



Australian Government

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency

# TEQSA Corporate Plan

2018-22



TEQSA

## TEQSA Corporate Plan 2018–22



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The document must be attributed as the TEQSA Corporate Plan 2018–22

### Contacts

More information about the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, including electronic versions of this corporate plan, is available at [teqsa.gov.au/about-us/publications](https://teqsa.gov.au/about-us/publications)

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# Contents

Introduction	4
From the Chief Commissioner	5
TEQSA's purpose	7
TEQSA's remit	7
Quality assurance and regulation of higher education	8
TEQSA's engagement with stakeholders	8
Operating environment and risks to achievement of TEQSA's objectives	10
Planning overview and performance	14
Capability requirements	22
Management systems	24

# Introduction

As the accountable authority of the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), we are pleased to present the TEQSA Corporate Plan 2018–22 as required under paragraph 35(1)(a) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* and s160(1) of the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Act 2011*. The Corporate Plan is prepared in accordance with the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014* and covers four reporting periods from 2018–19 to 2021–22.



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**Professor Nicholas Saunders AO**  
Chief Commissioner



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**Professor Cliff Walsh**  
Commissioner



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**Dr Lin Martin**  
Commissioner

August 2018

# From the Chief Commissioner



I am pleased to present the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Corporate Plan for the years 2018-19 to 2021-22.

This Plan sets out TEQSA's priorities for the next four years in an environment of potentially significant changes in Australian higher education.

Since 2015, TEQSA has increased the opportunities for providers and other stakeholders to provide feedback on our performance as a regulator and to discuss developments in quality assurance with the agency. These opportunities have included the annual stakeholder survey, meetings with peak bodies, forums with groups of providers, visits to and from individual providers and, not least, the annual TEQSA conference. Stakeholders found much to welcome but, in 2017-18, the deterioration in the timeliness of decisions about applications for accreditation of courses and registration of providers was consistently raised by providers from across the sector. Providers also noted a lack of consistency in the service delivered through the case management approach, primarily due to the high turnover in case managers. With the welcome announcement in the 2018-19 Commonwealth Budget of an additional \$24.3 million over four years to ensure the ongoing financial sustainability of the agency and an increase in permanent staffing, both the timeliness of decisions and the approach to case management are key aspects of this corporate plan. The first steps are already underway to recruit more permanent assessment staff, and to develop and implement improved procedures to lift our performance in this area.

Building our capability in regulatory policy is another key area of activity in this plan that will ensure policy makers have the evidence required for decisions about the future of higher education and the role of regulation. In particular, we expect to provide key input to the reviews of the Australian Qualifications Framework and of higher education provider categories. TEQSA is also building capability to respond to broader changes in pedagogy, and the structure and delivery of higher education, so that the approach to quality assurance and regulation remains contemporary and effective.

TEQSA will continue to work closely with the Higher Education Standards Panel across the wide range of policy issues with which they are engaged. Work to align more closely TEQSA's work and that of the many professional accreditation bodies that work in higher education will be a particular priority, with the aim of reducing duplication and thus regulatory burden. We will be working with the Department of Education and Training and the sector to address issues of student attrition and retention, building on good practice. We will also continue our

work with the higher education quality assurance agencies of other countries, as well as other domestic regulators such as the Australian Skills Quality Authority, to share information about risks to students and the quality of higher education and to identify opportunities to streamline our processes further.

This plan is a living document and will be revised as the agency adapts and responds to changes in Australia's higher education sector and our operating environment.

**Professor Nicholas Saunders AO**

Chief Commissioner

# TEQSA's purpose

TEQSA's purpose is to protect student interests and the reputation of Australia's higher education sector through a proportionate, risk-reflective approach to quality assurance that supports diversity, innovation and excellence.

We have four key objectives in delivering our purpose. We will:

1. quality assure and regulate the sector in a timely, transparent and risk reflective manner
2. support providers to deliver high quality higher education, protect student interests and enhance the reputation and competitiveness of Australia's higher education sector
3. provide advice and information to inform decisions about the appropriateness and quality of higher education
4. take prompt and effective action to address substantial risks to students or the sector's reputation.

## TEQSA's remit

TEQSA is Australia's independent national quality assurance and regulatory agency for higher education. All providers that offer higher education qualifications in or from Australia must be registered by TEQSA. Providers that have not been granted self-accrediting authority must also have their courses of study accredited by TEQSA.

TEQSA's guiding legislation is the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011* (the TEQSA Act). The Act confers powers and functions on TEQSA, among other things, to:

- register regulated entities as registered higher education providers and accredit courses of study
- conduct compliance assessments and quality assessments
- provide advice and make recommendations to the Commonwealth Minister responsible for Education on matters relating to the quality and regulation of higher education providers
- cooperate with similar agencies in other countries
- collect, analyse, interpret and disseminate information relating to quality assurance practice and quality improvement in higher education.

TEQSA also has responsibility, as an ESOS agency under the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000* (ESOS Act), for regulating all providers delivering higher education to overseas students studying in Australia, providers delivering Foundation programs, and also providers delivering English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) (where they have an entry arrangement with a registered higher education provider). Providers in all categories that wish to offer higher education courses to overseas students must be registered on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS).

# Quality assurance and regulation of higher education

In keeping with contemporary trends in quality assurance and regulation, TEQSA's approach:

- is standards-based, risk-reflective and transparent
- places a significant emphasis on promoting and facilitating a culture of effective self-assurance as an integral part of a provider's ordinary operations
- uses 'variable-touch' regulation, in which regulatory intervention is no greater than is required to achieve a necessary regulatory purpose
- is based on a preferred model of respectful regulatory partnerships, with individual providers and with the sector overall.

TEQSA's principal purpose is to ensure that quality standards are being met by all higher education providers so that the interests of students and the reputation of Australia's higher education sector are promoted and protected. The standards are set out in the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015* (HES Framework).

TEQSA's work is guided by three principles for regulation as set out in the TEQSA Act – reflecting risk, proportionate regulation and regulatory necessity. TEQSA has gained considerable insight into risks faced by the higher education sector as well as the most common risks to provider quality assurance practices. TEQSA differentiates between providers with positive track records and low risk of future non-compliance with the standards, and those with poor or limited track records and a substantial risk of future non-compliance. TEQSA not only takes a provider's track record and *risks* of future non-compliance into account, but also ensures that any exercise of its powers is *proportionate* to actual non-compliance and/or risk of future non-compliance, taking only those actions which are *necessary* to achieve effective outcomes.

Further information about TEQSA's approach to quality assurance and regulation can be found on the TEQSA website:

[teqsa.gov.au/our-approach-quality-assurance-and-regulation](http://teqsa.gov.au/our-approach-quality-assurance-and-regulation)

## TEQSA's engagement with stakeholders

TEQSA's stakeholder engagement is:

- **Purposeful** – we begin every engagement with a clear understanding of what we need to achieve
- **Collaborative** – we work with our stakeholders in partnership
- **Informative** – we provide our stakeholders with the information they need to work with us
- **Transparent** – we are open and honest in our engagement
- **Respectful** – we acknowledge and respect the expertise, perspective and needs of stakeholders.

TEQSA builds respectful, consistent and open relationships by:

- using a tailored and targeted approach to maintain communication and cooperation, and where necessary, to advise providers about effective self-assurance practices
- providing guidance about TEQSA's processes, insights and experiences for achieving and maintaining effective self-assurance
- providing information for students and the public about registered providers and their courses through the National Register of Higher Education Providers, and a range of publications and external communications
- engaging with all providers on TEQSA's annual risk assessments, where we identify significant risks to students or risks to the financial position of providers
- consulting and working with peak bodies in the sector about TEQSA's approach and receiving their feedback and the perspectives of their members.

Ongoing consultation with key sector bodies, including the Australian Council for Private Education and Training, the Council of Private Higher Education, the International Education Association of Australia, TAFE Directors Australia, Universities Australia, the organisations representing groups of universities, and student organisations (including through the TEQSA Student Expert Advisory Group), is crucial to strengthening and improving TEQSA's processes.



# Operating environment and risks to achievement of TEQSA's objectives

TEQSA closely follows developments occurring nationally and internationally that could impact on the agency's ability to achieve its objectives over the planning period. The environment in which TEQSA operates is highly likely to be subject to change in the coming four-year period.

## Policy developments and legislative issues

Over the period of this corporate plan, the policy environment within which TEQSA works will be subject to a significant number of reviews. TEQSA will both contribute to their development and respond to their outcomes.

The review of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) by the Department of Education and Training (the department) began in 2018 and changes to the AQF may impact on the shape and type of qualifications within the regulatory scope of TEQSA, not least in the case of those that are common in both higher education and in vocational education and training (VET).

The department's current review of professional bodies' accreditation of higher education courses offers an opportunity to reduce regulatory burden and improve student outcomes.

A review of the Criteria for Higher Education Providers in Part B of the HES Framework will occur during the period of this plan. The review is being overseen by the Higher Education Standards Panel and TEQSA will monitor the impact of any proposals on the quality of the sector and its provision of education, and consider what changes to existing approaches to applications for a change of provider category may be required due to the outcomes of the review.

Taken together, the reviews of the AQF, professional accreditation and the provider categories represent a significant re-examination of the shape of tertiary education and the relationship between its academic, vocational and professional elements.

During 2017-18, there were legislative changes regarding provider integrity, tuition protection, the ELICOS Standards and the National Code for Providers of Education and Training for Overseas Students. The Agency will ensure that implementation of changes arising from these amendments occurs in a timely and transparent manner to ensure a smooth transition to the new requirements.

## Sector-wide issues

From time to time, issues of quality and standards emerge which affect the whole higher education sector. TEQSA is currently working with the sector and the department on addressing a number of such areas.

The announcement in the 2018–19 Federal budget of additional funding for TEQSA to address contract cheating and its impact on academic integrity in the higher education system will require legislative changes to allow for legal action to be taken against those offering contract cheating services. TEQSA will have a key role to play in ensuring the effectiveness of new measures.

Work will continue on providing an overview of the sector’s response to the pressing problems addressed in the report from the Australian Human Rights Commission on sexual assault and sexual harassment. TEQSA, with regulatory responsibility for the whole higher education sector, is able to provide the broadest view of the measures taken, identifying good practice and, when necessary, responding to specific cases to ensure that the requirements of the Standards relating to student wellbeing and safety are upheld.

TEQSA will continue to work with the higher education sector on the continuing efforts to make admissions as transparent as possible, enabling students to make their choices on the basis of clear and comparable information. This work will progress during 2018–19 from the launch of the planned National Admissions Information Platform.

## Changing financial arrangements, markets and needs of students and employers

The existing public funding of the sector, as well as recent changes to this funding, will continue to impact on the operation of providers and therefore the work of TEQSA. To ensure quality is maintained, TEQSA will continue to undertake timely monitoring and assessment of the financial viability and sustainability of providers.

In addition, the impact of changes to the public funding of the VET sector continue to make the higher education sector an attractive prospect for new entrants. This is likely to continue to result in a high number of applications from prospective applicants to TEQSA for registration.

Changes to the ownership or structure of providers often result in changes to the strategic direction of a provider. The impact of such changes on the governance of providers during these periods of change requires TEQSA to closely monitor continued compliance with the quality standards.

The changing demands of employers and students to meet the needs of future workplaces are stimulating continued innovation in the use of a range of pedagogies, such as block delivery, combined VET and higher education delivery, the expansion of micro-credentialing and the development of new fields of study. These developments will require TEQSA to develop new regulatory policies for assessment of compliance in consultation with relevant stakeholders.

## International QA developments

Changing international student demand can have a significant financial impact on providers that are highly reliant on this market. The drivers for some changes in the past have been unforeseen and TEQSA will carefully monitor the exposure of higher education providers to changing international demand and the risks of the impact on compliance with quality standards.

The Australian Government *National Strategy for International Education 2025* includes a goal to broaden international engagement to support Australia's role as a quality provider of international education. This goal also supports the standing of Australian higher education, and the agency will align monitoring activities to confirm that the quality of provision is being maintained.

Many providers have arrangements with other entities to deliver higher education courses on their behalf, including delivery offshore. The registered provider has responsibility for the adherence of these third parties to quality standards. TEQSA will monitor the effectiveness of oversight by registered providers and the extent to which the achievement of equivalent outcomes for offshore students is maintained.

## Revised approach to monitoring and assessment

During the four-year planning period, the agency will complete the re-registration assessments under the TEQSA Act of the last of the providers that transitioned from previous regulatory arrangements. For the next cycle of re-registrations and re-accreditations, the agency will use its learnings and experience since 2012 to review its regulatory approach and ensure it aligns with the degree of confidence in how effectively after renewal of their registration providers are assuring the quality of their provision of education and managing their risks.

In evolving TEQSA's regulatory approach, a partnership and monitoring model will be further developed, particularly with providers that have consistently demonstrated high levels of quality assurance and management of risks to students.

A revised approach will also progressively refine the focus on those risks that adversely impact students and the reputation of the sector, while supporting quality enhancement in the sector.

## Cooperating with ASQA and other regulators and agencies

Higher education providers operate in environments that require compliance with the requirements of Commonwealth and State agencies, and professional bodies. An object of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* is to require Commonwealth entities to work co-operatively with others to achieve common objectives, where practical. TEQSA has developed a strong relationship with the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) with whom it regularly engages at Commissioner, CEO and operational levels to share information regarding provider trends and regulatory strategy. Similar engagement occurs with the Department of Education and Training, the Higher Education Standards Panel, the Department of Home Affairs, the Australian Institute for Teaching and Learning, and other agencies and bodies, to synchronise regulatory approaches and reduce the burden on higher education providers where possible, and ensure the protection of student interests.



# Planning overview and performance

To address the changes and challenges identified in our environment, TEQSA will focus on the following objectives over the next four years:

1. quality assure and regulate the sector in a timely, transparent and risk-reflective manner
2. support providers to deliver high quality higher education, protect student interests and enhance the reputation and competitiveness of Australia's higher education sector
3. provide advice and information to inform decisions about the appropriateness and quality of higher education
4. take prompt and effective action to address substantial risks to students or the sector's reputation.

The plan includes references to the performance indicators of the Regulator Performance Framework, deliverables and targets to achieve the objectives of the plan over the four-year period.

## Purpose:

To protect student interests and the reputation of Australia's higher education sector through a proportionate, risk-reflective approach to quality assurance that supports diversity, innovation and excellence.

### Objective 1

Quality assure and regulate the sector in a timely, transparent and risk-reflective manner

### Objective 2

Support providers to deliver high quality higher education, protect student interests and enhance the reputation and competitiveness of Australia's higher education sector

### Objective 3

Provide advice and information to inform decisions about the appropriateness and quality of higher education

### Objective 4

Take prompt and effective action to address substantial risks to students or the reputation of the sector

#### Action 1.1

Improve the case management approach

#### Action 1.2

Implement mechanisms to ensure efficient assessment of applications

#### Action 1.3

Ensure regulation of the sector is reflective of risks to students and the sector

#### Action 1.4

Enhance TEQSA's approach to monitoring, assessment and management of risks

#### Action 2.1

Consult with stakeholders and identify issues and delivery strategies where guidance is required

#### Action 2.2

Publish information about quality assurance and regulatory matters

#### Action 3.1

Enhance engagement with students

#### Action 3.2

Provide information about the sector to inform policy development, good practice and student choice

#### Action 4.1

Undertake compliance assessments of those providers that continue to present substantial risks to students

#### Action 4.2

Take enforcement action against entities in cases involving extensive non-compliance with the legislation administered by TEQSA

# Objective 1 Quality assure and regulate the sector in a timely, transparent and risk reflective manner

## Action 1.1: Improve the case management approach

### Performance indicator

TEQSA's dealings with higher education providers are open, transparent and consistent (RPF KPI 5).

Deliverable	Timeframe
Review, develop and implement a revised case management approach to regulation with enhanced use of a partnership model	2018-20
Develop a contemporary approach to quality assurance of the sector in line with policy changes	2018-22

### Target

- the majority of providers rate the case management approach as good or excellent.

## Action 1.2: Implement mechanisms to ensure efficient assessment of applications

### Performance indicator

Quality assurance and regulation does not unnecessarily impede the efficient operation of higher education providers (RPF KPI 1).

Deliverable	Timeframe
Reduce the time taken to make decisions about applications where the risk of non-compliance is low	2018-22

### Targets

- 90% or more of decisions about applications for re-registration from low risk providers are made within six months in 2018-19 with further improvements to timeliness in 2019-20
- 90% or more of decisions about applications for accreditation from low risk providers are made within three months in 2018-19 with further improvements in timeliness in 2019-20
- 100% of assessment reports and expert reports where adverse findings are reported are sent to applicants for consideration and response within six months of the application date from 2019-20.

## Action 1.3: Ensure regulation of the sector is reflective of the risks to students and the sector

### Performance indicator

TEQSA's compliance and monitoring approaches are streamlined and coordinated (RPF KPI 4).

Deliverable	Timeframe
Engage with providers about areas for improvements in TEQSA's approach using feedback from the stakeholder survey	Annual
Streamline evidence requirements further for providers that demonstrate sustained low risk of non-compliance with standards	2018-20
Work with the Department, ASQA, other agencies, professional bodies and international quality agencies to improve targeting of regulation	2018-22
Undertake cross border regulatory activity through engagement with international quality agencies	2018-22

### Targets

- there is a demonstrated positive correlation between the risk rating of providers and assessment outcomes for each year
- undertake two joint projects in 2018-21 with international partner agencies in accordance with memoranda of cooperation.

## Action 1.4: Enhance TEQSA's approach to monitoring, assessment and management of risks

### Performance indicator

Improved identification of high risk providers; reduced administrative cost burden for low risk providers; and improved evidence base for decisions about any required regulatory action.

Deliverable	Timeframe
Engage with individual providers with high risk ratings to determine the progress and the effectiveness of providers' risk treatment plans	Annual
The approach to scoping assessments aligns with TEQSA's risk appetite	2018-19
Incorporate broader and more timely sources of information about risks in monitoring of the sector	2018-22

## Objective 2 Support providers to deliver quality higher education, protect student interests and enhance the reputation and competitiveness of Australia's higher education sector

### Action 2.1: Consult stakeholders and identify issues and delivery strategies where guidance is required

#### Performance indicator

The quality assurance and regulatory framework continues to be improved in consultation with relevant stakeholders (RPF KPI 6).

Deliverable	Timeframe
Establish a program for delivery of information about quality enhancement based on identified needs and evidence of good practice	2018-20
Consult relevant stakeholders in implementing legislative and other changes arising from the review of the impact of the TEQSA Act	2018-22
Consult the sector on application fees and the annual levy in light of the Government policy on cost recovery	2018-19

### Action 2.2: Publish information about regulatory and quality assurance matters

#### Performance indicator

TEQSA's communication with higher education providers is clear, targeted and effective (RPF KPI 2).

Deliverable	Timeframe
Develop further guidance notes and communicate to providers to support compliance with the 2015 Higher Education Standards Framework	2018-22
Develop and publish good practice material in relation to admissions transparency and sexual harassment and sexual assault	2019-20
Deliver workshops with providers and students to address the risks of contract cheating	2019-20
Establish online materials to assist providers to address the risks of contract cheating	2020-21

#### Target

- 80% or more of stakeholders surveyed each year rate TEQSA's communication as good or excellent.

## Objective 3 Provide advice and information to inform decisions about the appropriateness and quality of Australian higher education

### Action 3.1: Enhance engagement with students

#### Performance indicator

The quality assurance and regulatory framework continues to be improved in consultation with stakeholders (RPF KPI 6).

Deliverable	Timeframe
Hold three meetings of the Student Expert Advisory Group to discuss and identify sector wide issues for students and to develop strategies for the deeper integration of students with TEQSA's regulatory work	Annual
Develop material for students to address key areas of concern to students	2019-20



## Action 3.2: Provide information about the sector to inform policy development, good practice and student choice

### Performance indicator

Policy makers and other stakeholders are provided with an evidence base for decision making in relation to particular issues.

Deliverable	Timeframe
Publish key data used or collected by the agency	Annual
Prepare reports on the international activity of Australian higher education providers	Annual
Publish the review of the transparency of admissions processes	2018-19
Report on the analysis of the sector's response to sexual assault and sexual harassment	2018-19
Contribute to the Higher Education Standards Panel review of provider categories	2018-19
Promote information about recent regulatory decisions on the National Register of Higher Education Providers	2018-19
Enhance the search facilities of the National Register to meet stakeholder needs	2019-20
Contribute to the work of the Department of Education and Training in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• review of the Australian Qualifications Framework</li> <li>• implementing the recommendations of the review of professional accreditation</li> <li>• improving retention, completion and success in higher education</li> <li>• developing legislation to make the provision of contract cheating services illegal</li> </ul>	2018-22

## Objective 4 Taking prompt and effective action to address substantial risks to students or the reputation of the sector

### Action 4.1: Undertake compliance assessments of those providers that continue to present substantial risks to students

#### Performance indicator

Regulatory actions undertaken by TEQSA are proportionate to the risks being managed (RPF KPI 3).

Deliverable	Timeframe
Ensure compliance assessments involve prompt, targeted action about substantial risks to students or the reputation of the sector	2018-22

### Action 4.2: Take enforcement action against entities in cases involving extensive non-compliance with the legislation administered by TEQSA

#### Performance indicator

TEQSA is effective in maintaining the quality of the sector.

Deliverable	Timeframe
Report on enforcement action taken as a result of investigations and compliance assessments	Annual
Ensure enforcement action effectively reduces the risk of non-compliance	2018-22

#### Target

- the majority of stakeholders rate TEQSA's performance over the last 12 months in assuring the quality of Australian higher education, as good or excellent.

# Capability requirements

## Workforce planning

TEQSA employees are required to be highly skilled with a wide range of knowledge and expertise in higher education, quality assurance, regulation, risk assessment and public sector administration. TEQSA seeks to be an employer of choice offering employees diverse and challenging work that embraces innovation and adaptability.

The 2018–19 Budget enabled an increase in the size of the permanent workforce, following a period of reliance on a contract workforce due to federal budget reductions in TEQSA's Average Staffing Level (ASL). The increasing proportion of non-permanent workers has resulted in a high turnover of staff across the agency's functions, and made consistency in the delivery of services to stakeholders more difficult to achieve.

The turnover in staff, and particularly staff employed to undertake regulatory assessments, has also been due to providers seeking similar skill sets and experience for their own workforce. Although TEQSA has also benefited from this overlap in skill sets, with many assessment staff having worked in higher education providers, the movement of staff from TEQSA to higher education providers is likely to remain a risk that requires management. To mitigate this risk, workforce planning over 2018–22 will focus on:

- the use of systems for the recruitment of staff that are effective and efficient and address the risk of continued turnover
- a revised approach to training and development of staff to ensure staff, and particularly new teams, have the requisite information to undertake their roles
- documenting the operating procedures for agency functions, and streamlining the procedures for quality assuring higher education providers, and adding provider relationship management to procedures
- developing effective management approaches for the performance of the agency.

During 2018–19, in order to improve the timeliness of decisions, to allow an increased focus on the risks to students and reputation of the sector, and to provide evidence-based material for reviews associated with higher education policy, the agency will focus on recruiting and training assessment staff, developing its investigation capability, strengthening its CRICOS expertise and increasing its policy and analysis capacity. In addition, TEQSA will use the results of the annual APS staff survey to identify areas for improvement.

## TEQSA Experts

In undertaking regulatory assessments, TEQSA staff use external experts in a range of discipline areas and in specialised higher education learning and teaching methodologies. To enable engagement with sector experts, TEQSA maintains a Register of Experts that

staff use to engage experts. These engagements are primarily for course accreditation or re-accreditation applications and the advice of the experts informs the assessment of applications and development of recommendations for decision makers. In 2017-18, TEQSA commenced a review of the management of the Register of Experts and its approach to engagement with TEQSA experts. During 2018-22, the agency will:

- review the selection and management of TEQSA Experts to ensure a diversity of experts in relevant fields
- develop an enhanced database and a review program for the Register of Experts to better support assessment processes by TEQSA staff
- establish and support a community of practice to update TEQSA Experts on assessment requirements and share best-practice approaches.

## ICT and IM capability

Timely access to, and appropriate use of, trusted data is required by TEQSA for informed decision making, and to enable innovation and support high quality regulation of the sector. In 2018-19, the agency commenced scoping work for an information management strategy with an initial focus on the following key areas:

- development of an improved approach to records management to better integrate the existing systems
- further development of the existing assessment management database to support the management of workflows and reporting requirements
- integration of data architecture to support the development of analytics requirements for monitoring of the sector.

## Legal capability

TEQSA's Legal Group assists the Commissioners and their delegates to make legally-informed decisions and to develop processes required for effective administrative decision making. The Group also manages claims by or against TEQSA, including dealing with the substantial workload associated with Administrative Appeals Tribunal proceedings involving the agency, and manages the agency's corporate legal obligations. In 2018-19, as a result of the increased emphasis on cases involving higher risk and the increased number of external review matters, the capability of the group will be strengthened so that the group can continue to provide the necessary legal support to TEQSA. This support will include an agency-wide role in promoting and supporting internal quality management of the processes and documents through which TEQSA's regulatory assessments and decisions are managed and communicated.

# Management systems

## Governance

TEQSA's corporate governance framework incorporates regulatory, strategy and management decision-making bodies; an integrated planning and reporting framework; Accountable Authority instructions; policies and procedures; an ethical and accountable organisational culture; and transparency in public reporting.

The Commissioners, acting as TEQSA's Accountable Authority, have overall responsibility for TEQSA's regulatory functions:

- governance
- planning (corporate plan, budget estimates)
- financial management
- risk oversight and management
- security oversight
- internal control
- performance reporting (including annual reports, annual financial statements, annual performance statements) under the TEQSA Act and the PGPA Act.

The Commissioners are also responsible for ensuring the preparation of annual performance reports consistent with the requirements of the Regulator Performance Framework.

Subsection 154(1) of the TEQSA Act states that the CEO of TEQSA is responsible for the management and administration of TEQSA. Subsection 156(2) of the TEQSA Act states that for the purposes of the *Public Service Act 1999*, the CEO and the staff of TEQSA together constitute a statutory agency, and the CEO is the head of that statutory agency.

The Senior Management Team (SMT) is made up of senior managers led by the CEO. The role of the SMT is to develop, implement, coordinate and oversee the agency's corporate plan and subsidiary plans. The SMT monitors progress against the corporate plan on a quarterly basis and regularly reports on performance to the accountable authority.

## Risk oversight and management

TEQSA has developed systems of risk oversight, management and internal control within the agency, and is committed to the continuous improvement of risk management practices in line with the Commonwealth Risk Management Policy (RMG 211) and the Guide to Implementing the Commonwealth Risk Management Policy.

TEQSA's Enterprise Risk Management Framework is underpinned by:

- a strong organisational culture
- a deep understanding of risk in relation to regulatory matters
- a risk management policy and risk appetite statement
- an internal control framework
- an enterprise risk register
- a Fraud Control and Anti-Corruption Plan
- arrangements for staff training and support.

TEQSA's Audit and Risk Committee provides independent assurance to the Accountable Authority on TEQSA's financial and performance reporting responsibilities, risk oversight and systems of internal control. This includes reviewing the internal audit program to ensure the focus is on TEQSA's key areas of financial and operational risk.

TEQSA's Senior Management Team, the Audit and Risk Committee and the Accountable Authority regularly review the enterprise risk register. During 2018-22, TEQSA will continue to improve its risk culture across the agency. In particular, we will use the results of the annual Comcover Risk Management Benchmarking Survey to identify elements where we should focus on improvement in our risk management maturity level and our overall maturity relative to other comparable agencies.



# TEQSA

[teqsa.gov.au](https://teqsa.gov.au)