SLG Communiqué

July 2021

The ASQA SLG held its third meeting for 2021 on 13 July.

ASQA update

SLG Members noted that:

- 1 July 2021 marked 10 years since the establishment of ASQA. The Hon. Stuart Robert MP, Minister for Employment, Workforce, Skills, Small and Family Business, and the Hon. Steven Joyce, former New Zealand Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment participated in an event that recognised the important progress ASQA is making to drive co-operative relationships between ASQA, providers and other stakeholders, to be more transparent in its approach to regulation, as well as our work to promote and facilitate a culture of effective self-assurance as an integral part of a provider's routine operations.

- ASQA's 2021–22 Corporate Plan, to be published soon, reflects feedback from the SLG and other stakeholders on the Performance Framework.

- ASQA has welcomed and will carefully consider the Auditor-General's recommendations and opportunities to improve, as outlined in the recently tabled ANAO report on ASQA's Effectiveness of Planning and Implementation of Reform.

Update on ASQA cost recovery

SLG Members noted the government's decision to transition to full cost recovery from 1 January 2022 and ASQA's work in this area:

- ASQA is currently working on a transitional phase to implement the current cost recovery implementation statement (CRIS) and commence transition to full cost recovery through modelling, engagement and consultation with the sector from 1 January 2022.

- Consultation with the sector will enable ASQA to develop a CRIS to implement a new model for cost recovery from 1 July 2022, consistent with ASQA's regulatory approach and intent.

- Over forward years, this can be further developed to align cost recovery with a more differentiated model of provider performance in line with new outcomes-based standards and demonstrated levels of provider self-assurance.

Regulatory reforms

Review of Application processes

ASQA will hold a consultation workshop in late August with SLG Members on the features of a possible future model for provider applications.

《 Working together 》

Financial Viability Risk Assessment Requirements

SLG Members noted that the existing Financial Viability Risk Assessment Requirements (FVRARs) will be extended for up to 18 months. ASQA will conduct a review to identify if amendments are required to the FVRARs, the way they are applied, or to the FVRA tool. SLG Members and other key stakeholders will be consulted in the review, which will help ensure the FVRARs align with ASQA's enhanced regulatory approach, including the focus on self-assurance.

Current and emerging risk: Member engagement

ASQA communicated how it is collaborating to identify regulatory risks and designing regulatory approaches and strategies that are well informed and take account of the current and emerging environment. This means sharing information with stakeholders to better understand risk, and raising awareness and providing clear feedback and support for providers to self-assure and continuously improve.

Engaging strategically with stakeholders about risk is central to ASQA's enhanced Regulatory Risk Framework and Operating Model, supporting ongoing environmental scanning and the continuous improvement of regulatory outcomes.

SLG Members discussed risks, their characterisation, and associated treatments identified by ASQA this quarter. Treatment actions for these risks are the responsibility of a number of agencies and jurisdictions across the VET sector.

ASQA will seek regular input from the SLG as part of its ongoing environmental scanning for provider and systemic risk in the sector.

Strategic review and evaluation

VET delivered to secondary school students scoping study (VETDSSS)

SLG members discussed ASQA's work on this scoping study, which drew on ASQA's regulatory data and intelligence, stakeholder insights and feedback, NCVER participation data, reviews and reports relating to VETDSSS, and information about state and territory delivery models, to identify risks associated with VETDSSS.

SLG Members noted that the VETDSSS final report is expected to be published shortly. The report will propose actions and a recommendation to work with stakeholders across the skills and education portfolios to support providers to self-assure and continuously improve the quality of VETDSSS.

Strategic review of online learning in the VET sector

In December 2020, ASQA launched a strategic review in response to the substantial shift to online learning in Australia's VET sector and international education sectors due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Review activities have included interactive webinars, a provider survey, and focus groups with VET and English language students.

SLG Members noted that ASQA's next steps in this review are to critically analyse the information it has gathered through external consultations to date, review regulatory and participation data, and conduct internal and external consultation.

Self-assurance research partnership

ASQA's regulatory reforms aim to shift, over time, from input and compliance controls to a focus on self-assurance. SLG Members discussed ASQA's plan to establish a long-term, translational research partnership to support the co-design, with the sector, of a shared model of self-assurance, as well as the building of a community of practice, and the progressive development of information and resources to support and measure provider capability to self-assure.

Engagement and education

Members discussed the *Spotlight On* series, including its second chapter on [Assessment Validation](#), plans for a future chapter on Student Support, and continuous improvement of series content and channels.

Members suggested that increased provider interest in *Spotlight On* reinforces the support for RTOs to understand and address risks, and the usefulness of real-life examples from practitioners.

One recommendation was for ASQA to continue to communicate expectations of providers and feature, in webinar presentations, information about the interactions with ASQA during a performance assessment. ASQA committed to continue engagement in this area, including as providers are experiencing the new approach to assessment.

Members noted the progress ASQA is making towards procuring a dedicated learning and engagement platform for providers.

Members discussed training package developments, including extensions to training package transitions and the proposed holistic review of the TAE Training package and E-assessment project.

SLG governance

This month marks one year since the SLG was established. ASQA will engage with members to seek feedback and review the SLG's functioning, including its Terms of Reference, as agreed at its [foundation](#) in July 2020.

Members agreed that, in line with ASQA's quarterly program of work and associated engagement with stakeholders, SLG meetings will be held quarterly from 2022, supplemented, as required, by regular discussions, consultation workshops and subgroup meetings.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the SLG will be held on 14 September 2021.