Section 7: The Western Australian vocational education and training system

7.1 Vocational Education and Training Act 1996
The VET Act sets out the functions and powers of the Minister for Training and Workforce Development and provides for:
- a VET system for the State;
- the establishment and functions of the State Training Board and Training Accreditation Council;
- the establishment of TAFE Colleges and other VET institutions; and
- the training of people, including apprentices, under training contracts with employers.

Under the VET Act the Minister delegates the responsibilities of governing the functions and operations of a TAFE College to Governing Councils. The Minister does so with the expectation that Councils will adopt public sector best practice in accountability, good governance and strategic and operational frameworks.

In performing their responsibilities, Governing Councils must ensure that their actions, and their courses, programs and services, align with, and are responsive to, the VET Act and the fundamental elements of the Western Australian VET system.

For more information on the VET Act and VET Act Regulations visit the State Law Publisher website


7.2 Fundamental elements of the VET system

7.2.1 Quality frameworks

Australian Qualifications Framework
The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) is a structure of endorsed qualifications that provide pathways through Australia’s education and training system.

The AQF is a key national policy instrument to protect the quality of Australian education and training wherever it is delivered.

Australian Quality Training Framework
The Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) is the national set of standards which assures nationally consistent, high-quality training and assessment services for clients of Australia’s VET system.

All registered training organisations (RTOs) must comply with national standards. This ensures the consistent delivery of high-quality training across Australia. RTO systems, processes and practises are audited regularly to ensure compliance against the standards.
During September 2014, the COAG Industry and Skills Council (CISC) agreed to new regulatory standards for training providers and regulators. These standards came into effect on 1 January 2015.

7.2.2 Registered training organisations

RTOs are providers of nationally recognised training. Only RTOs can issue nationally recognised AQF qualifications.

RTOs include public providers, adult and communication education providers, private providers, community organisations, schools, higher education institutions, commercial and enterprise training providers, industry bodies and other organisations that meet registration requirements.

7.3 Key VET Stakeholders

Stakeholders are integral to the success of the VET system in Western Australia. While there are a large number of stakeholders involved in the delivery of training, several are pivotal to the planning, coordination, monitoring, quality assurance, evaluation and purchasing of training services as outlined below.

7.3.1 Minister for Training and Workforce Development

The Minister is responsible for the VET sector in Western Australia, including TAFE Colleges.

Division 1 of the VET Act sets out the functions and powers of the Minister. Section 8 of the VET Act outlines the functions of the Minister in relation to the VET sector in Western Australia, while section 9 outlines the powers of the Minister.

In addition to commissioning and approving the State Training Plan, from time to time the Minister will:

- control, direct and coordinate the State training system;
- ensure as far as practicable that the needs identified in the State Training Plan are met by a combination of State and private training providers;
- promote the development of a competitive training market and facilitate commercial activities that are authorised by or under the VET Act; and
- enter into commercial activities both within Australia and overseas, to generate revenue for, and otherwise benefit, the State training system.

Under section 10 of the VET Act the Minister may also delegate the performance of Minister’s functions, excluding the appointment of council members, to Governing Councils.

7.3.2 Department of Training and Workforce Development

The VET system in Western Australia is administered by the Department in its role as the State Training Authority.

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Established in October 2009, following a demerger of the Department of Education and Training, the Department operates in accordance with the Public Sector Management Act 1994 and assists the Minister in the administration of the VET Act.

The Department contributes to the growth and prosperity of Western Australia by delivering workforce development strategies that create, sustain and retain a viable workforce to support current and future industry needs. The Department’s vision is that all Western Australians can be part of a skilled workforce to meet the economic and community needs of Western Australia.

As the State Training Authority, the Department manages the investment of public resources to provide a quality training system delivered via a state-wide network of TAFE Colleges and private training providers.

For more information visit the Department website (www.dtwd.wa.gov.au)

7.3.3 State Training Board
The State Training Board (Board) is a statutory body established in accordance with section 18 of the VET Act. The Board is the peak industry training advisory body to the Minister in Western Australia.

The role of the Board is to provide high level expert advice to the Minister on matters relating to VET in the State. The Board’s market intelligence is provided by the training council network in Western Australia.

The Board provides advice on strategies to improve the links between specific industry developments and VET so as to gain optimum employment opportunities for the Western Australian community. The Board also provides advice to the Minister on the emerging international, national and state training issues.

For more information visit the State Training Board website (http://www.stb.wa.gov.au)

7.3.4 Training Councils
In Western Australia, Industry Training Councils are contracted and funded by the Department of Training and Workforce Development.

The Training Council network receives a wide range of input from key stakeholder representatives, including peak employer, employee and industry organisations and is responsible for providing:

- a leadership role in promoting training within industry areas, including strengthening partnerships between industry and the VET sector;
- industry advice regarding the development of strategic policy for VET in Schools (VETIS);
- high level, strategic information and advice that informs the State Training Board on the training needs and priorities of industry in Western Australia;
- market intelligence on skills supply and demand, in particular, current or emerging skills shortages and recommending training strategies to support industry skill development needs; and
- detailed advice regarding the establishment/variation of apprenticeships and traineeships.
For more information about training councils visit the State Training Board webpage
(http://www.stb.wa.gov.au/industry/Pages/trainingcouncils.aspx)

7.3.5 TAFE Colleges

TAFE Colleges are training institutes that have been established under section 35 of the VET Act. Each TAFE College is a separate statutory authority as per Schedule 2 of the Public Sector Management Act 1994.

There are five TAFE Colleges throughout Western Australia with over fifty campuses stretching from Esperance in the south to Wyndham in the north.

The TAFE Colleges form part of an integrated system. Funded predominantly by the State Government, they offer VET training to more than 100 000 people each year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TAFE College</th>
<th>Region of Western Australia</th>
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<tr>
<td>North Metropolitan TAFE</td>
<td>North Metropolitan area</td>
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<td>South Metropolitan TAFE</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Regional TAFE</td>
<td>Kimberley and Pilbara regions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Regional TAFE</td>
<td>Wheatbelt area including Geraldton and Kalgoorlie</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Regional TAFE</td>
<td>South West region including Albany and Esperance</td>
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TAFE Colleges are responsible for implementing the State Government’s policy objectives for VET.

TAFE Colleges provide:
- publicly funded VET in Western Australia targeted to meet the State Government’s economic and social development objectives in particular industry sectors and regional areas;
- skills recognition (recognition of prior learning);
- nationally recognised qualifications and accredited courses;
- apprenticeship and traineeship training;
- entry and bridging courses and qualifications leading into mainstream courses and qualifications;
- commercial training (fee for service) – including customised training, short courses, and training to international students; and
- Adult Community Education (ACE) courses (accredited and non-accredited training).

The planning, development, monitoring and reporting of publicly funded VET is negotiated with the Department and formalised through the Delivery and Performance Agreement between the Department and the TAFE College.
While TAFE Colleges may deliver higher education qualification on behalf of other training providers, all other higher education activity is subject to approval by the Minister via the Strategic and Business Plans.

**Managing Director**

The Managing Director of a TAFE College, as a Chief Executive Officer, is appointed under Part 3, Division 2 of the *Public Sector Management Act 1994*.

A Managing Director is appointed for a term not exceeding five years and is bound to act within the terms and conditions outlined in their performance agreement.

It is the responsibility of the Managing Director to remain informed of, and ensure compliance with, all mandatory governance requirements (for example – legislative, contractual, Departmental policy, Circulars and Ministerial Directives).

**Staff**

TAFE Colleges employ, manage and develop staff under a number of industrial awards and agreements. The relevant awards and agreements for the two main employee groups are as follows:

- lecturers are employed under the relevant Western Australian TAFE Lecturers’ General Agreement;
- administrative staff are employed under the Public Service and Government Officers General Agreement 2014.

TAFE Colleges have a variety of business processes, systems and reporting mechanisms in place to plan, develop, implement, monitor, evaluate and acquit their VET activities.

**7.3.6 Australian Skills Quality Authority**

ASQA became the national VET regulator in 2011 and provides audit and registration services for RTOs across Australia with the exception of Western Australia and Victoria.

Both Western Australia and Victoria have not referred their VET regulatory control to the Commonwealth. In these States, regulation of RTOs is carried out by State authorities. RTOs registered and operating exclusively in Western Australia only, or in Western Australian and Victoria, remain under the jurisdiction of the Training Accreditation Council (TAC) and the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015*.

TAFE Colleges in Western Australia are regulated by TAC.

If an RTO is multi-jurisdictional and operates in other States and Territories outside of Western Australia, it will be regulated by ASQA. Similarly, if an RTO in Western Australia is registered under the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) it will be regulated by ASQA.

*For more information refer to the ASQA website* [http://www.asqa.gov.au]
7.3.7 Western Australia Training Accreditation Council

TAC is Western Australia's State registering/course accrediting body and is responsible for quality assurance and recognition of VET services in Western Australia under the AQTF. This includes:

- the registration of training providers;
- the accreditation of courses;
- the recognition of skills and qualifications; and
- providing policy advice to the State Training Board on recognition arrangements.

TAC is committed to being the national leader in the strategic management of the recognition and quality assurance of training, including associated policies, services and standards in the VET sector. It provides support for government, the State Training Board, industry training providers, and the community.

For more information visit the TAC website (http://www.tac.wa.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx)