

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2024-25

ASQA Opening Statement

ASQA has been proactive in our role as the national regulator of VET, and have worked closely to support and implement a range of legislative and regulatory practice reforms. These reforms are about supporting the regulatory system to adapt to changing circumstances and risks and ensuring that it is fit-for-purpose and serves to improve outcomes for students and industry stakeholders.

We continue to focus on implementation of changes to the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Amendment (Strengthening Quality and Integrity in Vocational Education and Training No.1) Bill 2024, as well as our regulatory response designed to target threats to the integrity of VET and to better protect vulnerable students.

In October 2023, we welcomed the government's investment of more than \$33 million to implement a suite of measures over 4 years to protect integrity of the sector, particularly by strengthening ASQA's capacity to take action against non-genuine providers that threaten the integrity of VET.

This investment has established an Integrity Unit and Tip-off line, which has increased our intelligence, analytic and investigative capacity to respond to VET integrity risks. This investment is also supporting an uplift in our legacy systems through staged digital reforms.

The enforcement and compliance activity of our Integrity Unit is sending a clear message to the community that risks to the quality and integrity of VET will be taken seriously and acted upon.

We are using the full extent of our regulatory powers to educate, detect and respond to risks relating to student wellbeing, inadequate or non-compliant training outcomes, and poor provider performance, as well as to proactively monitor the sector to identify and address low-quality training and practices.

In this context, I would like to advise the committee of regulatory action to cancel the registration of a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) Luvium Pty Ltd (trading as Australia Education & Career College 52865) following an extensive compliance investigation and subsequent regulatory action that we are taking.

Luvium was registered to deliver training and assessment to domestic students.

Effective from 19 October 2024, ASQA's decision to cancel Luvium's registration was based on serious findings that Luvium issued qualifications without appropriate training or competency-based assessment by qualified assessors.

To ensure public confidence of the qualifications gained through Australia's VET sector, ASQA has begun the process to consider the cancellation of qualifications and statements of attainment issued by Luvium between 1 January 2023 and 19 October 2024. This action is being taken to maintain the integrity of the Australian VET sector and in the interests of community safety.

Notices of intent to cancel qualifications or statements of attainment have been sent to 7,360 students today. Former students of Luvium hold a variety of qualifications across individual support, early childhood education and care, community services and first aid.

Former students issued qualification(s) and/or statements of attainment during the relevant period have 7 days to respond after receiving ASQA's notice of intent dated today. Again, I reiterate that this action is being taken to ensure the integrity of national qualifications.

It is important to emphasise that no decision will be made on whether qualifications will be cancelled until ASQA has considered any response from affected former students.

ASQA is not new to exercising this provision - we have cancelled qualifications in the past and we have clear statutory processes to support implementation of this kind of action. We have a managed process underway and there are a number of steps ASQA will need to follow before we make a decision. Information for former students, employers and the general public has already been developed and is available on our website and we have a dedicated call centre line to support enquiries.

Mindful of the large number of affected former students in this case, we are working with Department of Employment and Workplace Relations in collaboration with other government departments and agencies to work through the potential impact on former students and their qualifications, as well as working directly with any workplaces affected. Those employers that are identified as potentially having affected employees will be progressively contacted and advised of ASQA's process.

We are exercising our statutory powers whilst collaborating to ensure the right agencies are aware and can support risk mitigation during ASQA's process as well as being ready to take any actions arising from ASQA's decisions once they are made.

ASQA is committed to lifting quality and integrity across the VET sector. The integrity of our qualifications is our primary focus and there is no place for any provider who seeks to undermine the sector or exploit students.