

Media Release —

ASQA Reform Bill Doesn't Address Sector's Deficit With Regulator

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Current legislative reforms to the way the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) operates don't go far enough. That's the view of the Independent Tertiary Education Council Australia (ITECA), the peak body representing independent providers in the higher education, vocational education, training and skills sectors.

The parliament is currently considering the *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Amendment Bill 2019 (Cth)* that, according to ITECA's members, is a piece of legislation that won't deliver the outcomes that independent providers are looking for.

Speaking at the '2020 Vocational Education and Training Business Summit' today in Sydney, ITECA Chief Executive, Troy Williams, highlighted the concerns of the sector.

"ITECA members are looking to work with a regulator that's firmly focussed on protecting students without creating an overly burdensome compliance burden. To date, ASQA has demonstrated its capacity to be quite inventive at creating red tape that frustrates good providers that have a track-record of offering students and their employers the quality outcomes they are looking for," said Troy Williams, ITECA Chief Executive.

According to ITECA, what's required is a regulatory reform package that addresses the legitimate concerns of independent training providers and properly focuses ASQA's activities.

"Reform ASQA's regulatory framework is long overdue. We need a regulator that works collaboratively with the independent registered training organisations to support students. That's what ITECA members are looking for and what we've asked the Australian Government for," Mr Williams said.

ITECA has welcomed the Australian Government's review of ASQA's performance to support the fair, transparent and effective regulation of the VET sector, and quality student outcomes.

"Over the course of more than a year, we've listened to our members and they have made it clear that there is a trust deficit when it comes to the regulator. Right now, many ITECA members lack the confidence that compliance activities will be undertaken in a transparent or consistent manner by ASQA. That's the advice we've given the independent review," Mr Williams.

"ITECA members are looking to this review of ASQA's performance to provide a clear set of recommendations on what further legislative reform looks like. That's what we're pushing for," Mr Williams said

Independent providers support more than 70% of the 4.1 million students enrolled in VET programs across Australia.

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