

## **TVET Australia: National Audit and Registration Agency Privacy Plan: May 2009**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this Privacy Plan is to identify ways in which the National Audit and Registration Agency collects, stores, uses and discloses personal information as it relates to the registration and audit of registered training organisations (RTOs).

### **Requirements of Delegation**

NARA is required to develop a Privacy Plan to comply with the delegation from Queensland's Training and Employment Recognition Council (TERC) to TVET Australia. This delegation requires compliance with the Queensland Government's *Information Standard 42* and the supporting privacy guidelines that regulate the responsible management of personal information - including its collection, storage, use and disclosure.

### **RTO Records (Hard Copy)**

In undertaking its delegated functions from TERC, NARA is required to collect information from RTOs relating to their registration and audit history.

NARA also collects this information from organisations seeking registration as an RTO for the first time.

For existing RTOs transferring their registration to NARA, hard copy files of the RTO's compliance history are forwarded to NARA by the Queensland Department of Education and Training (DET). Upon receipt of these files they are entered into NARA's records management system and stored in a secure storage facility. Only NARA officers are able to access these hard copy files.

NARA uses the information contained in the RTO's hard copy files to scope its audit and compliance approach for each RTO based on the *AQTF National Risk Management Guideline*.

### **RTO Records (Electronic)**

NARA maintains electronic copies of RTOs' records, including audit reports and correspondence with RTOs. NARA officers and officers of TVET Australia working in the Office of the CEO and the IT business unit have access to these records. TVET Australia is currently making amendments to its IT policy to ensure it specifically address information security in relation to access by non-NARA officers to RTO records. It is anticipated that the updated policy will be in operation from 1 July 2009.

### **NTIS**

In addition to hard copy RTO files transferred to NARA by DET, each RTO's electronic file is transferred from DET to NARA via the National Training Information Service (NTIS).

The electronic information recorded on NTIS relates to the RTO's contacts, training locations, scope and period of registration. All RTO information available on NTIS is intended to be publicly available.

NARA maintains a registration database that uploads information to NTIS. This database is managed by a third party contractor (Hammond Street Developments). Their privacy policy is available at: [http://www.hsd.com.au/privacy\\_policy.html](http://www.hsd.com.au/privacy_policy.html).

### **iCiX**

RTOs whose registration and audit functions are managed by NARA are provided with access to a secure web facility managed by the International Compliance Information Exchange (iCiX).

These RTOs are provided with their own iCiX sites onto which they can upload information that is relevant to their NTIS record.

RTOs are able to update their own personal details in iCiX (including the names of day-to-day contacts, training locations, etc). This information is later reflected in the NARA registration database and on NTIS. RTOs are not able to change details such as their legal or trading names or ABN numbers through the iCiX facility. NARA must be notified directly of changes such as these by the RTO. NARA receives daily reports on changes made to each RTO's iCiX site and undertakes periodic checks (in accordance with its documented Quality Management System) to ensure this information is accurate and complete.

RTOs can also upload onto iCiX documentation to support their audit applications. In doing so, RTOs allow NARA officers permission to view their electronic documents. NARA then assigns viewing permissions to those documents to the NARA auditor who will undertake the RTO's audit. At the conclusion of the audit these permissions are turned off.

iCiX has its privacy statement for the collection of personal information on its website at: <http://www.icix.com/assets/user/files/OnlinePrivacyPolicy.pdf>.

### **Complaints**

NARA collects and stores personal information from learners, employers, industry regulators and other VET stakeholders where they have a complaint to make about an RTO registered with NARA.

In managing its complaints process NARA complies with the *AQTF National Guideline for Responding to Complaints about VET Quality*.

The complaints form on the NARA website details the information that is collected by NARA. Complainants are not required to complete the complaints form to lodge a complaint and may choose to contact NARA by phone or in person. The information collected by NARA is used by to determine what action needs to be taken in relation to the complaint.

Where a complainant requests that their details be kept confidential, NARA has guidelines in place for staff to ensure the confidentiality of the complainant. The amendments to TVET Australia's IT policy to ensure it specifically addresses information security in relation to access by non-NARA officers to RTO records will also cover those related to complaints received by NARA.

To aid the investigation of a complaint, NARA is authorised to share with other State and Territory registering bodies, information about an RTO having its registration managed by NARA. This information sharing does not extend to personal information where a complainant has requested it be kept confidential.

NARA does not disclose information collected in relation to complaints about VET quality to any other parties.

### **NARA Good Practice Workshops**

NARA collects feedback from participants at all of its workshops as part of its continuous improvement processes. Participants have the option of providing their personal details with their feedback. Any personal information provided by participants is stored in a secure storage facility and can be accessed only by NARA officers and relevant non-NARA officers of TVET Australia. This information is not disclosed to any organisations outside TVET Australia.

### **Ministerial Correspondence**

Occasionally NARA may receive correspondence addressed to the Queensland Minister for Education and Training (or the staff of the Office of the Minister) from other public or government agencies on matters related to the management of RTO registration by NARA. Such correspondence may require the preparation of advice and responses.

In such instances NARA will keep copies of the inwards and outwards documentation in electronic and paper form. Those records may include personal information such as: names, addresses, personal opinions about public administration matters, occupational and organisational information about persons, complaints and grievances subject matter and any other matter that the correspondent wishes to convey to the Minister about themselves or personally identifiable third parties in government or amongst the public.

The NARA officers who have access to the ministerial correspondence records include the TVET CEO, NARA General Manager, senior officers and administrative staff who process the correspondence and departmental officers on a 'need-to-know basis'. The information will not usually be disclosed to other persons or organisations.

In addition the Minister, Director-General of DET, and/or the Chair of TERC may require timely, accurate and comprehensive written advice from NARA to support their decision-making. NARA's advice may, in certain circumstances, include personal information.

### **Retention of Records**

The RTO records under the control of NARA are retained for 30 years. Individuals may obtain information regarding access to their personal information by contacting NARA's Operations Manager (02) 9409 3210 or by email [nara@tvetaustralia.com.au](mailto:nara@tvetaustralia.com.au).

**Review**

TVET Australia will review and update its privacy plan and IT Policy on an annual basis, or as a result of feedback from RTOs or other stakeholders. NARA is subject to an annual independent audit of its compliance with the *AQTF Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies* and will ensure these annual audits include this privacy plan.

**Requests to amend or correct personal information held by TVET Australia**

RTOs having their registration managed by NARA are able to request that amendments are made to correct personal information held about them.

**TVET Australia Ltd's compliance with privacy legislation beyond RTO registration and audit**

In all other aspects of TVET Australia Ltd's operations, the organisation complies with the Information Privacy Principles as though it were an "agency" under the Privacy Act 1988.