing support for this objective.

In June 2003, Australian, state and territory VET ministers agreed to women's issues being addressed through annual VET planning and reporting processes. To achieve this, it was agreed that a framework was needed for states and territories to work with and report against, consistent with national directions for VET. This framework is documented in *Women: shaping our future*, a paper released in March 2004. The paper outlines plans to advance the agenda for women nationally and is designed to work with Australia's national strategy for VET 2004-2010, *Shaping our Future*.

Appendix 4

Report of operations

Legal change

VETAB is constituted by, administers and operates in accordance with the *Vocational Education and Training Act 2005*. The VET Act was gazetted on 26 April 2006 and replaced the *Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Act 1990*. The new Act better reflects the different aspects of VETAB's role in registering training organisations, accrediting courses and approving persons to provide courses for overseas students.

The objectives and functions of the VETA Board have been expanded in the VET Act to include working with other state and territory R/CABs to ensure compliance of training organisations registered interstate.

Economic or other factors

There were no economic or other factors that affected the achievements of VETAB's operational outcomes during the year in review.

Management and other activities

Refer to About the Board, page 6.

Human resources

Staff providing support to VETAB are employed by The Department under the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act 2002*. VETAB's support staff are part of the QAS Directorate which is detailed in the organisation chart on page 10. VETAB's human resources and industrial relations policies are in accordance with the Department's policies and Public Employment Office guidelines.

More information on human resources is available in the Department's annual report, which is published each calendar year and is available from the Department's website at www.det.nsw.edu.au/

Consultants

There were no consultants employed by VETAB during 2007 – 2008.

Promotion

The public were able to access a range of VETAB publications online and in print during the year in review. These included VETAB's *2006-2007 Annual Report* and *VETAB News*. The email alert system implemented in 2005 – 2006 sends RTOs regular information and links to news updates on VETAB's website.

Website users also had access to a number of VETAB's forms, including declaration forms to be submitted with applications for renewal of registration, amendments to scope. In addition, the website contains the application form for course accreditation, and links to training.com.au where stakeholders can download national publications including *AQTF 2007 Essential Standards for Registration*, *Users' Guide to the Essential Standards for Registration*, and *Standards for Accrediting Courses*. VET stakeholders could also access to the national online VET publication *Training Packages @ Work*, which had more than 5,500 NSW subscribers in June 2008.

Consumer response

Details of complaints from consumers about RTOs and about VETAB services and the Board's responses are detailed in the year in review on page 33.

Guarantee of service

VETAB's standards are covered by the Department of Education and Training's Guarantee of Service. Service performance is highlighted in the Department's annual report.

Payment of accounts

VETAB's accounts are paid centrally by the Department.

Risk management and insurance

Risk management and insurance policies covering Board members and VETAB customers are the responsibility of the Department's Corporate Services Directorate and details of these are reported in the Department's annual report.

Occupational Health and Safety

The occupational health and safety of Board members and VETAB support staff is the responsibility of the Department's Corporate Services Directorate. Details of Occupational Health and Safety initiatives are reported in the Department's annual report.

Waste reduction and implementation of energy management policies

Implementation of the Government's waste reduction and energy management policies is the responsibility of the Department's Corporate Services Directorate. Initiatives to reduce waste are detailed in the Department's annual report.

Records management

VETAB's records management procedures are in accordance with those used and required by the Department.

In 2004-2005, QAS began using a new web-based customer and content management system – known as VIP – to manage RTO information. Three modules of VIP – namely customer management, general enquiries and RTO registration – were in operation in 2006-2007 and regularly enhanced.

As reported in VETAB's 2005 – 2006 Annual Report, recommendations for enhancing VETAB's record-keeping procedures were made by the Independent Commission Against Corruption. Improvements have continued to be made in 2007 – 2008 to VETAB's Quality Management System. All correspondence is recorded and tracked using the Department's VIP database.

Work was carried out in 2007 – 2008 on incorporating data for CRICOS providers into VIP, as well as on the Quality Assurance module covering complaints and risk management.

Privacy management plan

VETAB complies with all relevant State and Commonwealth legislation in managing customer information and details. Compliance of VETAB staff with the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* is managed by the Department of Education and Training and reported in the Department's annual report.

Freedom of Information Act requests

As a statutory body, VETAB must comply with the *Freedom of Information Act 1989* and relevant regulations. As information relating to VETAB's functions and customers is managed by Department of Education and Training staff, applications for access to documents under freedom of information legislation are managed by the Department. Details of requests for VETAB-related information or documents are included in the Department's annual report.

Electronic service delivery

VETAB customers are able to complete a number of transactions online, using e-lodgement facilities through VETAB's website. VETAB's registration, re-registration and variation to scope applications are now completed online. There is also a facility for customers to pay registration and other service fees online by credit card. In December 2005, a "present and pay system" was implemented as part of the e-lodgement facility that allows RTOs to set up a direct debit payment from their bank account.

An online fee calculator was also introduced at the end of 2005, allowing prospective and existing RTOs to calculate the cost of an application before it is submitted to VETAB.

Annual report format and cost

VETAB's annual report is available in print and on the Board's website. A full copy of the report or a copy of the report highlights document can be downloaded from **www.vetab.nsw.gov.au**. The total cost of producing the report was \$9,949.50 including GST.

Information sources for VETAB customers

Registration and accreditation

Information about becoming a registered training organisation and about course accreditation procedures is available on the VETAB website. Copies of registration and course accreditation documents can be downloaded from the training.com.au website. Printed copies of some documents are available from VETAB and can be requested by phone, fax or email. Copies of documents published by the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) and DEEWR can be downloaded from DEEWR's website at **www.dest.gov.au**

Registration and professional development workshops

Information about workshops for prospective training providers or existing RTOs can be obtained through the Department's Skills Development Unit. Information is available on 02 9266 8135 or on their website at:

www.det.nsw.edu.au/industryprograms/forueven/welcome.htm

Nationally recognised training and accredited courses

Information about RTOs and/or accredited courses is available on the NTIS website at **www.ntis.gov.au**

Training packages

Details of the status of training packages and the review processes is available on the Training Packages at Work website at **www.tpatwork.com**

Information about the New South Wales training system

Skilling NSW is a portal to training information and contacts within the NSW training system which is managed by the Department's State Training Services. The site is designed to assist RTOs and other VET stakeholders. Visit **www.skilling.nsw.gov.au**

Understanding the Terminology

ACD

Automatic Call Distribution

AQF

Australian Qualifications Framework

AQTF

Australian Quality Training Framework

ARF

Australian Recognition Framework

AVETMISS

Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standards

BVET

NSW Board of Vocational Education and Training

CRICOS

Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students

DEEWR

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

DIAC

Department of Immigration and Citizenship

ELICOS

English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students

IPART

Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal of NSW

ISC

Industry Skills Council

ITAB

Industry Training Advisory Bodies

NEAS

National ELICOS Accreditation Scheme

NRATC

National Registration and Accreditation Technical Committee

NTIS

National Training Information Service

NQC

National Quality Council

NSW

New South Wales

R/CAB

Registering/Course Accrediting Body

RPL

Recognition of Prior Learning

RTO

Registered Training Organisation

SIR

The NSW Police Security Industry Registry

The Department

NSW Department of Education and Training

VET

Vocational Education and Training

VETAB

NSW Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board

VIP

VET Integrated Project

Training Package(s) represent the national industry benchmarks for nationally recognised vocational outcomes in the VET system. They are an integrated set of nationally endorsed competency standards, Assessment Guidelines and AQF qualifications for a specific industry, industry sector or enterprise.

Training Packages consist of:

- ☐ Endorsed components of competency standards, assessment guidelines and qualifications
- ☐ Optional non-endorsed components of supporting materials, such as learning strategies, assessment resources and professional development materials

Accredited course means a structured sequence of vocational education and training that has been accredited and leads to an AQF qualification or Statement of Attainment.

Scope of Registration the particular services and products that a RTO is registered to provide. An RTO may be registered to provide either:

- ☐ Training delivery and assessment services and products and issue AQF qualifications and Statements of Attainment or
- ☐ Assessment services and products and issue AQF qualifications and Statement of Attainment.

Contacting VETAB

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NSW Vocational
Education & Training
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