



VET Sector Strategic Forum (VSSF) Communiqué

January 2026

The VSSF meeting was held on 28 January 2026 and chaired by ASQA's Chief Executive Officer, Saxon Rice. It brought together senior representatives from peak VET sector organisations, including to welcome the National Indigenous Employment and Training Alliance to the membership.

The meeting centred on the following areas of shared focus and discussion:

- ASQA's cost recovery review, including key reforms to improve fairness, predictability and alignment between regulatory effort and fees
- sector use of artificial intelligence (AI), as it aligns to the 2025 Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)
- ASQA's quality and integrity work program, including actions to strengthen confidence in VET qualifications
- progress across the Smart Regulation program, including implementation of the 2025 Standards, maturing of the risk-based differentiated regulatory approach, dual sector alignment and digital transformation initiatives
- review of ASQA's Service Standards to ensure they remain contemporary, improve clarity and support more timely and transparent regulatory interactions.

Cost Recovery Review

ASQA engaged members in discussion on the cost recovery review. The review is progressing to continuously improve ASQA's transparent, modern and proportionate regulatory model. The updated approach reflects expanded regulatory functions, increased operational activity and changes in provider risk. These changes ensure that fees and charges more accurately align with the actual regulatory effort required, to support fairness, clarity and long-term sustainability while enabling providers to better plan for the cost of regulation.

ASQA acknowledged the group's feedback on the cost recovery review, including questions around the rationale for differing charges for NVR and ESOS providers, the information required to ensure complete applications, and how charges, including the process for disputing charges, may be communicated to providers. The feedback highlighted several areas for ASQA's consideration to include in future communications.

Sector use of AI

ASQA provided a project update on the Regulatory Use of AI, noting the rapid uptake of generative AI across the VET sector and its implications for quality and integrity. Early research shows providers commonly use AI for curriculum development, assessment design, administrative functions and learner support, with benefits such as efficiency gains, improved learning materials and more

personalised pathways. ASQA also outlined emerging risks, including academic integrity concerns, data privacy and security issues, inconsistent AI outputs and gaps in digital literacy. ASQA is progressing work to establish a framework and principles for responsible AI use aligned with the 2025 Standards for RTOs, supported by stakeholder engagement and forthcoming sector guidance.

ASQA's Quality and Integrity Work Program

ASQA's quality and integrity programs continue to focus on the 2025-26 Regulatory Risk Priorities, with targeted risk-treatment campaigns underway to maintain strong oversight of provider behaviour and safeguard confidence in VET qualifications. Since late 2024, regulatory action has resulted in the cancellation of 16 RTOs and, by 31 December 2025, the cancellation of qualifications and statements of attainment for more than 30,000 individuals. This work reflects ASQA's ongoing commitment to student protection and high-quality training and assessment. Regulatory intelligence and recent sector activity is informing emerging areas of concern and reinforcing the integrity of qualifications while ensuring providers meet their obligations under the 2025 Standards.

Smart Regulation

ASQA provided an update on the Smart Regulation program, highlighting progress across 4 core elements of the regulatory reform agenda, including the implementation of the 2025 Standards and supported by revised assessment approaches, expanded sector engagement and quality-uplift initiatives. ASQA also outlined its ongoing maturing of its risk-based, differentiated regulatory model to enable more targeted and proportionate supervision and engagement aligned with provider risk profiles. Progress under the Dual Sector Regulatory Strategy was noted, focusing on streamlining processes, reducing administrative burden and strengthening governance for dual-sector providers, alongside enhancements delivered through the Digital Transformation Program to modernise systems, improve data use and simplify provider interactions.

Service Standards

ASQA outlined its review of Service Standards to ensure they remain contemporary and reflect its modern regulatory approach and clearer service expectations. The updated Standards streamline processes, set new timeframes for registration, clarify complaint management and remove outdated requirements. Members discussed how these changes will affect provider operations, especially registration notifications and funding arrangements.

ASQA acknowledged the feedback provided which would support broader clarity of communication to assist providers in understanding the practical application of the Service Standards. Additional clarification was circulated to members that provided feedback, following the meeting.

Attendees

Australian Skills Quality Authority

Chief Executive Officer, Saxon Rice
Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Vidoshi Jana
Director, Continuous Improvement, Sharayne Given
Director, Policy and Education, Melinda Cox

Adult Learning Australia

Chief Executive Officer, Jenny Macaffer

Community Education Australia (CEA)

Chief Executive Officer, Russ Hawkins

English Australia

Chief Executive Officer, Ian Aird

Enterprise Registered Training Organisation Association

Executive Officer, Gabrielle Deschamps

Independent Higher Education Australia

Chief of Policy, Dr James Hart

Independent Tertiary Education Council Australia

Chief Executive Officer, Felix Pirie

National Indigenous Employment and Training Alliance

Chief Executive Officer, Kylie Penehoe

TAFE Directors Australia

Executive Director, Policy and Governance, Dr Teresa Schmidt