



MEDIA RELEASE

ASQA's decision to cancel AIPE's registration stands

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The Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) has welcomed a decision by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) to dismiss an application to review its decision to cancel the registration of the Australian Institute for Professional Education (AIPE, RTO number 91437).

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AIPE was one of the largest providers of vocational education and training (VET) services - including to overseas students – in Australia. Between 2013 and 2016, it enrolled approximately 15,500 VET FEE-HELP-supported students through external brokers, amounting to loans of \$243m provided by the Australian Government.

ASQA announced its decision to cancel AIPE's registration as a VET provider in December 2015 after comprehensive regulatory scrutiny. ASQA's scrutiny identified numerous serious issues with AIPE, including the way it was enrolling students.

The brokers working on AIPE's behalf targeted vulnerable sections of the community, providing inducements - including computers, food, alcohol, marijuana, cigarettes and cash - and failed to explain that students would incur significant debts by enrolling. The majority of students had little or no ability to complete diploma-level courses, nor did many of the students engage with the provider post-enrolment.

ASQA Chief Commissioner Chris Robinson said that AIPE entered voluntary liquidation in October, part way through a hearing by the AAT of AIPE's application to review the cancellation of its registration. ASQA and AIPE consented to the AAT dismissing the application before the AAT completed its review. AIPE's registration was cancelled immediately.

"The conduct of registered training providers (RTOs) such as AIPE has caused significant damage to Australia's domestic and international reputation as a destination for high quality VET services," Mr Robinson said.

"As a result of the audits of VET FEE-HELP-approved training providers undertaken in 2015, ASQA cancelled the registration of four RTOs – AIPE, Unique International College (RTO 91350), Cornerstone Investments (RTO 5500) and Phoenix Institute (RTO 21582).

"ASQA has continued its focus on VET FEE-HELP-approved providers in 2016 with 19 providers of concern identified and subjected to regulatory scrutiny. This scrutiny is well-advanced and ASQA will make a public statement about its findings at the end of the project."