



# Provider Roundtable Communiqué

## September 2021

The ASQA Provider Roundtable held its fourth meeting for 2021 on 10 September.

### Chair's update

The Chair summarised the status of the following key developments:

- On 1 September ASQA published its [2021–22 Corporate Plan](#), which articulates a program of work and a framework for performance measurement over the next four years. ASQA plans to consult with the Provider Roundtable, and a range of other stakeholders, on the progressive implementation of the Corporate Plan deliverables.
- The Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) is reviewing the Standards for RTOs as part of the VET sector [Quality Reforms](#). ASQA and Roundtable Members are among the organisations and individuals engaging in the DESE-led reform program.
- ASQA is working with DESE and the Department of Finance to implement the Government decision on cost recovery, including modelling of the proposed schedule of fees and charges that will apply from 1 January 2022. ASQA will discuss these preparations with the Provider Roundtable.

### Review of registration model: Workshop feedback and summary of outcomes

Members reflected on the early ideas generated at this first consultation workshop, held in August 2021, on features of a possible future model for provider registration. The workshop outlined ASQA's areas of focus across three stages of registration activity: Market entry (activities before applying, and on application); Delivery; and Renewal.

### Regulatory risk priorities: Member engagement

Members noted the findings of ASQA's 2021 Environmental Scan, which were used as a primary source to identify the particular sectors, training products or obligations that pose the greatest risk to the VET sector and which are in ASQA's authority to address.

ASQA and Members will continue to engage on the regulatory risk priorities and on provider and systemic risk in the sector.

## ASQA Provider and Course Owner Survey 2021

Members noted a snapshot of the independent survey report of the ASQA Provider and Course Owner Survey 2021.

In July 2021, ASQA conducted an independent survey of training providers and course owners, which sought provider views on ASQA's application process, engagement and education activities, audit, preparedness for self-assurance, and information provided by ASQA to support providers through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Members noted ASQA's commitment to analyse and use the results, including in its review of Service Standards, and in performance reporting, such as the Annual Performance Statement of the Annual Report 2020–21.

## Roundtable Member updates


Members discussed their priority focus areas in the context of the economic impacts of the ongoing pandemic, domestic and international border closures, and successive lockdowns across Australia.

Feedback for ASQA's direct knowledge and attention included:

- engagement with the Roundtable and the SLG, and communication to the sector, about ASQA's preparations for its transition to full cost recovery
- the relay of provider feedback about ASQA's changed performance assessment practices, which ASQA encourages
- expression of appreciation for the ongoing flexibility in ASQA's regulatory approach
- alignment and interface between the Provider Roundtable and the SLG, noting that a review of the SLG is pending.

Some of the current and emerging priorities and challenges shared by and between Members include:

- Concerns about commercial sustainability and financial viability, especially for English language providers, and for adult and community education (ACE) providers.
- Challenges for some providers in maintaining their strong engagement with vulnerable and disadvantaged learners, particularly given barriers in digital connectedness and literacy.
- Managing changes in student commencement and enrolments, staffing levels, the number of entities trading or hibernating, and the resulting growth of online and blended delivery modes.
- Behaviour and practices that target the onshore transfer of international students between providers.
- Shortage of, and competition for, work placements, which impacts student completions, as well as payments to providers under certain funding models.
- Rapidly expanding demand for qualifications delivery to support workforce growth in certain industries such as child care and aged care, which rely strongly on work placements and workplace-based assessment.

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- The supply or lack of qualified trainers and assessors; examples emphasised included geographically based supply shortages (such as in non-metropolitan areas) and in certain specialties, such as adult literacy and numeracy, and foundation skills.
  - Planned or potential vaccination mandates, and vaccine take-up, in different industries and learner cohorts.
  - The impact of state border closures for providers operating across border-adjacent locations.
  - Concerns about academic cheating, noting the framework that TEQSA has in place.
  - Preparations by enterprise RTOs for a number of registration renewals.

### **Next meeting**

The next meeting of the Provider Roundtable will be held on 9 November 2021.