

Media Release

TEQSA Appointment Welcomed By Independent Tertiary Education Sector

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For Immediate Release

The appointment of Emeritus Professor Joan Cooper as a Commissioner of the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) has been welcomed by the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET), the peak body representing the independent tertiary education system.

Professor Cooper has direct knowledge of the strengths and challenges of all parts of Australia's diverse higher education sector, particularly independent higher education providers. With around twenty per cent of the ACPET membership being independent higher education providers, Professor Cooper will bring an important perspective to the regulator's work.

"Independent higher education providers have a reputation for quality, they put students at the centre of what they do. However, they are generally structured differently from public universities and although this has no impact on student outcomes it often means they take a different approach to regulatory compliance," said Troy Williams, ACPET Chief Executive.

Many ACPET members are dual-sector providers meaning they support students in both the higher education plus vocational education and training (VET) sectors. Professor Cooper's recent experience as the Chair of the Academic Board of a large public sector VET provider will provide her with unique insights according to ACPET.

"A TEQSA Commissioner with the ability to approach the role with an appreciation of both the higher education and VET sectors is something that ACPET welcomes. The challenge quality providers face in balancing the different compliance obligations of the two sectors are real, and Professor Cooper's understanding of this will be crucial to the interests of the independent higher education sector," Mr Williams said.

There are around 120 independent higher education providers regulated by TEQSA.

Along with responsibility for TEQSA's regulatory decisions, the Commissioners are also responsible for setting the strategic directions of the agency, governance, financial management, performance reporting and its regulatory approach. Professor Cooper will join existing Commissioners Professor Nick Saunders AO, Dr Lin Martin and Emeritus Professor Cliff Walsh.

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Media Contact:

Lucy Scott, ACPET National Office
e: media@acpet.edu.au m: 0411 169 612

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