

Media Release —

ASQA Parliamentary Criticism Echo Sector's Concerns

— 1 August 2019
For Immediate Release

The regulator for the vocational education and training (VET) sector, the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA), has been criticised by Andrew Laming MP in a hard-hitting speech to parliament. According to the Independent Tertiary Education Council Australia (ITECA), the peak body representing independent providers in the higher education, vocational education and training sector, the views of Mr Laming echo those of most quality independent providers in the VET sector.

Mr Laming's speech canvassed the experience of many providers in dealing with ASQA. It highlighted how award-winning RTOs are being accused of failing to meet regulatory standards for minor technical breaches of the legislation or on matters that have no bearing on student quality such as the colour of a logo on a website.

ITECA encourages all with an interest in the challenges facing quality RTO's to listen to the speech. It was made in parliament on 31 July 2019 and can be found online at:

www.youtu.be/bNnwn5gY8OM

"The experience of many ITECA members can be found in Mr Laming's comments. He's drawn attention to how ASQA's approach keeps good people running quality RTOs up at night," said Troy Williams, ITECA Chief Executive.

Mr Laming's speech highlighted how many quality RTO's face the wrath of ASQA for compliance issues that have little to no outcome on the provision of quality providing of training to students.

"ITECA isn't calling for the regulatory system to be wound-back, simply that the approach of ASQA be modified to focus less on what Mr Laming correctly called administrivia," Mr Williams said.

In his comments Mr Laming said "Every provider I spoke to said that if there were to be another provider engaged in fraud, mismanagement or irresponsible training practice of course they should be driven from the training system". ITECA supports this view without qualification.

The work of ASQA was considered in the report *Strengthening Skills: Expert Review of Australia's Vocational Education and Training System* authored by Mr Stephen Joyce and commissioned by the Australian Government. ITECA believes this report sets a roadmap for reform that will help quality RTOs.

"ITECA and our members are supportive of the board direction set out in the Joyce report and we're comforted by the engagement that we've had at a Ministerial and departmental level to assist the government develop an appropriate response," Mr Williams said.

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