



Australian Government

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency

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TEQSA Chief Commissioner

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**TEQSA 2022**  
6th ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Fit for the Future:  
Leadership, Quality, Integrity

# State of the Sector

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- Australia went into COVID with, overall, a strong system of higher education. It emerges from COVID still strong though in some ways a different place.
- Notwithstanding the immense challenges the pandemic has provided, there have been some dividends for the HE sector from the experience. To that extent, COVID has provided something of an accelerant for reform, as well as providing some other lessons.
- Potential changes in policy settings, particularly those emerging from the Accord review, led by Professor Mary O’Kane which is commencing its work.
- Partly related to COVID has been an increasing chorus of concern about the safety of our places and spaces for both staff and especially our students. That concern extends to their overall well-being.

# External threats to Australian higher education quality, sustainability and integrity

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- Existential events with global impact.
- The shifting patterns of the International student marketplace, and particular challenges around business models. What does an Australian qualification mean, and look like? Australian international education inevitably will reduce its historical dependence on a single-source campus-based model of higher education.
- The corroding and ultimately undermining effects of academic cheating, cyber security vulnerabilities and admissions practices lacking integrity and transparency. Research misconduct (including misrepresentation of research activity and findings) also can prove to be institutionally ruinous, though this is a threat more from within than outside.

# The role and regulatory posture of TEQSA

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- Shifting from a command and control model to a more engaged one with greater acknowledgement of mutually understood responsibilities for quality assurance and outcomes.
- Supporting the sector requires TEQSA to exhibit leadership and, indeed, prescience about both emerging challenges and the tackling of seemingly intractable ones.
- A more supportive approach on the part of TEQSA goes to its priorities and the tone and manner of its dealings. It does not suggest cosiness. Nor should TEQSA provide a nappy service.
- TEQSA's approach should also explore new ways of engaging the authentic student voice.
- Within the context of the above, TEQSA's core roles remain unchanged: to help protect and build further Australia's higher education sector, and to protect the interests of students.