

Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia Inc.

"Access to Education"



Submission

to the

Department of Education & Training

on the

Review of the National Vocational Education & Training

Regulator Act 2011 Submission Page

from the

Federal Council

of the

**Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia Inc.
ICPA (Aust)**

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1. *In the interests of quality student outcomes, which aspects of vocational education and training (VET) should be under the closest scrutiny by the regulator, the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)?*

- Registered Training Organisations: It is essential for RTOs to have clear and transparent guidelines, competency regulations, transparent renewal procedures, regular audits for accreditation, built-in safeguards for students.
- Course Offerings Relevant To Current Business Environment: The key to the best placement of VET to deliver quality, relevant programs lies in regular evaluation of evolving industries and business, whether that be from current activities or newly emerging opportunities and the creation and/or adaption of competencies within existing courses to meet identified requirements.
- Course Offerings Relevant To Location: It is also vital to adapt the courses to fit the circumstances of each campus location. For example, in rural areas the quality and capability of internet offerings may make online components of the program challenging to complete. Furthermore, access to the place of business to facilitate the completion of the practical course components may not be readily available. Consideration must be given to particular course offerings in particular locations such as rural skills based courses in rural areas.
- Access To Skilled Staffing: It is essential that, given the challenge of attracting suitably qualified staff to regional/remote locations, those who choose to learn from a rural/remote location are able to engage with tutors with a high level of knowledge and skill relevant to the curriculum being taught. Innovative ways to facilitate that engagement, need to be identified and enacted. The technological limitations that may be experienced in these locations also need to be recognised when approaching these engagement plans and strategies put in place to mitigate/minimise impact.
- Upskilling Of Staff To Ensure Up To Date Relevance: VET teachers require access to regular upskilling opportunities to ensure their skills and knowledge remain relevant to emerging trends and demands of business/industry.

2. *What are the principles that should drive the business plan of a quality VET provider?*

- Accountability
- Transparency
- Clear Guidelines
- Regular Evaluation
- Resource Investment: Continuing levels of investment into resourcing of VET providers – buildings, personnel and tools/equipment – to enable quality of learning and full engagement with the curriculum regardless of location of the place of learning is the key to an ongoing quality VET system.

3. *Are regulatory and legislative changes required to support Registered Training Organisations to continuously improve across all areas of their operations and to go beyond meeting minimum quality standards?*

4. *How effective are the enforcement powers of ASQA for ensuring a quality VET sector and how might they be improved?*
 - Regular Compliance Auditing

5. *How could quality be effectively measured and reported as part of an outcomes-based approach to regulation? What is the best way to measure student outcomes?*
 - Student Course Completion Rate
 - Student Employment Rate
 - Employer and Student Satisfaction

6. *What measures can be taken to give students, parents and communities a stronger voice in the regulation of VET?*
 - Collaboration Between Stakeholders: Collaboration between government, industry, business, VET providers and community stakeholders could be implemented to regularly identify, evaluate and review growing trends. The results of this regular review would then be provided to VET training providers to allow them to adapt their course offerings, upskill staff to meet identified needs and provide oversight of fiscal responsibilities. Appropriate personnel and fiscal support would need to be provided to allow this to occur in a timely manner.

7. *Are there areas of overlap, inconsistencies or gaps between the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 and other legislation that impedes the effective regulation of the VET sector?*

8. *Other comments. Please address any other issues related to the Terms of Reference.*
 - Other Considerations for Rural and Remote Students: Ensure adequate information is available to support VET consumers' choices with regard to Registered Training Organisation facilities, course availability, entry requirements, pre-requisites, costs and financial support are available on a national platform.
In legislating any changes, something like an 'Effects Test' (amended section 46 of the Competition and Consumer Act 2010 (CCA)) should be considered to examine the repercussions of government policy and legislation on these students.
Regulation and Legislation requirements to support Registered Training Organisations to effectively reach high quality standards include:

- Accountability
- Regular Compliance Auditing
- Evaluation
- Funding Of More Than One Certificate In Certain Circumstances For Rural, Remote School Students: Often, students attending a rural/remote P-10 school are only able to complete a Certificate I or II due to their location and limited access to readily available courses. If a student has the desire and aspiration to complete their senior education with a higher VET certificate, these students need to move to a larger centre which provides access to an expanded VET curriculum, both in terms of qualification level and variety of offerings. Appropriate funding should be allocated to support these students to complete a second, higher level certificate.
- Support For Students With Disabilities: Flexibility in assessment would allow greater engagement by students with disabilities allowing them to contribute to their own and society's communal and economic wellbeing. Where practical, by providing support services, for example occupational therapists, to minimise the impact of their disability would also promote uptake of VET opportunities. Carrying this support through to workforce transitioning would also assist.
- Accommodation Provision: Key VET locations in each state could be identified as suitable for provision of accommodation to allow regional students to attend a course including practical and/or theory components to increase enrolment and completion of courses by students for whom distance/location is a barrier to successful education outcomes.
- Please refer to a submission previously lodged for the Reformation of Federation White Paper in March 2015. Part B is particularly relevant to this submission. <http://www.icpa.com.au/documents/download/1052/federal-submissions/federal-submissions-2016-1/appendix-a-discussion-of-ed-issues-for-reform-of-federation-white-paper-march-2015.pdf>