



Victorian  
Registration &  
Qualifications  
Authority

# AEN Skills Week Conference VRQA Presentation

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# Contents

1. **About the VRQA**
2. **Key Legislation**
3. **Focus on the AAU, RFS and VET Units**
4. **COVID-19 Impact on VRQA Functions**

1. **Functions of the Regulator**
2. **Education, Training and Reform Act 2006: key aspects**
3. **A&T, RTO and GTO functions**
4. **Adjustments to regulatory operations**

# 1. About the VRQA

The Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) is Victoria's education and training regulator.

The VRQA is governed by an independent Board with expertise from education, training, quality assurance and industry.

- **The VRQA is a statutory authority in Victoria's Education and Training portfolio.**
- **The Minister for Education and the Minister for Training and Skills are responsible for the VRQA.**
- **Established under s4.2.1 of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*.**

# VRQA Functions

- Register education providers – RTOs and independent schools
- Regulate apprenticeships and traineeships
- Manage State Apprenticeship Register - Epsilon
- Recognise GTOs
- Approve Training Schemes - ATS
- Register home education
- Accredite courses and register qualifications

## 2. Key Legislation

The VRQA's role as Victoria's education and training regulator is defined by:

- legislation
- direction issued by our Ministers
- powers delegated on behalf of our Ministers to our Chief Executive Officer (Director).

We regulate to a number of standards, codes and guidelines. We have also entered into a number of memoranda of understanding with other agencies

- Education and Training Reform Act 2006  
Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017
- Education and Training Reform Amendment (Dispute Resolution and Student Welfare Scheme) Regulations 2013
- Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000
- Child Wellbeing And Safety Act 2005

# Summary of VRQA regulatory activity 2018/19

## 1 in 6

Victorians are directly impacted by our regulatory activity.



## Registration

20 new schools



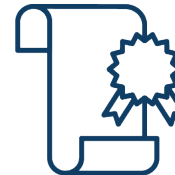
45 RTOs renewed

35,134 training contracts

## Accreditation

32 training packages reviewed

16 new courses



20 courses reaccredited

## Total at 30 June 2019:



2262 registered schools  
41 non-school senior secondary providers



5562 home schooling children  
3434 home schooling households



213 VRQA-registered RTOs



77,698 active apprentices and trainees  
25,656 active employers

152 complaints received



1460 apprenticeship field visits

# Skills and Training

## 3 Units:

- AAU – Apprenticeship Administration Unit
- RFS – Regulatory Field Services Unit
- VET – VET and Industry Engagement Unit



# 3. Focus on the AAU Unit

## **AAU – The Apprenticeship Administration Unit**

- **Manages the Victorian Apprenticeship and Traineeship Register – Epsilon**
  - **Registers and Adjusts Training Contracts**
- **Responds to Apprenticeship and Traineeship enquiries via phone or online**
  
- **Manages Trade Papers**



# Epsilon – IT system registering training contracts

- Epsilon was launched on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2020 and replaced Delta
- Some initial teething problems – the system is working well
- COVID -19 effects: seeing a reduction in new Training Contracts for registration, an increase in suspensions and withdrawals and not yet seeing the increase in cancellations as there is a known lag in this data

## **EPSILON:**

- 1. Letters emailed**
- 2. Better security**
- 3. More modern look and feel**
- 4. Easy to navigate**

**[vrqa.apprenticeships@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:vrqa.apprenticeships@edumail.vic.gov.au)**

# Trade Papers - Introduction

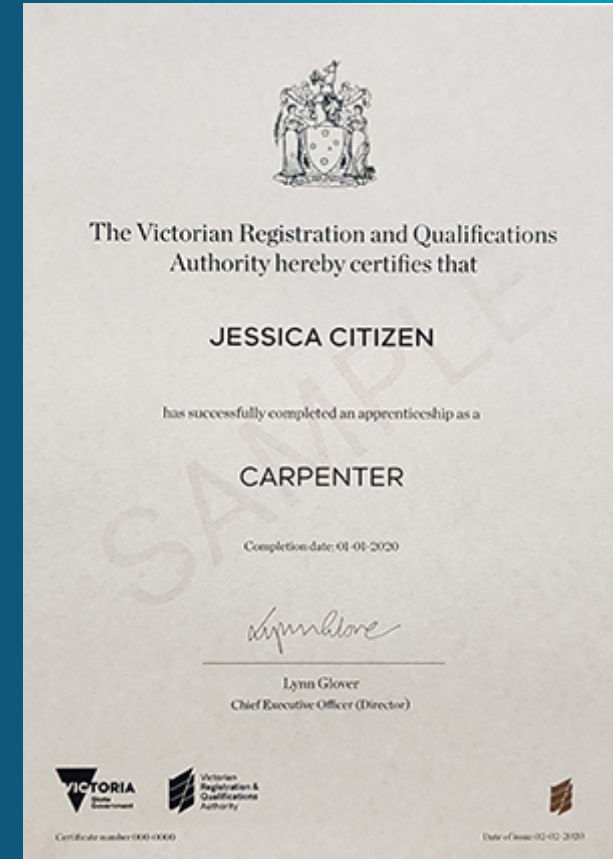
- In August 2018, a Ministerial Direction was released under the *ETRA 2006* to authorise the re-introduction of Trade Papers.
- The VRQA has partnered with VETASSESS to assist in determining the trade titles, the design of the portal and the process for issuing Trade Papers.
- The Victorian Skills Commissioner has endorsed the schedule of occupational titles.
- Available for apprentices only.
- First Trade Certificate is free of charge for eligible apprentices who completed since 1995.

# Trade Papers

- Free to apprentices who apply once they have completed their qualification and training contract
- Application through the portal – details on our website

<https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/apprenticeships/Pages/trade-papers.aspx>

- Managed on our behalf by VETASSESS
- Over 3600 applications received to date



# 3. Focus on the RFS Unit

## Apprenticeship Field Services

- Investigate employer compliance with regulatory obligations.
- Conduct investigative campaigns to target areas of regulatory risk.
- Investigate disputes between apprentices and employers, and conducts formal proceedings where the parties remain in dispute.



# Victorian Apprenticeship Field Services

BUSY Group Ltd – trading as:  
Victorian Apprenticeship Field  
Services (VAFS)

- Workplace compliance checks
- Authorised Officers
  - enter a workplace
  - make enquiries
  - inspect and copy documents.



The BUSY Group Ltd. trading as Victorian Apprenticeship Field Services have been contracted by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) to provide Victorian Apprenticeship and Traineeship Regulation Services in Victoria since 2013.



Victorian  
Apprenticeship  
Field Services

The BUSY Group acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to their Elders.

# Victorian Apprenticeship Field Services

Job Type	Description
<b>Risk Assessment Services (RASs)</b>	<u>Online or telephone contacts made with apprentices and trainees to determine compliance with training contracts, and to identify any issues requiring escalation (i.e., more detailed enquiries).</u>
<b>Medium Complexity Investigations (MCIs)</b>	<u>Enquiries by Authorised Officers (AOs), usually involving workplace visits and arising from RAS job escalations. They may also occur at the VRQA's direction.</u>
<b>High Complexity Investigations - Disputes (HCI Disputes)</b>	<u>Enquiries by Authorised Officers regarding disputes between employers and apprentices. These are generally more complex than MCIs.</u>
<b>High Complexity Investigations – Escalations (HCI Escalations)</b>	<u>Enquiries by Authorised Officers that have been escalated due to high complexity (e.g., response to multiple complaints).</u>

# Victorian Apprenticeship Field Services 2018/19

## VAFS activities in 2018-19:

- Outbound calls to 6,391 apprentices and trainees
- Authorised Officer enquiries, including:
  - 734 workplace visits based on issues identified via outbound calls or regulatory campaigns.
  - 44 dispute investigations.
  - 32 high complexity investigations



# Regulatory Field Services (RFS)

## Key Issues and Outcomes



## 2018/19

- **69 employer approvals revoked**
- **130 training contracts cancelled**



# 3. Focus on the VET Unit

## 1. GTO Recognition

## 2. Approved Training Schemes

## 3. RTO Registration and Compliance

## 4. Course Accreditation

- ❑ Recognition of GTOs against the National Standards for GTOs
- ❑ New and recognised GTOs undergo
  - Quality Assurance Audits
  - Financial Viability Assessments
- ❑ Qualifications which the VRQA approves to be undertaken as an apprenticeship/traineeship
- ❑ RTOs that only deliver to students in Victoria/WA
- ❑ Courses which are not covered in nationally endorsed training packages

# GTO Recognition

- VRQA regulates group training organisations (GTOs) as employers of apprentices and trainees under Part 5.5 of the ETRA (2006)
- Recognises GTOs under the Commonwealth's National Standards for GTOs
- To be recognised as a GTO by the VRQA, GTOs must comply with the National Standards for GTOs including demonstrating financial viability.
- Period of recognition is 5 years.
- An audit may be initiated at any time during the 5 year recognition period to either monitor ongoing compliance with the National Standards or as a result of a complaint about the GTO (subject to initial enquiry)

# About GTO Monitoring Audits

## What do quality services look like in a GTO?

### The Key Elements - National Standards for GTOs

- 1 quality recruitment, employment and induction
- 2 quality monitoring and supporting apprentices and trainees to completion
- 3 maintaining a sustainable GTO which is well governed and administered

## COVID-19 adjustments to the VRQA Audit process

- Desk-top audits in place of site-audits
- Flexibility with audit timing

# Approved Training Scheme

The VRQA determines which qualifications are available as apprenticeships and traineeships in Victoria.

These are called approved training schemes and include terms and conditions, such as:

- whether a qualification is available as an apprenticeship or traineeship
- the nominal duration of an apprenticeship or traineeship
- probationary periods.
- Approved training schemes also specify minimum hours for employment and training for apprentices and trainees.

# RTO Registration and Compliance

- Training organisations must be registered to be eligible to issue qualifications and statements of attainment under the Australian Qualifications Framework.
- RTOs delivering training only to domestic students in Victoria, or in Victoria and Western Australia, can register with the VRQA rather than ASQA.
- The registration period is 5 years
- Registered training organisations have annual reporting obligations as part of their conditions of registration
- These obligations fall under the VRQA Guidelines for VET Providers and Commonwealth data reporting standards.

# COVID-19 Impact on VET/GTO Functions

- VRQA is not conducting RTO or GTO site audits while physical distancing guidelines are in place.
- Participating GTOs/RTOs to participate in desktop audits.
- The COVID-19 Omnibus (Emergency Measures) Act 2020 provides the VRQA the ability to extend an RTO's registration by up to 6 months.

# COVID-19 Impact - Apprenticeship Administration Unit

- Commencement of the COVID 19 resulted in a significant increase in enquiries through to the AAU via telephone and email / website traffic.
- VRQA published FAQs on our website. Updated for Stage 4.
- Reduction in new Training Contracts for registration
- Increase in suspensions and withdrawals of training contracts – not yet a significant increase in cancellations – noting a lag in this data.
- JobKeeper attributed to retention of training contracts.

# Regulatory Field Services- COVID 19 response

## Risk Assessment Services

- Suspended all outbound risk assessments
- Introduced outbound intelligence gathering

## Authorised Officer workplace visits

- Suspended all non critical workplace visits
- Introduced remote assessments

## Complaints and disputes

- Suspended all non critical workplace visits
- Introduced remote response services



# VRQA COVID-19 Response

- The VRQA website provides updates/relevant information for clients and stakeholders regarding coronavirus (COVID-19) and VRQA regulation.
- FAQs are on the VRQA website and are regularly updated
- Please continue to check our website for new information: [VRQA News](#)

# Questions and Comments Welcome

Happy to take questions within this  
forum or via the VRQA email:

**[vrqa@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:vrqa@education.vic.gov.au)**

**Thank you**