

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SERVICES

INFORMATION STATEMENT - 2009

Department of Education Services
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Date: 21 July 2009

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SERVICES INFORMATION STATEMENT

The Organisation

The Department of Education Services was established in July 1996 under Section 35 of the *Public Sector Management Act 1994* as a department of the Public Service. The Department was created through the amalgamation of several education agencies and areas of responsibility including higher education, non-government education and international education. In July 2006 the Office of the Training Accreditation Council transferred from the Department of Education and Training to the Department of Education Services expanding the Department's services to include the responsibility for quality assurance and recognition of Western Australian vocational education and training (VET) services.

The Department plays a crucial role in strengthening and safeguarding the quality of education and training in Western Australia by providing effective and efficient regulation services. These services cover over 500 organisations providing education and training to approximately 270, 000 students in the State.

The Department is responsible to the Minister for Education and the Minister for Training.

The Department of Education Services currently delivers the following services to the non-government schools, international education, higher education, and vocational education and training sectors in Western Australia:

Regulatory Services to ensure compliance with relevant State legislation and to enhance public confidence in the quality and integrity of education and training through effective and efficient regulation.

Funding Services to the non-government school and university sectors (per capita grants and low interest loans for capital infrastructure projects) and for various scholarship schemes.

Policy Advisory Services, research, planning and legislative services to position the education and training system to meet the needs of the State. The Department supports the Minister, Government and other bodies through the provision of expert advice and participates in development of State and National Policy.

Executive Support Services to five Ministerial advisory councils and committees that operate within it:

- Aboriginal Education and Training Council;
- Non-Government Schools Planning Advisory Committee;
- Rural and Remote Education Advisory Council;
- Training Accreditation Council; and
- Western Australian Higher Education Council.

In addition the Department establishes a number of adhoc advisory committees as required.

Mission Statement

- *Proactively support the development of Western Australia's education and training systems for the benefit of students and the State through provision of relevant regulation, funding and policy advisory services.*

Vision

- *To be recognised as Australia's leader in the provision of services to education and training sectors.*

Guiding Values

The core values underpinning the Department's activities are a commitment to:

- *being **proactive** in supporting change where it is needed and making a difference through the services, advice and assistance that the Department provides.*
- *being **responsive** and flexible to changing needs and being able to take action quickly without undue formality.*
- ***advancing** continually improvement in services to the Western Australian education and training community and the outcomes for Government.*
- ***investing** in our people appropriately through a systematic approach to continual improvement and satisfaction.*

Directorates

The Department of Education Services comprises three operational directorates, each responsible to the Chief Executive Officer.

Corporate Governance and Non-Government Schools

The Corporate Governance section manages corporate services, oversees the strategic planning process and coordinates all corporate services and corporate governance matters for the Department.

The objective of the non-government schools section is to facilitate student access to, and provision of, quality education in non-government schools. The Directorate develops and manages policies and procedures to ensure the Government's legislative requirements for establishment, registration and funding of non-government schools are implemented.

Education and Training Regulation

The Directorate manages the secretariat support services for the Training Accreditation Council. The functions of the Council are to: register and de-register training providers; accredit and vary and cancel the accreditation of courses and skills training programs and the qualifications gained from such courses and skills training programs; recognise skills and qualifications obtained by individuals in this State or elsewhere, in industry, the workplace or educational institutions; and determine the minimum competency to be provided by accredited courses and skills training programs.

The Directorate registers international education institutions and courses and takes an active interest in issues surrounding the welfare of international students. The Directorate ensures that all registered international education providers deliver quality educational services and maintain standards in accordance with legislative requirements.

The function of accreditation and registration of higher education courses delivered by non self-accrediting higher education institutions in accordance with legislative requirements and national protocols is also managed by this Directorate.

Higher Education and Legislative Review

The Directorate provides policy advice on all matters relating to higher education in the State. It monitors the provision of higher education for the purpose of strategic planning; fosters a visionary approach to higher education issues; and undertakes special reviews, projects and feasibility studies from time to time at the request of the Minister. Another significant area of responsibility is that of overseeing the statutory review of specific education and training legislation and the drafting of new or amending legislation within the Education and Training portfolios.

The Directorate also represents Western Australia's position in bilateral and multilateral consultations on higher education issues.

Ministerial Councils and Committees

Aboriginal Education and Training Council

The Western Australian Aboriginal Education and Training Council (AETC) is an independent body that was established in 1995 in response to Recommendation 139 of the Report of the Western Australian Task Force on Aboriginal Social Justice. In 2005 the Council was restructured to ensure that the primary source of advice to Government on emerging issues in Aboriginal Education and Training is the grassroots participation of Aboriginal community members representing each of 10 regions across Western Australia. A fulltime Chairperson coordinates the activities of the Council. The State's education and training providers are represented on the Council in an Ex-officio capacity serving as a core reference group to provide expertise on education and training matters.

In addition to reports from the Regions' community representatives alerting the Council to key educational and training issues for Aboriginal people in regional Western Australia, the Aboriginal Education and Training Council commissions its own strategic educational research and projects.

Rural and Remote Education Advisory Council

The Rural and Remote Education Advisory Council (RREAC) was established in 1997 to provide advice to the Minister for Education on the education and training needs of people living in rural and remote areas of Western Australia. In May 2006, the Council underwent a restructure and now has bi-partisan support with the appointment of rural Members of Parliament to the position of Chair and Deputy Chair. The 'Terms of Reference' provide for a strategic focus based on grassroots input from rural communities which is in keeping with Government priorities. In providing advice to the Minister, the Council separates the voice of the 'community' and the 'consumer' from the providers of education and training in rural areas.

The Council is supported by a full time Director and administrative assistant.

Training Accreditation Council

The Training Accreditation Council (TAC) is Western Australia's State Registering/Course Accrediting Body and is responsible for quality assurance and recognition of vocational education and training services in Western Australia. The Council is committed to being the national leader in the strategic management of the recognition and quality assurance of training, including associated policies, services and standards in the vocational education and training sector and to providing practical, efficient and responsive support for government, the State Training Board, industry training providers, and the community.

Responsibilities of the Council include:

- the registration of training providers
- the accreditation of courses
- the recognition of skills and qualifications.

The seven members of the Training Accreditation Council are appointed by the Minister for their expertise, qualifications and experience in accreditation, curriculum, training provider registration or skills recognition.

Secretariat support for the Council is provided by the Department of Education Services.

Non-Government Schools Planning Advisory Committee

The Non-Government Schools Planning Advisory Committee (NGSPAC) was established in 1998 and provides advice to the Minister for Education on proposed new schools to be established and registered under the *School Education Act 1999*. The aim of the Committee is to consider issues associated with the long term planning of new non-government schools. The Minister must be satisfied that a proposed school is not going to have a detrimental impact on the educational programs of existing government and non-government schools in the catchment area for the proposed school and that the proposed school will meet certain demographic requirements. The Committee is provided with information from the Department of Planning and Infrastructure which relates to the planning of non-Government schools.

The NGSPAC has an independent Chair and has representation from Government and peak education groups.

Executive support is provided by the Department of Education Services.

Western Australian Higher Education Council

The Western Australian Higher Education Council (WAHEC) was established in March 1990. The Council operates as the peak body for higher education in the State and is chaired by the Minister for Education. Membership of the Council is comprised of the Vice-Chancellors of the five Western Australian universities and executive support is provided by the Department.

Legislation Administered

The Department is responsible for the following legislation in accordance with the allocation of legislation to portfolios. (*Government Gazette* No 182, 27 October 2008):

- *Curtin University of Technology Act 1966*
- *Edith Cowan University Act 1984*
- *Education Service Providers (Full Fee Overseas Students) Registration Act 1991*
- *Hale School Act 1876*
- *Higher Education Act 2004*
- *Murdoch University Act 1973*
- *Murdoch University Planning Board Act 1970*
- *School Education Act 1999 (Part 4 and other provisions of the Act as far as they apply to students enrolled at non-government schools)*
- *University Building Act 1938*
- *University Buildings Act 1930*
- *University Buildings Act 1952*
- *University Colleges Act 1926*
- *University of Notre Dame Australia Act 1989*
- *University of Western Australia Act 1911*
- *Vocational Education and Training Act 1996 (Part 4 Division 1)*
- *Western Australian College of Teaching Act 2004*

Public Participation

The Department welcomes views and comments from members of the public and bodies outside the Western Australian Government administration in the formulation of policy by the Department and in the administration of departmental functions. General participation is possible in various ways:

- making oral and written representations to the Minister for Education, the Minister for Training or the Department;
- putting submissions to working groups or reviews on policy matters undertaken by the Department; and
- making representation through committees with external participation.

The Ministerial Councils and Committees supported by the Department have a range of non-government (public) representation as well as representation from various education peak bodies and industry support groups.

Documents Held by the Department

In accordance with the *Public Sector Management Act 1994*, and other legislative requirements, the Department has developed the following policy and administrative documents:

- accounting manual
- annual financial accounts
- [annual reports](#)
- [budget statements](#)
- Ministerial Council and Committee agendas and minutes
- policy documents
- administrative guidelines
- information guides
- [strategic plans](#)

Copies of these documents are available for public inspection, subject to exemptions referred to in the *Freedom of Information Act 1992*, by arrangement at the Department's office located at 22 Hasler Road, Osborne Park Western Australia between 8am and 5pm Monday to Friday. The following information is also available for public inspection:

- directions given by the Minister under Section 11 of the *Vocational Education and Training Act 1996*;
- guidelines issued by the Minister under Section 13 of the *Vocational Education and Training Act 1996*; and
- decisions of Training Accreditation Council under Section 34 of the *Vocational Education and Training Act 1996* relating to appeals.

Freedom of Information Process

Freedom of Information Requests

In line with the general principles of the Freedom of Information (FOI) legislation, the Department of Education Services regards formal FOI applications as a process of last resort reserved for dealing with the most sensitive information. As far as possible the Department aims to make information readily available outside the FOI process by way of inspection on site. To facilitate access to Departmental documents, general enquiries should be referred to the Information Officer.

If information is not routinely available, the *Freedom of Information Act 1992* provides the right to apply for documents held by the Department for Education Services and to enable the public to ensure that personal information in documents is accurate, complete, up to date and not misleading.

Formal requests for information under the *Freedom of Information Act 1992*, will be processed in accordance with the Procedures and Access Arrangements prepared by the Office of the Information Commissioner.

Freedom of Information Applications

A formal application for information must:

- be submitted in writing;
- provide enough information so that the documents requested can be identified;
- give an Australian address to which notices can be sent; and
- be lodged at the Department with any application fee payable.

Applications and enquires should be addressed to:

In person

Freedom of Information Officer
Department of Education Services
22 Hasler Road, OSBORNE PARK WA 6017

By mail

Freedom of Information Officer
Department of Education Services
PO Box 1766, OSBORNE PARK WA 6916

By phone/email

(08) 9441 1900
info@des.wa.gov.au

Requests

Requests for information will be acknowledged within 14 days of receipt.

Notice of Decision

Notice of a decision will be provided as soon as possible, but in any case within 45 calendar days, and will include details such as:

- the date on which the decision was made;
- the name and the designation of the officer who made the decision;
- if the document is an exempt document the reasons for classifying the matter exempt;
- the fact that access is given to an edited document; and

- information on the right to review and the procedures to be followed to exercise those rights.

Appeal Processes

Internal Review

If you are dissatisfied with the initial decision of your application, you have a right to apply for an internal review.

An application for internal review must be lodged with the Department within 30 calendar days after being given the written notice, and must:

- be in writing;
- provide particulars of the decision to be reviewed; and
- give an address in Australia.

There is no lodgement fee for an application for internal review and there are no charges for dealing with an internal review request.

If an application for internal review is received, it will not be dealt with by the person who made the initial decision, or by any person who is subordinate to the original decision-maker. The outcome of an application for internal review may result in a confirmation, a variation, or a reversal of the original decision under review. You will be advised of the outcome within 15 days.

The address for lodgement of an internal review request is:

Freedom of Information Officer
Department of Education Services
PO Box 1766, OSBORNE PARK WA 6916

External Review

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of an internal review, you have the right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner seeking external review of that decision. You are required to lodge your complaint with the Information Commissioner's office within 60 days of receiving notice of that decision.

A complaint to the Information Commissioner must:

- be in writing;
- provide particulars of the decision to be reviewed;
- include a copy of the notice of the decision; and
- give an address in Australia.

There is no charge for lodging a complaint with the Information Commissioner's office.

The address of the Information Commissioner is:

Office of the Information Commissioner
Level 12, St Martin's Tower
44 St Georges Terrace, PERTH WA 6000

Freedom of Information Charges

A scale of fees and charges is set under the FOI Act Regulations. Apart from the application fee of \$30 for non personal information, there may be discretionary charges for staff time in accessing relevant information. There are no fees for accessing personal information about an applicant.