



# Pathways & Perspectives

July 2022

**The Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) is the national regulator for vocational education and training (VET).**

Our purpose is to ensure quality vocational education and training so that students, employers, governments, and the community can have confidence in the integrity of national qualifications issued by training providers.

This publication is designed to support providers and their trainers, managers, training coordinators and compliance personnel; help students, parents, career advisers and employers make informed choices about their education and training needs; and showcase the many benefits that quality training brings to communities and the Australian economy.

## What is VET?



VET qualifications provide the skills that students need, employers rely on, and industries trust.



VET readies students for skills and careers that lead to **specific and practical jobs**.



VET is the main way Australians upskill or reskill. There are around **3 times** the number of VET students as there are higher education students each year.



More than  
**4 million**  
students undertake  
VET training each year



with around  
**4,000**  
training providers.

**Data source:** National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER).

## What VET means for Australia

The Australian VET system is central to Australia's **economic growth** and **business productivity**, and benefits society and individuals in many ways:



New skills



Improved confidence



Sense of achievement



Improved mental health



Financial security



Community connection



Pathways to employment



Pathways to further education

ASQA enables these **important community benefits** by educating and regulating the VET sector.



### **Ngaire Trigg**

**Customer service  
to environment support**

Diploma of Community  
Development



### **Stephen Colloff**

**Commercial art  
to land management**

Certificate III  
in Horticulture

## **Quality VET transforms lives**

Career stability was once the norm, but in an ever-changing world it is expected that the average person will change job titles many times. As a result, a good quality VET sector is more important than ever before for people of all ages. ASQA recently spoke with Australian Training Award Alumni and here are some examples of how quality VET can transform lives.

Dedicated mother-of-2, **Ngaire Trigg**, describes her vocational pathway from dance, customer service, interior design, nutritional medicine to the environment as “an evolving journey” – and she is just one of many mature age students enjoying the benefits of VET.

“After experiencing several industry occupations, attaining an Advanced Diploma of Nutritional Medicine and switching careers to become an award-winning apprentice was only made possible through access to quality VET”.

The flexibility, variety and skills acquired through life-long learning in the VET sector has now led to her current career as an environmental support officer.

Like Ms Trigg, jack-of-all trades graduate **Stephen Colloff** has enjoyed a VET pathway from commercial art and bricklaying to land management.

Mr Colloff said he owes everything to the quality of his trainers. “They supported me, pushed me and can see potential before you can even see it yourself and they encourage or steer you in the right direction,” he said.

Mr Colloff said he dreaded becoming an apprentice at the age of 38, soon after his wife had a baby. “There was the financial side, a risk which I was dreading,” he said.

“My wife was good enough to do overtime and had a decent paying council job as well, so I’m forever grateful for her supporting me through that and I try to pay that back now by just doing the best I can and moving up as well,” he said.

“The very first day at trade school, the lecturer basically summed up the course and where you could go from there. He said, basically, ‘you’ll get out of this exactly what you put into it’ and I put everything I had into it, and I think I got everything from it.”

Now a team leader for a natural resource’s biodiversity team, Mr Colloff has enjoyed great success and is offering apprenticeship opportunities to other mature age students to turn their lives around.

Award-winners in their fields, both Ms Trigg and Mr Colloff say that their lives have transformed. They attribute this to the quality of their vocational education and training.

# Ensuring quality VET outcomes

We work with providers to ensure they meet their regulatory obligations and that students receive the training and qualifications they expect.



## Our regulatory approach

- Our regulatory approach is risk-based and proportionate. We gather information about risks to the quality of training outcomes for students through research, tracking issues raised by consumers and collecting and analysing data.
- To view our 10 priorities for the year, visit our website: [Regulatory Risk Priorities](#)



**Recently** we collaborated with other state and federal government departments and partner organisations to **take coordinated action** to: -----



**monitor** areas of increased government funding such as the Boosting Apprenticeships Scheme for **appropriate use of funding**, and provided guidance to support providers accessing these funds



track a detected increase in the use of student cheating services with a view to **improving academic integrity**.



## Performance assessments (audits)

- Our performance assessments (audits) help tell us if a training provider is **compliant**.
- And give students assurances their education investment has **value** and **purpose**.
- This gives **Australians** confidence in the **integrity** of training providers and the **qualifications** they deliver.



We **shared** with the VET sector **analyses of our surveys** about: -----



training providers' use, experience and perceptions of **online learning**, as part of our strategic review of this rapidly evolving delivery mode



training providers who teach overseas students and the ways they manage the practices of **overseas education agents** who recruit students.



We also: -----



provided resources and tools to **support training and assessors** in our educational Spotlight On Compliance series



continued working with the VET sector to **co-design** a model for **self-assurance**



launched an **improved** approach to how we understand **training provider performance**.



## Self-assurance is NOT self-regulation

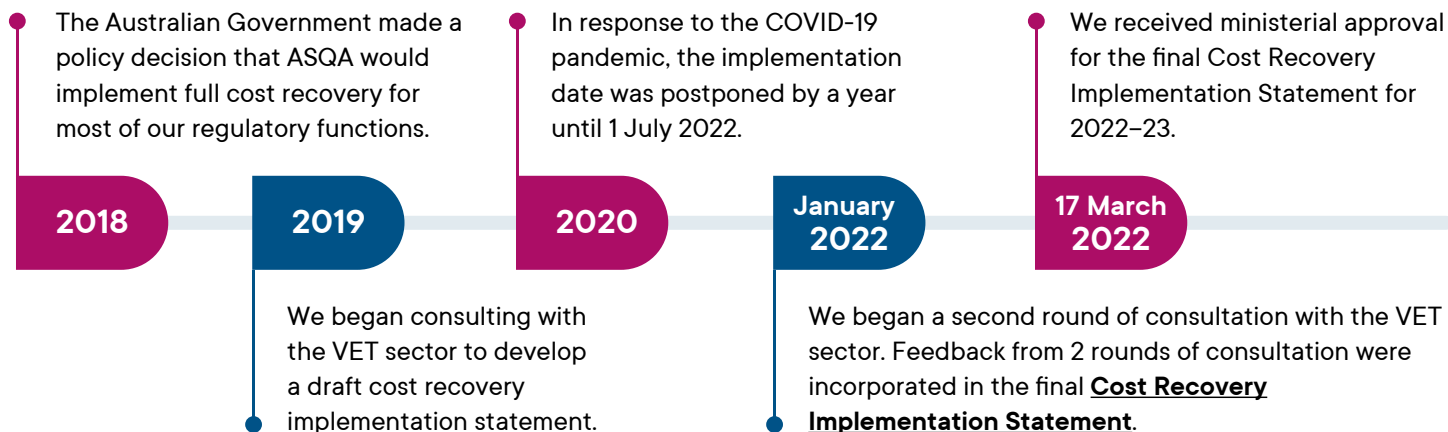
- Self-assurance is about supporting training providers to **identify risks** to the quality of their training practices and outcomes
- It helps providers be **proactive** in taking **remedial action** when things go wrong
- It encourages our providers to be **innovative** in meeting the training needs of students, industry and the community.

## Working together

Our overarching goal is to move from input and compliance controls, to a focus on self-assurance and excellence in training outcomes. Improving quality and confidence in the sector is a shared responsibility and ASQA is working with the VET sector to this end.

### Transitioning to full cost recovery

Working together with the VET sector for best practice cost recovery



From 1 July 2022, ASQA will begin operation as a **FULL COST RECOVERY AGENCY**. This will:



involve charging the non-government sector all of the efficient costs of a specific government activity



increase cost consciousness for all stakeholders by raising awareness of how much a government activity costs



influence demand for government activities



promote EQUITY, where recipients of a government activity, rather than the general public, bear its costs



improve the efficiency, productivity and responsiveness of government activities and accountability.

**Data source:** Department of Finance, Australian Government Cost Recovery Guidelines

### National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Advisory Council

The inaugural Advisory Council was appointed in April 2022. Members are appointed for their expertise in governance, regulation, industry engagement, and education and training. The Council will:

- support ASQA to continue its focus on best practice regulation of the VET sector
- facilitate continuous improvement of ASQA's governance practices and improve ASQA's access to high-level ongoing expert advice, including in relation to ASQA's strategic objectives and approach to regulation.

### National training package assurance body

In March 2022 ASQA was announced as the independent body to be responsible for training package assurance from 1 January 2023. This will see ASQA assessing training packages for compliance against standards and policies set by Skills Ministers.

This new function will:

- enhance transparency, accountability and confidence
- help ensure training packages are high quality
- meet the needs of employers and students.

By **working together**, we can foster a culture of **self assurance** and **continuous improvement** across the VET sector, for **all Australians**.

# Self-assurance research partnership

ASQA is working with ORIMA Research and the VET sector to develop a model for self-assurance through co-design. Details about the co-design process are available on our website: [Towards self-assurance](#)

As part of the co-design process ORIMA consulted with training providers and other VET stakeholders in the first half of 2022. The consultation has identified the guiding principles for a self-assurance model, enabling a draft model for self-assurance to be developed and refined.

**150+ representatives** of registered training organisations participated through:



**18** focus groups



**20** online interviews

**Stakeholders** participated through:



**8** interviews with state and territory skills representatives



Workshops with ASQA's Provider Roundtable (PRT), Stakeholder Liaison Group (SLG) and VET Regulators



Web feedback form.

## Defining self-assurance

Self-assurance refers to how providers manage their operations to ensure a **focus on quality, continuous improvement** and ongoing compliance with the **Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015** (the Standards).

Under a self-assurance model, quality and continuous improvement are **shared responsibilities** through the different roles of individual providers, sector leaders and the national regulator.

It involves providers having **systems in place to critically examine their performance against the Standards** and training outcomes, on an ongoing basis, to meet obligations and to identify ways to continuously improve outcomes.

Throughout the co-design process, there has been broad agreement with this definition of self-assurance.



## Evolving the model elements

The model has been refined based on input from providers and stakeholders in the co-design process.

As the sector continues its journey towards self-assurance ASQA will work with providers and stakeholders to understand more about providers' assurance practices and develop education and guidance materials.

Draft version of the model as at May 2022

Engage with us. Tell us what you think.  
Share your stories in future ASQA publications.

