



NATIONAL
AUDIT AND
REGISTRATION
AGENCY

NARA News

October, 2009

The Newsletter of the National Audit & Registration Agency



October has been another very busy month for the NARA team as you'll see from the size of this month's newsletter.

We're preparing for our upcoming *RTO Good Practice Workshops* (a small number of places are still available – see inside for details). We've also been making progress on the implementation of the continuous improvements identified in the NCVER's annual audit of our compliance with the *AQTF State and Territory Registering Body Standards*. For a copy of our 2009 audit report and my response to how we'll tackle the continuous improvements identified go to (<http://www.nara.tvetaustralia.com.au/>).

I'm very pleased to announce that this month has also seen us receive the Western Australia Training Accreditation Council's delegation to TVET Australia. As with Victoria, legislative change was necessary in Western Australia to enable a delegation to be made but it is now in place and NARA staff have been in discussions with staff from the Department of Education Services in Western Australia to ensure the successful operation of the delegation.

continued on page 02...

NARA Contact Details

1300 00 NARA (1300 00 6272)

Address: Level 16, 201 Miller Street
North Sydney, NSW, 2060

Phone: [02] 9409 3200

Fax: [02] 9409 3250

Email: nara@tvetaustralia.com.au

Web: www.nara.tvetaustralia.com.au

Delegation received from Western Australia

RTOs registered in Western Australia and wishing to have their AQTF audit and registration managed by NARA are now able to do so following the receipt of the delegation from the Western Australia Training and Accreditation Council. Information will shortly be available on both the NARA website (<http://www.nara.tvetaustralia.com.au/>) and from the Western Australia Training Accreditation Council website on what information you need to provide to the TAC for them to approve your eligibility for NARA.

Welcome to those RTOs from Western Australia who intend transferring registration to NARA. NARA will be spending time in Western Australia later this year and will run some of its RTO Good Practice workshops early next year in the West – giving you a chance to meet with key NARA staff and learn more about us.

Out and about with NARA

ERTOAs meetings

NARA General Manager Claire Field met with ERTOA members recently in Sydney, Melbourne, and Canberra. Topics discussed included feedback on the introduction of quality indicators, the challenges faced by enterprise RTOs, a shift in some enterprise RTOs away from full qualifications to skill sets, and other emerging issues in the national training system eg the VET Products for the 21st Century project (for more on this project see over for an interview with Project Director Paula Johnston).

VRQA meetings

Periodically throughout the year the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority holds seminars for individuals and organisations interested in seeking registration as an RTO. NARA's General Manager has been pleased to attend these workshops and highlight the processes NARA has in place to ensure applications

from organisations intending to operate nationally are of the highest order and that the organisation is thoroughly prepared to work as an RTO should they be registered. NARA has worked hard with its endorsed Quality Consultants to ensure that the advice and support they give to new applicants (and existing RTOs) is of the highest quality and has been very pleased by the applications and preparedness of organisations seeking initial registration with NARA.

RTO engagements

NARA General Manager, Claire Field presented a session on continuous improvement at the Jobs Australia National Conference in Hobart on 21 October 2009.

Titled "Close up and personal, continuous improvement and compliance in training" the presentation focused on the issue of continuous improvement in the following areas:

- The big picture – continuous improvement embedded as part of the whole business culture
- The close up view – what continuous improvement means for the individual on a day to day basis
- The audit perspective – compliance with the requirements of the AQTF

National consistency

Auditor moderation

Through September and October, NARA's auditor moderation program has covered the following topics:

- Definitions of low and medium risk as described in the AQTF National Guideline for Risk Management and the gap between these where many RTOs operate
 - Validation of vocational competence claims against AQTF Standard 1.4.
- Moderation sessions also included



presentations from Jennifer Gibb, Director of the National VET Equity Advisory Council (NVEAC) and Innovation & Business Skills Australia (IBSA) who provided NARA auditors with an overview of the latest training and assessment resources available to support the Business Services and Training and Assessment Training Packages.

NQC National Consistency Action Group

The National Consistency Action Group is overseeing a suite of benchmarking activities by the State and Territory Registering Bodies and NARA as part of its Continuous Improvement Strategy. Areas for benchmarking include:

- risk assessment
- complaints handling
- registration and re-registration processes and regulatory approaches (including provision of information and training)
- managing non-compliance
- industry regulator engagement
- process for accreditation of courses, and
- outcomes approach to auditing, including models for working with industry in auditing, auditing approaches and interpretation and audit evidence requirements.

NARA is working with the ACT and Western Australia on benchmarking registration and re-registration processes.

International quality assurance

National Quality Council

Over the last few weeks NARA General Manager, Claire Field, has been pleased to meet with consultants working on projects for the National Quality Council's International VET Action Group.

Projects include:

- AQTF and the International Student Experience – Mr Gary Thomas and Mr Robin Austen from Acuto Consulting. This project is identifying how the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) can be strengthened to better enhance the experience of

International Students during their time in Australia.

- Offshore quality assurance monitoring against the AQTF – Ms Moira Schulze and Dr Sue Foster. This project is developing a possible model for quality assuring delivery by Australian RTOs overseas.

ESOS Act Review and Amendments

TVET Australia has also made submissions to the Senate Committee reviewing the proposed amendments to the Education Services for Overseas Students Amendment (Re-registration of Providers and Other Measures) Bill 2009, as well as a submission to the Review of the ESOS Act being led by Mr Bruce Baird. A copy of TVET Australia's submission to the review will shortly be available on the NARA website.

Off-shore quality assurance

When the State, Territory and Commonwealth Ministers agreed to establish NARA, they were explicit that NARA would need to actively monitor and effectively quality assure any off-shore VET delivery being undertaken by RTOs having their registration managed by NARA. To that end, the TVET Australia Board has endorsed a fee schedule which enables NARA to recover the costs associated with off-shore audit activity. It is NARA's intention that as part of an RTO's re-registration audit its on and off-shore operations will be audited. NARA is currently scoping the first of these audits of an RTO operating in the Pacific and due for re-registration in the first half of 2010. NARA will ensure that the RTO and relevant agencies in the countries of off-shore delivery are involved in the audit scoping.

NARA RTO Good Practice Workshops

NARA is pleased to offer two new workshops for RTOs in November 2009. These workshops will be run in other States and Territories in early 2010.

Workshop One focuses on 'an holistic approach to managing a quality RTO' – facilitator NARA Auditor, Ms Marilyn Harvey. Workshop participants will consider:

...from page 01

Finally, I am pleased to announce that in addition to my responsibilities as the General Manager, NARA, I have been given responsibility to lead another TVET Australia business unit – *Training Products Australia*. At their October meeting, members of the TVET Australia Board endorsed a new business model for what had been TVET Australia's Product Services arm. Focussing explicitly on the provision of quality learning resources and support to trainers, the new business model will be rolled out in 2010. Watch this space for more information on Training Products Australia and read on for some of the national research findings commissioned by TVET Australia and underpinning our new business model for Training Products Australia.

*Claire Field
General Manager, NARA*

- The difference between quality and compliance
- What a quality approach contributes to an RTO
- The business process of an RTO
- Embedding quality in the business process
- Presenting the business process at audit

Places are only available for this workshop in Cairns on 6 November - all other cities are booked out. Cost - \$220.00 (including GST). Free for NARA RTOs and those in the process of transferring to NARA.

Workshop Two is free of charge to all RTOs and is aimed at those of you struggling to come to grips with all of the changes happening in the national training system and what they mean for RTOs. For example:

- Are you aware that the National Quality Council has agreed to a new definition of competency?
- Do you know about the work being undertaken by the NQC on 'VET Products for the 21st Century' – and how it will improve the design of training packages?



- Is national regulation of the AQTF Standards and ESOS National Code on the cards?
- What does the establishment of the new VET Equity Advisory Council (NVEAC) mean for the sector and those of you offering training to students from disadvantaged backgrounds?
- Where can you find reliable, cost effective resources to support your trainers and assessors?
- Have you thought about making your training resources available for sale – how can you make a profit and still protect your IP?

Staff from TVET Australia will lead an interactive discussion on these topics. Come prepared to ask your questions and hear about what's happening across the training system at the national level.

Questions and Answers with Paula Johnston – Project Director for VET Products for the 21st Century

NARA News: Paula, your name came to the attention of NARA News readers when we showcased the Policy in the Pub discussion you were a part of recently in Melbourne. Can you tell us a bit more about your project?

Paula Johnston: We're looking at how VET products can be made more usable, flexible and responsive for industry and individuals, and other players that use them along the way, including RTOs. The project came out of work by the National Quality Council (NQC) and the Council of Australia Governments (COAG) in 2008-09. Both groups were keen that VET products – including training packages, accredited courses and supporting material - met the needs of employers and learners and were flexible enough to keep pace with their changing needs. The resulting report, VET Products for the 21st Century can be downloaded from at: http://www.nqc.tvetaustralia.com.au/about_nqc/action_groups/vet_training_products_for_the_21st_century

The report's recommendations cover the following areas for further work:

- Streamlining Training Packages including separating the performance standards from guidance and supporting information

- Reviewing packaging rules in Training Packages to ensure maximum flexibility and consistency within and across Training Packages and accredited courses
- Revising the current definition of "competency" to embody the ability to transfer and apply skills and knowledge to new situations and environments
- Increasing the focus on preparatory and enabling qualifications and language, literacy and numeracy requirements in VET products and how best to address equity needs.
- Investigating the introduction of a national credit system, jointly with the Australian Qualifications Framework Council (AQFC)

With the research phase of the project completed in June this year, I joined TVET Australia in August to lead work on designing solutions based on the above overall directions already decided. We're now well underway and from January 2010 we'll start work on implementing the changes. We don't expect all will occur overnight on 1 January 2010 but everyone is keen to see the types of changes identified and agreed rolled out soon.. In particular, a new design for Training Packages needs to happen as quickly as possible, so that benefits for industry and learners can start to be seen.

Updates on progress will be available via the NQC's newsletter and website.

NARA Good Practice Workshops

Limited places are available in the following locations:

Date	Time	City	
4 November	10 am - 12 noon	Adelaide	
6 November	1 pm - 3 pm	Cairns	
9 November	10 am - 12 noon	Sydney	Extra places now available
10 November	10 am - 12 noon	Melbourne	Extra places now available
12 November	1pm - 3pm	Brisbane	

Bookings can be made for all sessions via email to nara@tvetaustralia.com.au



16 November Policy in the Pub: Employment and Training: Seamless or Separate

Please note that for those NARA News readers not in Melbourne the session will be streamed live on the TVET Australia website. For details go to http://www.tvetaustralia.com.au/policy_pub. All web participants MUST register their details by 5pm on Thursday, 12 November. Upon registering, you will receive a confirmation email and instructions and login details.

Training Products Australia

To assist TVET Australia in the development and implementation of a new business model for its Products Services arm, the Commonwealth government provided funding for a substantial market research project aimed at understanding what trainers and other VET practitioners within RTOs and ACE providers look for and need in the area of learning resources. Market and social research agency, newfocus Pty Ltd, was successful in winning the tender and undertook a combined qualitative and quantitative research project for TVET Australia.

The quantitative research comprised surveys of almost 900 VET practitioners earlier this year. The sample has an accuracy of $\pm 3.2\%$ and found that;

- 86% of the sample rated learning resources very important in the provision of training, with a further 14% rating them somewhat important
- learning resources were seen to support student learning by enabling (among other things): flexibility to cater for a range of learning styles, a means to better engage with learners, reinforcement of training 'outside of the learning environment' and the maintenance of high-quality, effective training
- most practitioners reported using a range of learning resources, including: learner guides (75%), assessment guides (71%), worksheets (71%), visual materials (66%), websites (62%), case studies (61%), teacher guides (60%) and textbooks (59%).

Most respondents used multiple sources of information to get information and recommendations on learning resources; however, the two key sources of information and recommendations were their peers (82%), such as other trainers and colleagues, and online searches (81%). Industry Skills Councils (46%), publishers (46%) and online repositories of learning resources (45%) were also commonly used as sources. Furthermore, around a third of the sample stated they received information and recommendations from tradeshow or conferences (37%), industry related suppliers (36%), bookshops (32%), Government authorities (31%) and libraries (30%).

TVET Australia Presents...

TVET Australia's Policy in the Pub provides an open and independent space where stakeholders can exchange ideas and engage in conversation on key policy issues and hot topics in vocational education and training (VET).

policy

in the

pub

@HONEY

Employment & Training: Seamless or Separate?

Monday, 16 November 2009 4.00pm-6.00pm

<h3>SPEAKERS TO INCLUDE</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ ANDREW SMITH CEO, Australian Council for Private Education and Training [ACPET] ◆ CRAIG ROBERTSON Group Manager, Tertiary Skills & Productivity Group, DEEWR ◆ ANNETTE GILL Policy Manager, National Employment Services Association [NESA] 	<h3>DON'T MISS THE NOVEMBER POLICY IN THE PUB!!!</h3> <p>TIME: 4.00pm-6.00pm DATE: Monday, 16 November 2009 VENUE: Honey Bar, 345 Clarendon St, South Melbourne Corner of Park St and Clarendon St RSVP: Kath Leslie by 2pm on 16 November 2009 PHONE: (03) 9832 8102 EMAIL: kath.leslie@tvetaustralia.com.au</p>
---	---

TVET Australia is a not for profit company owned by the Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers responsible for Training.

TVET is committed to the provision of services which underpin the quality of the National Training System and contribute to its continuous improvement.

AUSTRALIA www.tvetaustralia.com.au



Some surprising differences emerged in answer to some questions depending on the type of RTO the respondent worked in; all of the differences listed below were found to be statistically significant:

1. Respondents working in TAFE were more likely than small or medium private RTOs to have used the following learning resources for conducting training:

- toolboxes
- websites
- online participation platforms
- online course materials

Those working in small private RTOs were less likely than the others to use textbooks.

2. Respondents from large private RTOs were more likely than medium and small private RTOs to get information and recommendations relating to learning resources through trade shows/conferences, while those working in TAFE were likely to suggest the following:

- peers
- online repositories of learning resources
- publishers
- sales consultants specializing in learning resources
- libraries

3. Respondents working in medium-sized private RTOs were more likely than those working in TAFE or large private RTOs to say the main trigger for purchasing learning resources is to assist/support

passing of audits; while those working in TAFE were more likely than medium and small RTO participants to suggest upgrade of existing learning resources.

4. TAFE respondents were more likely than those working in medium or small private RTOs to be aware of and use the following learning resources:

- Australian Flexible Learning Framework
- Learning Object Repository Network (LORN)
- Commercial Publishers
- web-searches

Those working in medium-sized private RTOs were more likely to be aware of the following:

- National Training Information Service (NTIS)
- Small private RTO respondents were more likely to suggest www.training.com.au as a starting point for locating resources.

5. Respondents working in TAFE were more likely than small RTO participants to agree or strongly agree with the statement "a quality learning resources is one that takes advantage of multiple media channels". They were less likely than medium private RTOs to agree or strongly agree that a quality resource "focuses on what is expected of an employee in the workplace (rather than a learning process)".

6. TAFE respondents were also less likely than those working in medium sized RTOs to rate value for money as somewhat important or very important when taking decisions about the purchase of learning resources.

7. TAFE respondents were more likely than medium private RTOs to suggest that a lack of time/ allocation of time/ heavy workload are the key inhibitors for practitioners to contribute to the development and updating of learning resources.

With the approval of the TVET Australia Board, Training Products Australia will now be using these research findings in implementing some changes to our business model for the sale and licensing of Training Packages and related learning resources. Drawing on the expertise of the TVET Australia sales team and our NARA-endorsed Quality Consultants and auditors, and our partnerships with our VET sector stakeholders, we will also be developing advice and support for trainers on critical issues such as the customisation of learning resources, emerging issues for trainers in specific industry areas, and how trainers and assessors can keep abreast of the changing training landscape.

We'll have more details for you in the weeks ahead, in the meantime though if you have a question about learning resources to support high quality training delivery then contact the sales team at Training Products Australia by phone (03) 9832 818 or visit our website: <http://www.productservices.tvetaustralia.com.au/>