

## Submission details

1. Submission made on behalf of:  Individual  Organisation
2. Full name:
3. Organisation (if applicable):
4. Please indicate your interest in this discussion paper:   
(i.e. as a student, VET practitioner, RTO, third-party provider, peak body, business, industry representative, regulator or other government agency or community member)
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### **RESPONSE TO "Quality of assessment in vocational education and training – Discussion Paper (January 2016) by the VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AND INDUSTRY GROUP (VETIG).**

The **Vocational Education and Training Industry Group (VETIG)** operates out of Brisbane. It is a not-for-profit community of experienced professional practitioners committed to exceptionally high performance training and assessment practices for Vocational Education and Training professionals throughout Australia.

VETIG has chosen to respond to some of the questions included in the **Discussion Paper**.

### **RTO limitations:**

Arguably, the single most significant reason for the current poor quality of assessment in vocational education and training is the poor quality of much of the current and previous training and assessment of trainers and assessors. It is hard to understand so many current RTOs feel it is necessary to have this qualification on scope.

This situation will only be improved by a much more rigorous approach to the approval of a RTO to deliver this qualification. An opportunity exists at this time both to reduce the number of RTOs delivering this qualification and to ensure the quality of those RTOs approved to deliver it. The current qualification, *TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment* is about to be superseded by a new qualification, currently going through a final review. These qualifications will not be

equivalent so RTOs will have to apply to have the new qualification added to their scope of registration.

The belief that this qualification can be delivered and assessed in an impossibly short time frame needs to be challenged. Volume of learning and amount of training requirements must be more rigidly enforced.

This is not to say that there is no longer a place for recognition of prior learning with regard to this qualification. RPL is a legitimate assessment approach provided that it is carried out with appropriate rigour. The Queensland *Skills First* approach has demonstrated that RPL, conducted by skilled assessors, provides for rigorous (and effective and efficient) assessment of “genuine” RPL applicants.

Similarly, while RTOs issuing TAE qualifications or skill sets to their own trainers and assessors is not considered “best practice”, the real measure of such arrangements is the quality and rigour of the process involved. Ensuring the quality of the process may be more effective than banning it.

There is a strong argument that trainers/assessors should not be training other trainers/assessors until they have had significant training and assessment experience. Part of the current problem arose because trainers/assessors, who had been inadequately trained themselves, immediately moved into roles where they were training other trainers/assessors. At present a RTO is required to be registered for two years before it can be registered to deliver any qualification or assessor skill set from the Training and Education Package. There would be logic in applying a similar requirement to the trainers/assessors delivering qualifications or skills sets from this Training Package.

While encouraging trainers/assessors to hold university or higher level qualifications might add to the professionalism of the VET workforce, holding such qualifications will not necessarily lead to improvements in performance. Higher level qualifications do not necessarily address theoretical understandings related to competency-based training and assessment. Nor do they necessarily address the practical application of these understandings.

While entrants to the TAE Diploma will probably require employment experience in the VET industry to be successful, years of involvement in the industry per se may not be a measure of readiness to undertake this qualification. We are all aware of the differences between a trainer who has ten years of experience, and another who has one year of experience ten times.

### **Skills and qualifications of trainers and assessors:**

There would be little value in making *TAEASS502B Design and develop assessment tools* a core unit of the TAE Certificate IV, provided that it is still available as an elective unit. This is a specialist unit not needed by all trainers and assessors.

This said, there could be value in developing a new unit or changing an existing unit, to broaden learner’s understanding and use of assessment tools, as is currently under investigation as part of the Certificate IV review.

## **Benefits and purpose of a VET professional association:**

There could be value in establishing a national professional association for Australia's VET system. The most useful purpose of such an association would be the registration of VET practitioners.

Such an agency should not be in the business of delivering professional development. Rather its role should be to define the kinds of professional development required by practitioners and perhaps to describe, and/or approve, and/or accredit certain professional development activities which would need to be undertaken by trainers in order to maintain registration.

Given the wide diversity of training roles, from trainers who work on a full time basis to enterprise trainers who occasionally deliver enterprise training, registration (initially at least) should not be compulsory. However, in the long term such an association would need to become largely self-funding through registration and registration-renewal fees.

This professional association would need to be aware of the significant professional development providers that already exist across Australia and work closely with them.

In order to assist with a potential registration process the national association could:

- identify, approve or accredit professional development programs
- develop capability frameworks (taking into account work already done by IBSA)
- develop professional standards for VET practitioners, (taking into account work recently completed as part of a Queensland Government initiative)
- promote the profession of VET trainers and assessors as an employment destination and career path to attract professionals
- act as an advocate and voice for VET trainers and assessors,
- interact with industry to respond to their emerging needs, and
- identify and liaise with existing organisations.

This would be close to Model B but much could be learned by exploring the processes and history of teacher registration across Australia (Model C). Given the history and nature of relationships between the Australian and state and territory governments, the proposed national association might need to work in a coalition with organisations from the states and territories (something like Model A).

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to aspects of the *Discussion Paper*.

Submitted on behalf of VETIG by:

John Dwyer

Secretary, VETIG

c/- Unit 1, 52 Jeffcott Street, Wavell Heights, Q 4012

[info@vetig.com.au](mailto:info@vetig.com.au)

[www.vetig.com.au](http://www.vetig.com.au)