

ACT Accreditation and Registration Council Annual Report 2009-2010

The ACT Accreditation and Registration Council (the Council) advises the ACT Minister for Education and Training on improving the quality of vocational education and training and higher education, and regulating delivery by registered providers. The Council is an independent authority established by the *Training and Tertiary Education Act 2003* (the TaTE Act) and its members are appointed by the Minister.

The Council's advice assists the ACT Government in contributing to various local and national tertiary education and training agendas. The Chair of Council met regularly with the Minister throughout the 2009-10 reporting period to convey Council's views concerning policy issues in the tertiary education sector.

The Council contributes to the provision of quality education in the ACT by:

- exercising its statutory authority for accreditation and registration and ensuring national standards are met
- measuring and reporting on provider compliance with the appropriate standards
- communicating with education and training providers on quality of delivery
- sharing good practice among trainers and teachers.

National standards guiding Council's work include:

- the Australian Quality Training Framework 2007 (AQTF 2007) for vocational education and training delivery
- National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes for non self-accrediting higher education provision
- the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* and the National Code (s.33 of the Act) for international education provision in the ACT.

Composition and appointments to the Council

The ACT Minister for Education and Training appoints members to the Council, and staff of the ACT Department of Education and Training (the Department) support its work by providing secretariat and related services.

The membership of Council is determined by section 12(1) of the TaTE Act. The 11 members comprise a chairperson; four people with expertise in vocational education and training (VET); three people with expertise in higher education; one person who represents the interests of employers; one person representing the interests of employees; and one person who represents providers of industry training advice.

Council membership for the reporting period:

Member	Position and representation	Current Appointment Commenced	Appointment Expires
Professor John Richards	Chairperson (commenced 1 Jan 2005)	4 June 2010	3 June 2013
Mr Vince Ball	VET expertise	29 Aug 2008	31 July 2011
Professor Peter Camilleri	Higher education expertise	2 May 2008	30 June 2011
Mr Vaughan Croucher	VET expertise	1 Jan 2009	31 Dec 2011
Mr Mike Fitzgerald	Interests of employees	22 Dec 2009	21 Dec 2012
A/Professor Ruth Foxwell	Higher education expertise	16 May 2009	15 May 2012
Mrs Annie Gregg	Industry training advisory services	7 April 2009	6 April 2012
Ms Louise Mayo	VET expertise	2 May 2008	30 June 2011
Ms Karen Nicholas	VET expertise	22 Dec 2009	21 Dec 2012
Ms Jill Owen	Higher education expertise	5 Aug 2008	4 Aug 2011
Mr Chris Peters	Interests of employers	28 May 2009	27 May 2012

Accreditation and Registration Council members

Biographical details of the 11 members for the reporting period are as follows:

Professor John Richards AM (Chairperson)

Professor Richards was appointed as a Council member in September 2004, and appointed Chairperson from 1 January 2005. Professor Richards is Master of University House and Emeritus Professor in the College of Engineering and Computer Science at the Australian National University (ANU).

Earlier in his career, Professor Richards has held the positions of ANU Deputy Vice Chancellor and Vice-President, Director of the Research School of Information Sciences and Engineering and Dean and Director of the College of Engineering and Computer Science at the ANU. Professor Richards holds degrees of Bachelor of Engineering with first class honours and Doctor of Philosophy awarded by the University of New South Wales. He is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering, a Fellow of the Institution of Engineers Australia and a Fellow of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, New York.

Mr Vince Ball (Member)

Mr Ball is the Executive Director of the ACT Regional Building and Construction Industry Training Council. He has a range of VET experience including the industry training package development.

Mr Ball is qualified workplace assessor and trainer and an auditor of VET delivery. He received the University of Oxford (Delegacy of Local Examinations)

Oxford Assessor Award. In 2003 his contribution to VET in the ACT and region was recognised with the prestigious Norm Fisher Award, and was later recognised for his commitment to Australian apprenticeships as a finalist in the national 2008 Ministers Awards for Excellence. Mr Ball received the prestigious *Friend of CIT Award* in 2008 from the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT).

Professor Peter Camilleri (Member)

Professor Camilleri is the Professor of Social Work and previously the Rector at Canberra Campus of Australia Catholic University for ten years. He was appointed Deputy Chair of the University's Public Policy Institute in July 2009.

Professor Camilleri was appointed to Council in June 2005 and later that year appointed Chair of the Council's Higher Education Committee. He has worked with several ACT Government agencies, is a member of the ACT Children's Services Council and works on boards of non-government agencies.

Mr Vaughan Croucher (Member)

Mr Croucher is Senior Academic Advisor at the CIT. Mr Croucher holds a Master of Education from University of Canberra as well as a Bachelor of Education, Diploma of Teaching and a Certificate in Adult Literacy Teaching.

Mr Croucher's career in education includes Dean of Learning Services at CIT and as a senior manager in an ACT government training agency. From 2003 to 2009, Mr Croucher was a board member and national treasurer of *Adult Learning Australia*.

Mr Mike Fitzgerald (Member)

Mr Fitzgerald holds a Bachelor in Agricultural Science, a Certificate in Adult Education and Training, a Graduate Diploma in Human Resource Development (Adult Education), a Diploma of Community Services (Welfare Studies) and Certificate IV Workplace Training and Assessment.

Mr Fitzgerald is the ACT branch organiser of the Australian Education Union. Mr Fitzgerald's work history includes community development, agricultural and horticultural production/consultation and teaching/lecturing in the VET sector.

Associate Professor Ruth Foxwell (Member)

Associate Professor Foxwell works in Microbiology at the University of Canberra (UC) and is a member of the Executive of the Board for the Federation of Australian Science and Technological Societies and chairs the National Qualifications Committee for the Australian Society for Microbiology. She has also served as a board member for the Co-operative Research Centre for Freshwater Ecology.

Associate Professor Foxwell was awarded a Doctorate of Philosophy from the UC in 1999, and has previously chaired the UC Academic Board. She has instigated

strategic initiatives such as sports feasibility studies in the Bruce precinct and in health services with the ACT Government.

Mrs Annie Gregg (Member)

Ms Gregg is director of a training and consultancy company operating in the public and private sectors across Australia and overseas covering management, communication, leadership across a variety of industries.

Holding a degree in education and diplomas in training, business and property. Ms Gregg has been involved in the VET sector for many years, contributing to the development of Property Services Training Packages and accredited training programs for a number of clients. She was a chair of the ACT Business Industry Training Advisory Board, awarded the Real Estate Institute ACT "President's Award" for industry excellence and service and the John Scott Memorial Award for recognition of her contribution to VET training in the ACT.

Ms Louise Mayo (Member)

Ms Mayo is an experienced lecturer, tutor and manager in post secondary and tertiary education, with extensive knowledge in assessment and student administration. She designs, markets and delivers education programs in the post-secondary sector. Ms Mayo has worked in the ACT VET sector for many years and led a team of educators implementing and quality assuring academic programs across a number of industries in two sites in the ACT and NSW.

Ms Mayo is studying for a Doctorate of Business Administration that seeks to address a gap education institutions are providing and the requirements of industry.

Ms Karen Nicholas (Member)

Ms Nicholas is the owner/operator of a registered training organisation based in Canberra that provides nationally recognised training to the public and private sector, including small and micro business, and community sectors. Ms Nicholas works closely with clients in developing learning and assessment programs and has an ongoing interest in the professional development of trainers and assessors in the VET sector.

Ms Nicholas' experience in the VET community includes representing training providers' interests as a past president the *Association of Providers of Training Services Inc.* She has led the ACT Assessors Network and worked in the ACT Flexible Learning Advisory Group.

Ms Jill Owen (Member)

Ms Owen is a lecturer in Project Management at the University of NSW (Australian Defence Force Academy) in the School of Business. Ms Owen is currently undertaking her Doctorate of Philosophy within the Faculty of Information Technology on The Role of Knowledge Based Practices in Effective Project Delivery.

Ms Owen has occupied senior management and leadership positions in several organisations that specialise in project and program management in business and information technology contexts. Ms Owen has worked across a wide range of industries including: financial services, airline, health, insurance and credit industries.

Mr Christopher Peters AM OI JP (Member)

Mr Peters is the Chief Executive of the ACT and Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry and represents business on over 20 ACT government boards or committees, including three statutory authorities. He was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Canberra in 2009 and made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in 2004.

Mr Peters holds positions in management structures of both public companies and community organisations, including: Deputy Chairman of the Board of Senior Secondary Studies, Deputy Chairman of Defence Joint Training Taskforce Chief Executive Officer of the Retail Traders Association ACT & Region, Deputy Chairman of the Tourism Industry Council (ACT & Region), Managing Director of the Australian Industry and Defence Network and a member of General Council of the Australian Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

Mr Peters was previously a member of the ACT Skills Commission, Chief Executive of the Printing Industries Association of Australia, and the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Number of meetings held

The Council met on four occasions between 1 July 2009 and 30 June 2010.

Frequency of members' attendance at meetings

Dates of the meetings and member attendances are shown below.

Name	ARC 57 10 Sep 2009	ARC 58 3 Dec 2009	ARC 59 11 Mar 2010	ARC 60 3 June 2010
Professor John Richards (Chair)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mr Vince Ball	✓	✓	✓	✓
Professor Peter Camilleri	✓	x	✓	✓
Mr Vaughan Croucher	✓	✓	✓	A
Mr Mike Fitzgerald	✓	✓	✓	✓
Associate Professor Ruth Foxwell	✓	✓	x	x
Mrs Annie Gregg	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ms Louise Mayo	✓	✓	✓	✓

Name	ARC 57 10 Sep 2009	ARC 58 3 Dec 2009	ARC 59 11 Mar 2010	ARC 60 3 June 2010
Ms Karen Nicholas	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ms Jill Owen	x	A	x	A
Mr Chris Peters	✓	✓	✓	✓

Key:

- ✓ Attended
- X Did not attend
- A Approved leave
- ARC nn ACT Accreditation and Registration Council Meeting number.

Procedures and protocols for council operations

Oversight of entity's financial arrangements and internal controls, composition and responsibilities of audit committees

The Council has no financial functions under the TaTE Act. Consequently the Council does not receive or expend funds in its own right.

Audit and risk management

The Department undertakes audit and risk management activities that identify and manage risk. The Departmental audit includes the Council secretariat and the regulatory activity it performs for the Council.

Quality Indicators were developed for the National Quality Council (the advisory body to all Australian Government Ministers with responsibility for training) to assist it in compiling a national overview of registering body activity and broad comparison of performance against indicative measures including frequency and scope of audits.

The five principles within the AQTF 2007 *Standards for State and Territory Registering Bodies* and *State and Territory Course Accrediting Bodies* set the parameters for quality indicators: Consistency, Effectiveness, Proportionality and Responsiveness. Work on a final reporting framework was pending at the end of this reporting period, and revised AQTF standards for providers and registering bodies were endorsed by the NQC in June 2010. The new *Essential Conditions* and *Standards for Initial Registration and Continuing Registration of Training Organisations* strengthen the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) and provide additional protection for all students undertaking Vocational Education and Training in Australia.

Maintenance of ethical standards and code of conduct

Prior to appointment, Council members are provided with the Bowen Code of Conduct (see s.14 of the *Public Service Act 1999*) as a guide for ethical standards of behaviour. All members sign a declaration stating that:

- their professional and private interests will not impact on their involvement with the Council
- they will disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest to the Chair of the Council.

Resources allocated for council activity

Consistent with the TaTE Act (s17) the Council receives secretariat, research and advisory assistance in the context of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Chair and the Chief Executive of the ACT Department of Education and Training. ACT Government Solicitor's Office advice is also available to the Council.

Remuneration arrangements for council members

Council members are entitled to reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred in the exercise of their functions (TaTE Act, s16). The Chair is provided with an annual payment to cover expenses related to his statutory responsibilities.

Corporate and operational plans and associated performance reporting and review

The Council operated in the context of the *ACT Accreditation and Registration Council Strategic Plan 2009-2011* and its operations were guided by the Council's *Operational Plan 2009-2010*. Both elements were developed in the context of and with reference to other government strategic documents including the *ACT Department of Education and Training Strategic Plan 2010-2013*.

Council operations

Strategic issues

On 26 March 2010, the Council convened a meeting of Chairs of registering bodies from each Australian State and Territory as part of its commitment to a professional exchange of best practice regulation.

The meeting considered a number of matters including national regulation, international education provision and Commonwealth government advice on policy implementation in tertiary education and training. Commonwealth government officials and the Chair of the Ministerial company, TVET Australia, attended, and meeting proceedings were recorded and distributed.

In 2009, the Council of Australian Governments announced the introduction of national regulators for both the VET and higher education sectors, to be enabled by referral of powers currently residing with the States and Territories. This development and its implications for Council were considered at several Council meetings in the reporting period.

Council considered that governance of the proposed regulatory arrangements needed clarification for it to be assured that each regulatory body would be successful and for State and Territory interests to be assured.

Council discussed the Commonwealth proposal to merge VET and higher education regulators in 2013, two years after implementing each entity separately. It resolved to advise the ACT Government that it believed the regulators need to commence as a joined entity as early as possible to minimise the risk that separate governance and operations would constrain regulatory effectiveness, particularly for dual sector education and training providers.

Council resolved at each of its 2010 meetings to provide advice to the ACT Minister concerning regulatory approaches that would assure the interests of the ACT, including during transition arrangements in 2011.

In the context of regulatory change and related national policy, Council discussed options for its future. Key issues for Council include:

- how the ACT's quality of tertiary education provision continues to be assured once new national regulatory arrangements are in place in which State and Territory jurisdictions have no direct governance role
- the desirability of national regulators utilising skills currently residing within Council staff
- maintaining the depth and breadth of advice the ACT Government currently receives on tertiary education and training quality.

Council's discussions about possible future roles identified functions currently contained in the TaTE Act that it believes should remain after referral of regulatory powers to the national regulator. Those functions include strategic advice on improving VET and higher education quality in the ACT, advising the Minister on new universities in the ACT and conducting research that informs policy formulation.

In May 2010, the ACT Government announced the establishment of a 'Tertiary Taskforce' to advise it on how to create a better connected ACT tertiary education environment. The Council is represented on the Taskforce by the Chair, enabling it to inform that advice to government.

Vocational education and training

At 11 June 2010, there were 133 registered training organizations (RTOs) approved by Council to deliver and assess nationally recognised training. All RTOs must continue to comply with the AQTF 2007 Essential Standards for Registration to remain registered. Council conduct initial registration and monitoring audits according to identified risks and cyclical schedules over each provider's period of registration.

Registered providers are recorded on the National Training Information Service (<http://www.ntis.gov.au>), the Ministerially endorsed national register.

VET auditors comprised staff drawn from the Department, including Council secretariat, and from recognised industry professionals. Auditors participated in audit moderation and professional development activities through the reporting period.

Council used a risk managed approach to quality assurance of training providers using nationally agreed criteria within the AQTF. Supplementary risk indicators prescribed by the AQTF standards also determine audit activity, and include publicly funded delivery, the operations of providers approved to deliver to overseas students in Australia and formal concerns and grievances received by the Council secretariat.

Audit activity in 2009 – 2010

The total number of ACT RTOs registered by the Council increased from 126 to 133 during the reporting period. The Council conducted 53 on-site audits and 18 desktop audits of training providers' compliance with relevant national standards. All audit activity is scheduled after risk assessment against the AQTF 2007 *National Guideline for Risk Management*.

Australian Quality Training Framework 2007

All RTOs were required to collect AQTF 2007 Quality Indicator data as part of their registration conditions. At the end of the reporting period RTOs will report 2009 and 2010 training activity and client satisfaction data through a national web portal managed by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), with technical expertise provided by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER).

The reported data will be made available to the Council in July 2010 and will inform the risk assessments routinely conducted to determine audit frequency and scope.

Providers received ongoing advice from the Council secretariat about important developments in the AQTF over the reporting period. NCVER and ACER provided online and telephone support for RTOs in relation to data collection and analysis that underpins the Quality Indicators; the data also assists RTOs to maintain good practices and continuously improve training delivery.

International education

The Council makes recommendations to the Australian Government regarding the approval of providers of training for overseas students, consistent with the provisions of the Australian Government *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000*. When approved by the Australian Government, the training provider is registered on the *Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students* (CRICOS).

As of 30 June 2010 there were 22 CRICOS providers registered in the ACT. There were seven on-site audits conducted during the reporting period. The Council continued to work with the Australian Government to monitor compliance of providers and met regularly with the Department of Education, Employment and Workforce Relations and Department of Immigration and Citizenship to discuss issues of mutual interest including compliance and audit.

Ministerial directions to council

Section 18 of the TaTE Act requires Council to report action(s) it takes in response to Ministerial direction. There were no such directions during the reporting period.

Higher education

The Council regulates and quality assures five non self-accrediting higher education providers, and their twenty-six courses, approved for delivery in the ACT. Two providers are ACT legal entities and three hold primary registration in other Australian states, recognised by Council for delivery in the ACT.

Council membership includes three people with expertise in higher education, who are also members of Council's only sub-committee, the Higher Education Committee (HEC). The HEC operates to terms of reference endorsed by the Council and has a limited set of decision-making functions delegated to it concerning the registration of non self-accrediting higher education providers and the accreditation of their courses.

Membership of the committee during the reporting period included:

Professor Peter Camilleri	Chairperson and Council member
Ms Jill Owen	Council member
Mr Vaughan Croucher	Council member
Associate Professor Ruth Foxwell	Council member
Adjunct Professor Barbara Chambers	ex University of Canberra
Professor John Dearn	Australian National University
Mr Stephen Darwin	Australian National University

The Council is also advised on higher education policy through Departmental officers' attendance at national forums and committees.

During the reporting period the Council responded to a request from the Joint Committee for Higher Education (JCHE) and the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) concerning quality assurance of higher education approvals. Council was previously audited by AUQA in late 2003 against the then national protocols for higher education approvals (now referred to as the Cycle 1 audit).

In endorsing the AUQA Cycle 2 audit program of government accreditation authorities and universities Ministers accepted JCHE advice to amend authority

audits to a self assessment process. An intended outcome of the collective assessment of all authorities in the states and territories was that this would inform the future operations of the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), which was planned to subsume AUQA's functions from 2011.

Council formed a committee in August 2009 to develop its self assessment which it transmitted to AUQA in May 2010 as agreed with the JCHE. A response from AUQA is anticipated in early July 2010 which may include a request for follow up activity, or no further action on the part of Council.

At the end of the reporting period the HEC had provided a submission to a joint AUQA and ministers' committee project examining quality assurance by government authorities of the non self-accrediting higher education sector.

Higher education stakeholders are consulted throughout the year, including formally at ACT Higher Education Forums. HEC also facilitated forums that provided information and exchange of ideas about emerging issues in higher education and tertiary education sector reforms including responses to the 2009 Bradley Review of Higher Education.

For more information contact:

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