



MEDIA RELEASE

Change of leadership for VET regulator

27 September 2019

Mark Paterson AO will conclude his term as Chief Commissioner and CEO of the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) on 6 October 2019.

Mr Paterson first joined ASQA as a Commissioner in May 2016, before leading the regulator as Chief Commissioner and CEO since 1 January 2017.

Minister for Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business, the Honourable Michaelia Cash thanked Mr Paterson for his contribution in lifting the vocational education and training (VET) sector out of its embattled VET FEE-HELP era.

“I would like to thank Mark for the leadership he has provided to ASQA since January 2017, including managing the removal of a large number of poor quality training providers that arose as a result of past practices and the VET FEE-HELP debacle,” Minister Cash said.

Mr Paterson was appointed as Chief Commissioner at a time of important reform for the VET sector. He was tasked with restoring trust from students, industry and the mostly quality providers across the sector in the wake of the removal of the much maligned VET-FEE HELP program.

Since then, Mr Paterson has used his role to ensure unscrupulous providers were removed from the sector, rebuilding the reputation of Australia’s education and training system.

He has overseen ASQA’s shift to a risk-based approach to regulating the sector that has resulted in audits only targeting providers that pose risks to quality. He also implemented the Raising the Bar initiative that ensures only quality newcomers can enter the VET market.

During Mr Paterson’s time as Chief Commissioner ASQA released two significant strategic reviews investigating systemic problems in the sector. One identified that very short VET courses may prevent students from gaining all of the skills and competencies they should when completing training, and paved the way to stamp out these courses. The latest is a comprehensive response to risks in Australia’s international VET and English language education markets, which will improve experiences for overseas students and strengthen collaborations between the many government, industry and education bodies working across this sector.

ASQA’s Deputy Chief Commissioner, Ms Saxon Rice, has been named as the regulator’s interim Chief Commissioner from 7 October 2019. Ms Rice has been Deputy Chief Commissioner at the regulator since April 2018.

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