

**Senate Committee: Education and Employment**

**ASQA response to QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**Enquiry into vocational education and training in South Australia**

**Public hearing 2 February 2018**

Senator HANSON-YOUNG: Twenty-five per cent would be down the tube! Imagine if funding cuts meant there weren't enough doctors on the emergency ward—well, then, whoopy do—that's not a problem in relation to people getting their care. Anyway, I digress. Let me get back to some questions that you may be able to answer.

In your submission you note that certificate III in commercial cookery—and I'm just using that as an example—was suspended after discovering an agreement between TAFE SA and offshore organisation Win-Stone, which gave learners in Sri Lanka a local qualification that was then recognised as part of prior learning. This was credited towards the certificate. Was this prior learning assessment process looked at in your audit? Was it appropriate? What level did you go to in your audit?

Mr Paterson: That was very much one focus of the examination of this qualification. Our finding was very clearly that the recognition of prior learning assessment or the assessment of what had been done in Sri Lanka was inadequate. That is very clearly the finding in our submission. We have found that those students were not being adequately assessed relative to the Australian qualification.

Senator HANSON-YOUNG: Why has that occurred? Surely, your job is not just to tick and flick. Your job is to uncover why that happened. Why would a course be given—

Mr Garner: It's not the function of an audit to do a root-cause analysis of an organisation—

Senator HANSON-YOUNG: How do you know it was deficient then?

Mr Garner: Our auditors examine records of the actual assessments. They would have examined the evidence that was submitted by the relevant students and compared that evidence to the requirements of the Australian qualification. In this case, the evidence submitted as proof of competence was not adequate to confirm the students' competence against the qualification.

Senator HANSON-YOUNG: Do we know how long that process had been used for in terms of that prior learning?

Mr Garner: How long had that arrangement been in place?

Senator HANSON-YOUNG: Yes.

Mr Garner: I don't have that information.

Senator HANSON-YOUNG: Is that something that your audit looked at? I'm trying to work out how many students were effectively left in the lurch.

CHAIR: You might be able to take those questions on notice, and if you could respond to them—

**Answer**

ASQA's records show that TAFE SA's third party agreement with Win-Stone commenced on 1 January 2016. ASQA does not collect data on student numbers.