VET Sector Strategic Forum (VSSF) Communiqué

July 2025

The VSSF convened on 29 July 2025, chaired by ASQA Chief Executive Officer Saxon Rice. The meeting brought together senior representatives from peak VET sector organisations.

The meeting achieved the following outcomes:

- sector feedback on the transition to the 2025 Standards for RTOs to inform ASQA's ongoing program of guidance and support
- an outline and understanding of ASQA's updated Regulatory Risk Priorities for 2025–26
- an initial outline of ASQA's plan to revise its Cost Recovery Implementation Statement (CRIS) in 2025-26 and the consultation that will inform that process
- discussed ASQA's approach to supporting productivity through regulatory reform and
- strengthened collaboration and stakeholder engagement, including in relation to the opportunities for aligning VET sector strategies, minimising policy friction and continuing to consider key issues such as diversity, foundation skills and the consideration of AI in training product review.

2025 Standards for RTOs Implementation

ASQA provided an update on the implementation of the 2025 Standards, including insights from recent workshops and webinars. Feedback from providers indicated strong awareness and motivation to engage, as well as high rates of motivation to support the changes presented by the 2025 Standards. ASQA committed to ongoing engagement, including expanding Practice Guides with case studies, publishing FAQs and interpretive advice, monitoring implementation and sharing insights, refreshing the ASQA website and digital resources.

Regulatory Risk Priorities and Integrity Focus

ASQA outlined the 2025–26 Regulatory Risk Priorities, which focus on six deeply interconnected areas including, academic integrity, recognition of prior learning, shortened course durations, student work placements, delivery to overseas students, and non-genuine providers. It was acknowledged that while these priority areas don't differ significantly from the current regulatory risk priorities, there is nuance to relation to the nature of some of these risks. ASQA continues to apply a risk-based, intelligence-driven approach to regulation, supported by initiatives such as an inspectorate program, independent validation of student assessment, and qualification integrity campaigns and will provide more information about these to all stakeholders shortly.

Cost Recovery Implementation Statement

ASQA outlined its phased approach to cost recovery and plans for consultation on a revised Cost Recovery Implementation Statement (CRIS) in 2025-26 for implementation in 2026-27. The program aims to increase transparency and accountability, streamline operations through digital investment and collaborate with stakeholders to reduce unnecessary costs. Members discussed the importance of market entry controls and supported proposals for considering different options for the oversight of applicants new to VET delivery in order to mitigate risk.

ASQA's support for Productivity and Regulatory Reform

The Chair shared and welcomed discussion ASQA's intended response to the Government's request for regulatory reform to support productivity growth. Key initiatives included reducing unnecessary administrative costs, enhancing flexibility and innovation through the 2025 Standards, implementation of a Dual Sector Strategy with TEQSA, enhancing ASQA's targeted approach and regulatory effort, enhanced collaboration and information sharing and implementation of a digital transformation program. ASQA is also working closely with DEWR to identify opportunities to remove duplication and improve system efficiency.

Strategic Alignment and System Cohesion

The Chair welcomed Brett Schimming (Build Skills Australia on behalf of JSC CEOs) who opened a discussion on the opportunity for greater strategic alignment across the VET ecosystem to shape the future direction of VET, including as it relates to training product development and regulation. The group agreed that a more unified approach is needed to address challenges such as diversity, tertiary harmonisation, foundation skills, and closing the gap. There was strong support for ensuring conversations were not siloed and towards influencing system-wide reform. The increasing shift towards micro-credentials and away from formal national qualifications was noted as a key trend requiring further exploration.

Technology and AI in VET

Brett Schimming also discussed the rapid pace of technological change and its impact on education and training. Members highlighted the challenges posed by current training product approval processes and questions whether these were keeping pace with industry needs. The role of AI in reshaping education and the workforce was a recurring theme, with consideration given to upskilling educators in digital literacy and supporting lifelong learning. The Chair acknowledged the importance of integrating AI considerations into regulatory frameworks and committed to further engagement on this topic.

Attendees

Australian Skills Quality Authority
Chief Executive Officer, Saxon Rice
Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Penny McKay

Adult Learning Australia
Chief Executive Officer, Jenny Macaffer

Enterprise Registered Training Organisation Association
President, Pamela Simon
Executive Officer, Gabrielle Deschamps

English Australia
Chief Executive Officer, Ian Aird

Independent Tertiary Education Council Australia
Chief Executive Officer, Felix Pirie

TAFE Directors Australia
Chief Executive Officer, Jenny Dodd

Invited Guest
Jobs and Skills Council CEOs
Chief Executive Officer, Brett Schimming (Build Skills Australia)