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 Acts). Ministerial responsibility for the VRQA is with 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
- the role of the VRQA in investigating complaints.

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 in education and training.

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 have the right to 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. The VRQA is also responsible for registering all Victorian schools (government and non-government) school and non-school senior secondary providers, students for home schooling, providers of vocational education and training, and providers of higher education (except universities established under their own Acts).

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.
Delegations
Section 4.2.7 of the Act sets out the delegations that may be made by the VRQA. Delegations by the VRQA Board during 2009–10 were:

- all functions and powers of the VRQA other than the power of delegation to the VRQA Director and the Deputy Director
- from 9 December 2009, all functions and powers of the VRQA other than the power of delegation to the VRQA director of the Rapid Audit Program and VRQA manager of Governance and Corporate Services; these delegated powers are subject and subordinate to the Director and/or Deputy Director
- the investigation of courses for accreditation and extensions to scope of registration 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
- registration and audit functions to TVET Australia Ltd in respect of registered training organisations (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.

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. Four staff were approved and trained as VRQA authorised officers in 2009–10, bringing the total number to 17. All authorised officers are issued with identification cards and their powers are set out in section 5.8 of the Act.

VRQA Board
In 2009–10, as a result of the Board renewal process, there were three new members appointed in 2009 and three acting appointments were made in 2010. The Board comprises 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 AO, BA (Hons), BEc
Chair
Mr Stuart Hamilton is the Chief Executive Officer of Open Universities Australia. He was previously Secretary of the Victorian Department of Education and Training (2001–02), Director of the Innovation Economy Advisory Board (2002–03) and Chair of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (2004–06). Mr Hamilton was Executive Director of the Australian Vice-Chancellors’ Committee (now Universities Australia) (1996–2001) and worked in the Commonwealth Public Service for many years, including as Deputy Secretary in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and as Secretary to the Departments of Health, Housing and Community Services and Environment, Sport and Territories. Mr Hamilton was a Rhodes Scholar at the University of Oxford (1971–74).
Mr Peter Annett, BCom, TSTC

Member until 25 May 2010

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 Christopher Bennett, BBus (Accounting)

Acting member from 30 May 2010

Mr Christopher Bennett is Partner in Charge of PricewaterhouseCoopers’ (PwC) Government Sector in Australia, overseeing all engagement with Government across the firm’s Audit, Tax and Advisory businesses. He has a background in information technology and transformational change for large organisations. Mr Bennett has specialist knowledge about the education sector and was PwC’s lead partner for education in Victoria for a number of years. Before moving to PwC, he was an employee of the Department of Education in Victoria (1979–86), working in both finance and technology.

Mr Bennett is an Affiliate of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia, a Fellow of the Australian Society of CPAs, a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and a member of the Australian Computer Society (Senior).

Mr Brian Boyd, BA, DipEd

Member

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, Transport, Hazardous Industrial Waste 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 a member of the Expert Reference Group of the Victorian Bushfire Recovery and Reconstruction Authority.

Professor Wendy Brabham

Member until 25 May 2010

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 16 years. Professor Brabham has considerable experience working with Indigenous communities and in education.

Professor Gerald Burke, BCom, DipEd, PhD

Member until 25 May 2010

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 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 is Secretary of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD). He joined the Department in 2006 following a period as Deputy Secretary of the Department of Treasury and Finance (2005–06). He has also been active on the national stage, for example as Chair of the committee that produced the Melbourne Declaration on the Educational Goals for Young Australians, and a member of the Productivity Agenda Working Group, which developed the National Productivity Agenda for COAG.

Prior to joining the public service, Professor Dawkins held a number of university positions, including Director of the Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research at the University of Melbourne (1996–2005). He remains an honorary Professorial Fellow of the Melbourne Institute. Professor Dawkins is a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia and a Fellow of the Institute of Public Administration (Victoria).

Mr Alan Frees, MAICD

Member

Mr Alan Frees is the founder and co-owner of the business consultancy group, Business Redirections, specialising in legal and governance issues. He worked for 25 years as a corporate lawyer and was a partner in Arthur Robinson & Hedderwicks (now Allens Arthur Robinson) for 13 years, before retiring from practice in 1996. 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 Independent Schools Victoria (1998–) and a member of the Board of Management of the Independent Schools Council of Australia (2007–).

Professor Jack Keating, BEc, PhD

Member until 16 October 2009

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 the 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, BA, BEd

Member until 16 October 2009

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.

Mr Peter Lewinsky, BEc, MBA, FCA, SFFin, FAICD

Acting member from 30 May 2010

Mr Peter Lewinsky provides consultancy services to the private and public sector on corporate governance, business and strategic planning, and audit and risk management. He has worked with all tiers of government on major projects and strategic planning in a range of portfolios. He has particular experience over the last ten years as an administrator in reforming organisations and overseeing significant organisational change, and has extensive experience as a non-executive director of listed public and private companies. He is currently the Chair of the Panel of the Administrators at the City of Brimbank, a part-time appointment. Mr Lewinsky is also on the boards of a number of not-for-profit companies.
Ms Julie Moss, BA, GradDipArts (Sociology), AssocDip (Community Development)
Member
Ms Julie Moss is the Managing Director of the Photography Studies College (Melbourne). She has been a member of the VRQA since its inception and also served on the Victorian Qualifications Authority Board. She is the former National Chair of the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET) and a former member of the National Quality Council. She is a member of the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre Management Committee and the TAFE Development Centre, and has over 25 years experience in the post-compulsory education and training sector.

Ms Patricia Neden, BA, DipEd, GradDipBusAdmin
Member from 17 October 2009
Ms Patricia Neden is the Chief Executive Officer of Innovation and Business Skills Australia (IBSA). IBSA operates across the VET sector, developing training packages and working with industry on workforce development issues. Ms Neden is a Director of TVET Australia; a member of the Australian Human Resources Institute's National Accreditation Committee; and a member of the Commonwealth Government's Contributions Review Panel. Ms Neden worked in the Victorian Public Service for many years, holding the position of Deputy Secretary, Skills Victoria between 2005 and 2008. She also spent time in the private sector, working predominantly in information technology and human resource management in the manufacturing and mining sectors.

Professor Pauline Nestor, BA (Hons), MPhil, PhD
Member
Professor Pauline Nestor is Associate Dean Research in the Faculty of Arts, and Academic Adviser to the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research, 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, BEd
Member until 16 October 2009
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.

Mr Roger Peacock, BA (Hons)
Member from 17 October 2009
Mr Roger Peacock has expertise in relationships with Asia, international education and university development. He has served at Australian embassies in Thailand, Indonesia and China. He was Executive Director of the Asian Studies Council; Head of the International Division of the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training; founding head of Australia Education International (AEI) and Vice-Principal (University Development) at the University of Melbourne.
Mr Michael Perry, BCom, FCA, SAFSIA, MAICD

Acting member from 30 May 2010

Mr Michael Perry is a recently retired Senior Partner of Ernst & Young’s Melbourne office. He has extensive experience in financial consulting services, with specialist skills in auditing, government advisory services, public company floats and takeovers, the preparation of prospectuses, the valuation of companies, corporate financing (both local and overseas), internal audit structures and business acquisition planning and implementation. Mr Perry has specialised and headed the firm’s Government Sector and the Utilities, Property and Communication industry teams. He is a member of the Museums Board of Victoria and Chair of its Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, as well as fulfilling similar roles for a number of other government and corporate entities.

Mr Howard Ronaldson

Ex officio member

Mr Howard Ronaldson is the Secretary of the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development (DIIRD). 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.

Ms Glenda Strong, GradDipEdStudies (Literacy), DipTeaching (Primary)

Member from 17 October 2009

Ms Glenda Strong has worked in the Victorian education sector for almost 30 years. With a background in primary teaching, Ms Strong has held positions in DEECD’s central office, working on a range of curriculum initiatives including the Early Years Literacy and Numeracy strategies. During this time she was awarded a Public Service Medal for her contribution to education generally and the early years of schooling in particular. Ms Strong then took up the role of Regional Director of the DEECD Barwon South Western Region. She is now the Executive Director at the Royal Children’s Hospital Education Institute, where she is a driving force in ensuring that students with health conditions are educationally supported throughout their health journeys.

Ms Strong holds several notable appointments with various education and health-related organisations, including member of the Jack Brockhoff Foundation Child Health and Wellbeing Advisory Committee; member of the Victorian Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) Data Dissemination Committee and Chair of the AEDI in Schools Study Advisory Group.
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 2009–10.

VRQA Audit and Risk Management Committee
- John Parish (Chair), VRQA Board until 16 October 2009
- Peter Annett, VRQA Board until 25 May 2010
- Alan Frees (Chair), VRQA Board from 17 October 2009
- Patricia Neden, VRQA Board from 17 October 2009
- Jonathan Thomas, Moore Stephens HF Assurance
- Duncan McColl, Chief Accounting and Finance Officer, DEECD

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, Victorian Vice-Chancellors Committee
- Alan Lindsay, Senior Panel Chair
- Simon Livingstone, Council of Private Higher Education and the Australian Council of Independent Vocational Colleges
- Anne Martin, Senior Panel Chair
- Kym Peake, Skills Victoria from 29 January 2010
- Brendan Sheehan, Skills Victoria until 28 January 2010
- Tony Zalewski, ACPET

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

The Board has subcommittees that provide advice and make recommendations to the VRQA Board in specific areas. The changing priorities of the VRQA and the focus on quality of delivery in VET resulted in a revision of Board subcommittees during 2009. All Board committees include representatives from key stakeholders from within government and the private sector who have an interest in the outcomes of the committee's discussion.

The following subcommittees were convened during 2009–10:

**State Register Subcommittee**
- Julie Moss (Chair), VRQA Board
- Brian Boyd, VRQA Board
- Jan Lake, VRQA Board until 16 October 2009
- Glenda Strong, VRQA Board from 17 October 2009
- Sandy Forbes, ACFE until November 2009
- Michelle Hill, DEECD
- John Spasevski, DIIRD from February 2010
- Wendy Timms, Skills Victoria, until February 2010
- Sian Lewis, ACFE from March 2010

The State Register Subcommittee has oversight of the implementation of the State Register. It acts as the steering group for the project, focusing on the display of public information about education and training, and the project's achievement of high-level milestones.

**Credit Matrix Implementation Advisory Committee until 4 September 2009**
- Gerald Burke (Chair), VRQA Board
- Jack Keating, VRQA Board
- Wendy Brabham, VRQA Board
- Greg Clarke, DEEWR
- David Howes, VCAA
- Bernadette Gigliotti, Career Education Association of Victoria
- Verna Kearney, ACFE
- Toni Kilsby, Swinburne University of Technology
- Ewa Kuriata, DIIRD
- Edmund Misson, DEECD
- Nita Schultz, VTA

The Credit Matrix Implementation Advisory Committee had oversight of the implementation activities of the Credit Matrix. It brought together internal and external stakeholders and acted as the steering group for the project.

**Quality Assurance Subcommittee from 15 September 2009**
- Roger Peacock (Chair), VRQA Board from 17 October 2009
- Alan Frees, VRQA Board (held Chair position until 16 October 2009)
- Patricia Neden, VRQA Board from 17 October 2009
- Julie Moss, VRQA Board
- Jane McInnis, Skills Victoria

The Quality Assurance Subcommittee addresses issues in relation to registration and ongoing regulation of providers in all sectors, with a particular focus in 2009–10 on delivery in the VET sector and to international students.
Fees Subcommittee
The Fees Subcommittee is convened as required to undertake broad consultation with external stakeholders as part of its deliberations on any review of fees. The Fees Subcommittee did not convene in 2009–10.

Qualifications and Credit Recognition Subcommittee
The Qualifications and Credit Recognition Subcommittee addresses issues in relation to the Credit Matrix and accredited qualifications.

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:
- developing the new VRQA Guidelines for VET Providers and the CRICOS risk assessment processes
- contributing to the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) consultation – Strengthening the AQF
- contributing to drafting legislative amendments for the Education and Training Reform Amendment (Skills) Bill 2010.

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; Rob Fearnside, Deputy Director (until 26 July 2009), and Robyn Timmins, Acting Deputy Director (from 27 July 2009), appointed Deputy Director on 26 April 2010.

VRQA staffing is organised in four functional areas:

- Governance and Corporate Services
- Quality Assurance:
  - school education
  - senior secondary education
  - international education
  - higher education
  - vocational education and training
- State Register and Qualifications Navigator
- Major Projects:
  - Rapid Audit Program
  - Financial Health Assessments.

As at June 2010, the VRQA had the full-time equivalent of 51.1 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

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VRQA staff are included in DEECD workforce data.