

About the VRQA

History

The VRQA was established under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (the Act) on 1 July 2007. It is the peak accreditation, registration, certification and quality assurance body for school education, vocational education and training, and higher education (except universities established under their own Act).

Ministerial responsibility for the VRQA is shared by the Minister for Education and the Minister for Skills and Workforce Participation.

The Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007 include four sets of VRQA-related regulations – the registration and review of schools, the registration of home schooling, the registration of education and training organisations, and the role of the VRQA in investigating complaints.

The Act was first amended in 2007 and two sets of further amendments were incorporated in 2008.

Purpose

The VRQA's key responsibilities are to ensure that all providers of education and training meet quality standards, and that information is readily available to support informed choice.

The broad principles that underpin the work of the VRQA are set out in section 1 of the Act and may be summarised as follows:

- education and training providers conduct programs in a manner that supports and promotes the principles and practice of Australian democracy
- all Victorians have access to high-quality education
- information concerning the performance of education and training providers is publicly available
- parents choose an appropriate education for their child
- schools report their performance to their communities
- schools report on student performance to parents and students.

Functions

The functions of the VRQA are set out in Part 4.2 of the Act. The VRQA is responsible for quality assurance for education and training in Victoria. It registers students for home schooling, government and non-government schools, providers of senior secondary courses or qualifications, providers of vocational education and training, and providers of higher education (except universities established under their own Act).

The VRQA accredits courses and registers qualifications, authorises providers and organisations to award registered qualifications, and approves persons or organisations to operate student exchange programs.

The VRQA ensures that minimum standards are maintained by the providers and organisations it has registered. It maintains the State Register of registered providers and accredited courses and qualifications.

The VRQA's operational responsibilities also include:

- the provision of support to the Board and any committees it might establish
- the running of internal processes and procedures that comply with the Act and other appropriate legislation, and that are in accordance with the policy framework of DEECD
- effective communication of its policies, qualifications and initiatives.

Delegations

Section 4.2.7 of the Act sets out the delegations that may be made by the VRQA. Delegations previously granted by the VRQA Board and continuing during 2008–09 were:

- all functions and powers of the VRQA other than the power of delegation to the VRQA Director and the Deputy Director
- the investigation of courses for accreditation and extensions to scope to Box Hill and Holmesglen Institutes of TAFE, and Swinburne University of Technology (TAFE Division)
- the investigation of courses for accreditation to Chisholm Institute of TAFE.

Changes to the Act in November 2008 through the *Education and Training Reform Further Amendment Act 2008* made it possible for the VRQA to delegate registration and audit functions to TVET Australia Ltd in respect of RTOs that operate in more than one Australian State or Territory, and have their principal place of business in Victoria or conduct all or most of their operations in Victoria. The delegation to TVET was enacted in January 2009.

A report on all delegations is made to each Board meeting to ensure that statutory responsibilities are being met.

Authorised officers

Section 5.8 of the Act provides for the appointment of authorised officers. Fifteen staff were approved and trained as VRQA authorised officers in 2008–09. Staff from a range of operational areas underwent training in investigations and enforcement procedures related to the prosecution of offences in the Magistrates' Court. All authorised officers are issued with an identification card and their powers are set out in Section 5.8 of the Act.

VRQA Board

In 2008–09, all Board membership positions were filled for the whole period and there was no change in membership. The composition of the Board includes members who are highly regarded in the area of school education and post-compulsory education, including government and non-government schools, vocational education and training, private and public education and training organisations, higher education and further education. They provide a fair and balanced reflection of the diversity of the community and metropolitan and country interests, as well as management and regulatory expertise.

The Board meets six times a year on a Wednesday of every second month. The Board also meets once annually for a strategic planning day.



Mr Stuart Hamilton

Chair

Mr Stuart Hamilton AO, BA (Hons), BEc

Mr Stuart Hamilton is the Chief Executive Officer of Open Universities Australia. Mr Hamilton held the position of Secretary of the Victorian Department of Education and Training (2001–02) and Director of the Innovation Economy Advisory Board (2002–03). He was Chair of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (2004–06) and is Secretary of the Council for the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences. Mr Hamilton was Executive Director of the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (1996–2001) and worked in the Commonwealth Public Service for many years, including in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet as Deputy Secretary (1987–88), and as Secretary to the Departments of Health, Housing and Community Services (1988–93) and Environment, Sport and Territories (1993–96). Mr Hamilton was a Rhodes Scholar at the University of Oxford (1971–74).



Mr Peter Annett

Member

Mr Peter Annett, BComm., TSTC

Mr Peter Annett is a part-time education consultant in Catholic education. Mr Annett held the position of Deputy Director of Catholic Education in Melbourne (1993–2005) and prior to that was Director of Catholic Education in the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn. He has over 40 years experience in education as a teacher and administrator and is a former member of the National Catholic Education Commission and the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria.



Mr Brian Boyd

Member

Mr Brian Boyd, BA, DipEd

Mr Brian Boyd is the Secretary of the Victorian Trades Hall Council, elected in 2005 and re-elected in 2009. He is a member of several government committees, including the Building Industry and Manufacturing Industry Consultative committees, and has specialist industry skills in occupational health and safety (OHS), scaffolding and rigging. As a member of WorkSafe's WorkCover Advisory Committee and OHS Advisory Committee, he is consulted widely on improving workplace safety across Victoria. He is a recipient of the Australian Centenary Medal, a member of the ACTU Executive and is on the Expert Reference Group of the Victorian Bushfire Recovery and Reconstruction Authority.



Professor Wendy Brabham

Member

Professor Wendy Brabham

Professor Wendy Brabham is the Director of the Institute of Koorie Education at Deakin University and member of the Deakin University Academic Board. She was a member of the Victorian Qualifications Authority Board and holds the office of treasurer of the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc., with which she has worked for 15 years. Professor Brabham has considerable experience working with Indigenous communities and in education.



Professor Gerald Burke

Member

***Professor Gerald Burke,
BCom, DipEd, PhD***

Professor Gerald Burke was executive director of the Monash University–ACER Centre for the Economics of Education and Training from 1994 to 2008 and now has an adjunct appointment as a professor in the Faculty of Education. He is a member of Skills Australia, which was established in 2008 to provide advice to the Deputy Prime Minister on Australia’s workforce development and skill needs. From 2004 to 2007, he was Chair of the Victorian Qualifications Authority and ex officio member of the Victorian Learning and Employment Skills Commission and the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority.



Professor Peter Dawkins

Ex officio member

Professor Peter Dawkins

Professor Peter Dawkins is Secretary of DEECD. He is also a Professorial Fellow of the University of Melbourne. Professor Dawkins was Deputy Secretary of the Victorian Department of Treasury and Finance (2005–06) and has been an active contributor to the development and implementation of the COAG Human Capital Reform agenda. He also chaired the committee that developed the Melbourne Declaration on the Educational Goals of Young Australians, signed in December 2008 by all of Australia’s Education Ministers.



Mr Alan Frees

Member

Mr Alan Frees, MAICD

Mr Alan Frees is the founder and co-owner of the business consultancy group Business Redirections, specialising in legal and governance issues. Mr Frees has been, and is, a non-executive director of a number of Australian and overseas public and private companies, and is a member (and immediate past President) of the Mentone Girls' Grammar School Council (1993–). He has been an adviser to a number of independent schools and is a member (and past Chair) of the Board of the Association of Independent Schools of Victoria (1998–) and a member of the Board of Management of the Independent Schools Council of Australia (2007–). He worked for 25 years as a corporate lawyer and was a partner in Arthur Robinson & Hedderwicks (now Allens Arthur Robinson) for 13 years.



Professor Jack Keating

Member

Professor Jack Keating, BEc, PhD

Professor Jack Keating is a Professorial Fellow at the University of Melbourne in the Centre for Post-compulsory Education and Lifelong Learning, and has over 30 years experience in education and training. During 1995, he was a policy officer at the Australian National Training Authority before becoming an Associate Professor at RMIT (1995–2003). He has been an adviser in the Ministry of Education (1988–2001), a curriculum officer at Curriculum Corporation (1991–95), an executive member of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Board (1987–88) and an assistant secretary at the Victorian Secondary Teachers Association (1985–87).



Ms Jan Lake

Member

Ms Jan Lake, BA, BEd

Ms Jan Lake is retired and has had over 30 years of service in education in Victoria. She was Regional Director in the Office of School Education, Southern Metropolitan Region (1999–2005) and has previously held senior positions in regional offices of the Department across the State.



Ms Julie Moss

Member

***Ms Julie Moss, BA,
GradDipArts(Sociology),
AssocDip(Community Development)***

Ms Julie Moss is the Managing Director of the Photography Studies College (Melbourne) and the immediate past National Chair of ACPET. She is also a member of the National Quality Council and the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre Management Committee. She served on the Victorian Qualifications Authority Board and has over 25 years experience in the post-compulsory education and training sector.



Professor Pauline Nestor

Member

Professor Pauline Nestor, BA(Hons), MPhil, PhD

Professor Pauline Nestor is Associate Dean (Research) in the Faculty of Arts at Monash University. Professor Nestor has 30 years university teaching experience in English Literature, Comparative Literature and Women's Studies, and is the author/editor of eight books. She was awarded a Rhodes scholarship to the University of Oxford (1978–83).



Mr John Parish

Member

Mr John Parish, BEd

Mr John Parish has had a long career in vocational education and training. He was Chief Executive Officer of the TAFE Development Centre (2004–06) and Chief Executive Officer of Kangan Batman TAFE (1997–2004). Mr Parish started his career as an apprentice panel beater before teaching in the trade and moving through senior teacher ranks to become a department head and Acting Director at Dandenong TAFE.

Ex officio member

Mr Howard Ronaldson

Mr Howard Ronaldson is the Secretary of the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development. He was previously the Secretary of the Department of Infrastructure. Mr Ronaldson has also held executive positions in the Department of Premier and Cabinet, and was previously the Director of Gaming, the Director of Crown Lands and the Director of Housing in Victoria. He also worked in Canberra as the Chief Executive and Under Treasurer of the Department of Treasury, Australian Capital Territory.

Committees

The Board has two standing committees: the VRQA Audit and Risk Management Committee, and the Higher Education Advisory Committee. Both committees met on six occasions during 2008–09.

VRQA Audit and Risk Management Committee

- John Parish (Chair), VRQA Board
- Peter Annett, VRQA Board
- Alan Frees, VRQA Board
- Jonathan Thomas, Moore Stephens HF Assurance
- Brad Appleton, DEECD (November 2008 – 3 June 2009)
- Duncan McColl, Chief Accounting and Finance Officer, DEECD (3 June 2009–)
- Ron Cooper-Thomas, DEECD (to November 2008)

The Audit and Risk Management Committee assists the VRQA Board in fulfilling its monitoring and oversight responsibilities with regard to the VRQA's governance, risk management, audit and business assurance activities, including monitoring Board delegations. The committee informs the Portfolio Audit Committee of DEECD of its activities.

Higher Education Advisory Committee

- Stuart Hamilton (Chair), VRQA Board
- Pauline Nestor, VRQA Board
- Julie Jackson
- Alan Lindsay
- Simon Livingstone
- Anne Martin
- Brendan Sheehan, representing Deputy Secretary, Skills Victoria
- Tony Zalewski

The Higher Education Advisory Committee has responsibility for oversight of the regulation of higher education provided by non-self-accrediting institutions in Victoria in accordance with the National Protocols and Guidelines, and the VRQA's legislative obligations.

Subcommittees and working groups

In addition to the two standing committees, the Board has three subcommittees that provide the Board with advice and recommendations in specific areas: the Credit Matrix Implementation Advisory Committee; the State Register Subcommittee and the Fees Subcommittee.

Credit Matrix Implementation Advisory Committee

- Gerald Burke (Chair), VRQA Board
- Jack Keating, VRQA Board
- Wendy Brabham, VRQA Board
- Greg Clarke, DEEWR
- David Howes, Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority
- Bernadette Gigliotti, Director, Career Education Association of Victoria
- Verna Kearney, Adult, Community and Further Education
- Toni Kilsby, Swinburne University of Technology
- Ewa Kuriata, Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development
- Edmund Misson, DEECD
- Nita Schultz, Victorian TAFE Association

The Credit Matrix Implementation Advisory Committee has oversight of the implementation activities of the Credit Matrix. It brings together internal and external stakeholders, acts as the steering group for the project and monitors progress by providing advice to the VRQA Board.

State Register Subcommittee

- Julie Moss (Chair), VRQA Board
- Brian Boyd, VRQA Board
- Jan Lake, VRQA Board
- Sandy Forbes, Adult, Community and Further Education
- Michelle Hill, DEECD
- John Spasevski, Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development

The State Register Board Subcommittee has oversight of the implementation activities

of the State Register. It brings together Board members and representatives from DEECD, Skills Victoria and the Adult, Community and Further Education Division of the Department for Planning and Community Development. It acts as the steering group for the project, monitors progress and provides advice to the VRQA Board. The subcommittee focuses on the display of public information about education and training, and the project's achievement of high-level milestones.

Fees Subcommittee

- Lynn Glover (Chair), VRQA
- Jan Lake, VRQA Board
- John Parish, VRQA Board
- Brad Appleton, DEECD
- Dina Guest, representing Secretary, DEECD
- Brendan Sheehan, representing Secretary, Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development
- Cheryl Wilkinson, Adult, Community and Further Education, representing Secretary, Department of Planning and Community Development

The Fees Subcommittee undertakes broad consultation with external stakeholders as part of its deliberations.

The Board also brings together ad hoc working parties from time to time to provide advice to the Board and external stakeholders on specific issues or projects. In the reporting period this involved drafting legislative amendments to allow delegation to TVET Australia Ltd.

All Board committees include representatives from key stakeholders within government who have an interest in the outcomes of the committee's discussion.

VRQA staff

VRQA staff provide advice and report to the VRQA Board on:

- accreditation of courses and registration of education and training providers
- development and implementation of certification and registration procedures and processes
- quality assurance services related to the Victorian Minimum Standards for School Registration and Home Schooling
- quality assurance services related to the provision of vocational education and training and higher education, and compliance with National Standards and Protocols
- the quality of implementation of the VRQA directions by various institutions and agencies
- strategic planning and directions
- management of the VRQA's resources.

The VRQA staff operate within the financial, asset, human resource and information technology policy frameworks of DEECD. Further details of these arrangements are provided in Appendix 1.

Director

The Director is responsible to the Chair of the VRQA for the effective and efficient implementation of the VRQA Board's decisions and to the Secretary of DEECD for the running of the organisation and its effective interaction with the Department.

Staff organisation

Executive Officers were Lynn Glover, Director and Rob Fearnside, Deputy Director. VRQA staffing is organised in three functional areas:

- corporate services
- quality assurance:
 - school education
 - vocational education and training
 - higher education
 - international education
 - senior secondary education
- State Register and Qualifications Navigator.

As at June 2009, the VRQA had 47.9 staff members. Details of VRQA staff are provided in the table below. The total staffing is made up of a core

establishment plus additional staffing appointed through secondments or short-term contracts to work on specific projects.

*Staff on pay by classification, gender and time fraction, June 2008 and June 2009**

| Classification | June 2008 | | | June 2009 | | |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | Males | Females | Total | Males | Females | Total |
| E02 | – | 1.0 | 1.0 | – | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| E03 | 1.0 | – | 1.0 | 1.0 | – | 1.0 |
| VPSG6 | 2.0 | 4.0 | 6.0 | 3.0 | 3.0 | 6.0 |
| VPSG5 | 5.5 | 10.4 | 15.9 | 5.5 | 13.2 | 18.7 |
| VPSG4 | 2.0 | 3.6 | 5.6 | 2.0 | 6.8 | 8.8 |
| VPSG3 | 4.3 | 6.4 | 10.7 | 3.0 | 5.6 | 8.6 |
| VPSG2 | – | 1.8 | 1.8 | – | 1.8 | 1.8 |
| VPSG1 | – | 1.0 | 1.0 | – | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| Other | – | – | – | 1.0 | – | 1.0 |
| Total | 14.8 | 28.2 | 43.0 | 15.5 | 32.4 | 47.9 |

*VRQA staff are included in the DEECD workforce statistics



Back row (left to right): Tony Ayers, Karin Mapperson, Jontel Kiwikiwi, Ian McLiesh, Daisy Adams, Gregory Deakin, Rob Fearnside, Bronwyn Tyrrell, Brian Dennehy, Robert Johnson, Ian Penna, Jerzy Gill.

Middle row (left to right): Melinda Nulty, Ellen Young, Rachel Walker, Lynn Glover, Pauline Thambu, Aurora Nakayama, Terri Hopkins, Christine Croker.

Front row (sitting down): Wendy Down, Marie Isaacs, Mary Keary, Frances Lamb, Catherine Fitzgibbon, Kay Rodriguez, Enriqueta Dalton, Jennifer Wong.

Staff unavailable on the day of the photograph

Beverly Adams, Gary Armstrong, Eleanor Bardsley, Claire Bartle, Edward Belin, Gary Bourton, Terry Breen, Erin Brown, Maryse Felicite, Christine Finch, Sarah Foy, Frank Galati, Francesca Gibilisco, Emma Hickingbotham, John Hopkins, Don Hudgson, David Jones, Debra Jones, Lorraine Kibbis, Samantha Lawton, Colleen Marks-Desa, Janet Matheson, Geoff Morgan, Jan Mulcahy, Vi Nguyen, Katherine Papastathopoulos, Geoff Pile, Angela Russo, Leonie Sellwood, Lyn Smith, Joyce Spence, Robyn Timmins, Alison Vickers, Annette Whiter.

Organisation chart as at 30 June 2009

