

JANUARY 2006



**National Standards**

for Group Training  
Organisations



Australian Government  
Department of Education,  
Science and Training

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On 24 May 2002 the ANTA Ministerial Council agreed that the *National Standards for Group Training Organisations* be adopted and that these Standards become the quality arrangements for group training in each State and Territory as from 1 January 2003.

In 2005 a review of the Standards was undertaken and some minor changes were made. The National Quality Council (NQC) endorsed the changes to the Standards on 29 August 2005. These changes are effective from 1 January 2006.

## **Interpretation**

- Section 1 provides general information regarding the *National Standards for Group Training Organisations* and is not to be construed to be part of the Standards.
- Section 2 contains the *National Standards for Group Training Organisations*.

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# Section 1: General Information

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## Background

In 2001, a National Review of Group Training was established to provide advice to the ANTA Ministerial Council on future directions, issues and options for Governments in the area of group training services.

One of the Terms of Reference for the Review was *“The development of a framework relating to recognition and quality arrangements for the provision of group training services, including to what extent there needs to be formal recognition processes.”* The content of this document represents the main deliverable for this Term of Reference.

On 24 May 2002 the ANTA Ministerial Council agreed that the *National Standards for Group Training Organisations* be adopted and that these Standards become the quality arrangements for group training in each State and Territory as from 1 January 2003.

In 2005 a review of the Standards was undertaken and minor changes were made. The NQC endorsed the changes on 29 August 2005. These changes are effective from 1 January 2006.

## Scope

The key objective of the *National Standards for Group Training Organisations* (GTOs) is to strengthen the capacity of GTOs in achieving the three goals of group training that is to create additional apprenticeship and traineeship employment opportunities; to provide for the continuity of that employment; and to improve the quality and breadth of training available to apprentices and trainees.

The *National Standards for Group Training Organisations* provide the ongoing basis for a nationally consistent, robust group training service brand; assist GTOs to monitor and continuously improve their organisations' operations and strategic and financial planning; they also provide Governments with a consistent basis for the recognition, support and monitoring of Government funded GTOs.

The *National Standards for Group Training Organisations* were developed through the work of the Steering Committee for the National Review of Group Training, chaired by the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) CEO and including representatives from States and Territories, Group Training Australia (GTA), the Commonwealth, industry organisations and Australian Indigenous Training Advisory Council and endorsed by Ministers for Vocational Education and Training in May 2002.

There are other requirements that may apply to a GTO wishing to operate in any State or Territory. There may be a requirement for “approval to employ an apprentice or trainee” or similar as applies to other employers of apprentices and trainees. States and Territories

may also have other operational requirements that have a legislative or regulatory base. Such state-based requirements are outside the scope of these *National Standards for Group Training Organisations*.

The *National Standards for Group Training Organisations* is a standards-based recognition system that applies consistently across all States and Territories to GTOs seeking Government funding. Compliance with the *National Standards for Group Training Organisations* is mandatory for those GTOs seeking eligibility for GTO Government funding.

All GTOs are encouraged to comply with the recognition system for the branding advantage to their organisation and to group training as a national name, and also, as a tool for continuous improvement of performance.

## **Description of Standards**

The development of these revised Standards has drawn on earlier work from the *National Standards for Group Training Organisations* that were released in 2003. Most GTOs have now had first hand experience of the *National Standards for Group Training Organisations*. These revised Standards incorporate minimal changes and provide greater clarity and applicability of the Standards.

## **Evaluation and Audit**

State or Territory Training Authorities (STAs) are responsible for the compliance evaluation, including an independent audit program to ensure compliance with the *National Standards for Group Training Organisations*. In some cases, the audit will be by a government official, in others by a private contractor.

This program includes an evaluation by the STA of all existing GTOs that are in receipt of Joint Group Training Program funding, or wish to be considered for eligibility for future Joint Group Training Program funding. Independent audits are scheduled at least once every three years for funded GTOs commencing from 1 January 2006. In addition, STAs may conduct strategic audits as provided for in their contractual arrangements with GTOs.

Compliance with each of the eight Standards is necessary to comply with the *National Standards for Group Training Organisations*. The evidence required for each Standard has been defined in a way that balances the need to be clear about what is expected, with sufficient flexibility in the way evidence can be presented to acknowledge the diversity of GTOs. For example, to satisfy a sub-clause of a Standard, one particular GTO may provide an example of evidence to demonstrate compliance whilst another GTO may cite a different example of evidence, yet be able to satisfy the same compliance requirements.

A handy reference, "*Resources Handbook to accompany the National Standards for Group Training Organisations*," has been developed to assist GTOs and auditors with examples of evidence of compliance.

STAs have provision to provide feedback and advice after audits have been conducted to assist GTOs to address areas where opportunities for improvement are identified. STAs will provide adequate time for making improvements and arrange for re-assessment of GTOs and appeals, in the circumstances of unsuccessful audit reports. GTOs with unsuccessful audit reports are able to continue operating. However, a GTO that is not able to meet the Standards after agreed opportunities to comply are exhausted, becomes ineligible for Joint Group Training Program funding and are no longer authorised to use the National Logo for Group Training.

The costs of independent audits are the responsibility of the GTO, unless otherwise advised by the STA.

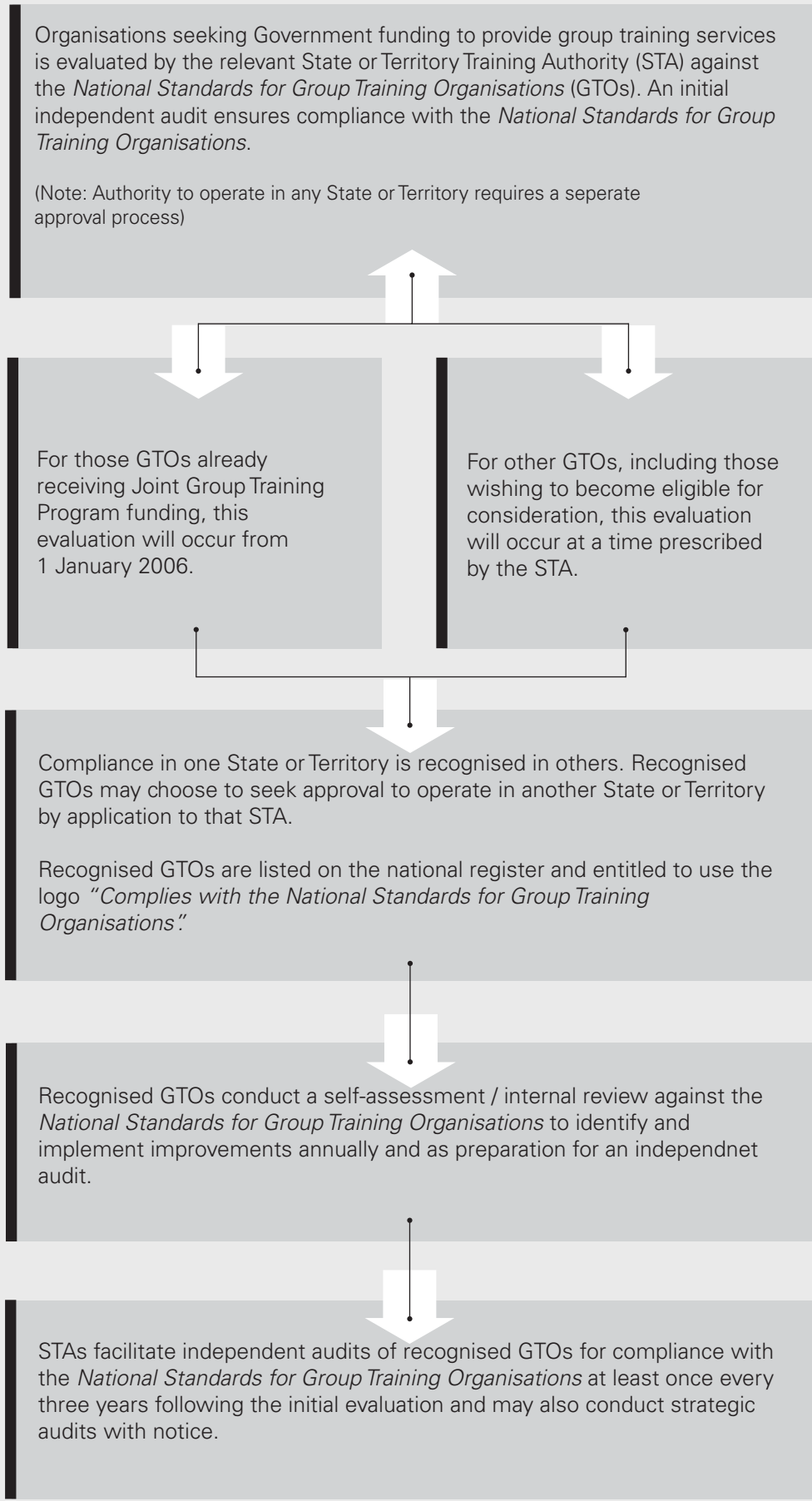
### **National Logo for Group Training**

A GTO that has received notification from the STA of its recognition, that is, it has met the requirements of the *National Standards for Group Training Organisations*, is listed on the national database and is entitled to use the "*Complies with the National Standards for Group Training Organisations*" logo in its documentation and advertising.

Such use is authorised to continue unless a withdrawal of recognition notice is issued by the STA.

Logo material for use with letterheads and brochures is available from STAs.

**Figure 1 - Operation of the *National Standards for Group Training Organisations***



# Section 2: National Standards for Group Training Organisations

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## Preliminary

### Name of Standards

These Standards are the *National Standards for Group Training Organisations*.

### Application of Standards

These Standards apply to each recognised GTO.

### Definitions

In these Standards:

**Access and equity** means the policies and approaches that ensure that group training services are responsive to the diverse needs of all host employers, apprentices and trainees. Through the implementation of these policies and approaches, the benefits of participating in group training are available to everyone on an equitable basis, including: women where under-represented; people with disabilities; people from non-English speaking backgrounds; Indigenous Australians; and rural and remote learners.

**Apprenticeship/Traineeship Training Contract** means a contract for an apprenticeship/traineeship, made between an employer and an apprentice/trainee, which is registered with the appropriate State/Territory Government department or agency, as may be required by State/Territory legislation or regulation.

**Audit** means a systematic, independent and documented process for assessing evidence to determine whether the operations of a GTO comply, or continue to comply, with the *National Standards for Group Training Organisations*.

**Australian National Training Authority (ANTA)** means the Authority established under subsection 5 (1) of the Australian National Training Authority Act 1992 of the Commonwealth of Australia. ANTA ceased to exist on 30 June 2005. All functions were then transferred to the Department of Education, Science and Training.

**Chief Executive Officer** means the most senior executive of the GTO.

**Completion of Apprenticeship/Traineeship Training Contract** means completion of the on-the-job and the off-the-job components of an apprenticeship or traineeship, leading to the issuing of completion documentation as it applies to apprenticeships or traineeships in that State or Territory.

**Downtime** means the definition within the timeframe specified by the relevant State or Territory Government when used in this document.

**Evidence Required** means the evidence to demonstrate a sub-clause of a Standard has been met.

**Evaluation** means all the activities such as audit results or reports, risk assessment, review of complaints and financial assessment carried out by a STA to determine whether the GTO meets, or continues to meet, all the requirements of the *National Standards for Group Training Organisations* necessary for recognition.

**Group Training** means a service whereby an organisation employs apprentices and trainees under an Apprenticeship/Traineeship Training Contract and places them with host employers.

**Group Training Organisation (GTO)** means an organisation, usually a company, providing group training services to apprentices, trainees and employers.

**Host employer** means an organisation that hosts, under a written agreement, an apprentice or trainee employed at that time by a GTO.

**Internal review** means reviews conducted by, or on behalf of, the organisation itself for internal purposes. Where conducted by the organisation, these may usually be described as self-assessment.

**Ministerial Council** means the Ministerial Council for Vocational and Technical Education (MCVTE). The Council comprises the Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers responsible for vocational and technical education, or any successor council comprising those Ministers. Formally known as ANTA Ministerial Council.

**National Logo for Group Training** means the logo that a GTO is entitled to use signifying that it has complied with the requirements of the *National Standards for Group Training Organisations*.

**National Standards for Group Training Organisations** means the nationally agreed quality arrangements for group training agreed to by the Ministerial Council.

**New Apprenticeships** means structured training arrangements for apprentices and trainees, usually involving on and off-the-job training, for a person employed under an Apprenticeship/Traineeship Training Contract.

**Non-compliance** means failure to comply with one or more of the *National Standards for Group Training Organisations*.

**Quality** means the ability of a set of inherent characteristics of a product, system or process to fulfil requirements of customers and other interested parties\*.

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\*From AS/NZS ISO 9000: 2000

**Recognised GTO** means a GTO recognised by an STA as complying with the *National Standards for Group Training Organisations*.

**Risk management** means the systematic application of management policies, procedures and practices to the tasks of identifying, analysing, evaluating, treating and monitoring risk.

**Rotation** means an apprentice or trainee moving from one host employer to another as part of his/her apprenticeship or traineeship with the GTO.

**Staff** means, when used in this document, the employees of the GTO other than apprentices and trainees.

**Standards** means when used in Section 2 of this document the *National Standards for Group Training Organisations*. Each Standard has a heading and a short statement of the principles behind the Standard.

**State Training Authority (STA)** means the State or Territory Authority with the primary responsibility for vocational education and training in that jurisdiction and whose Minister has signed the current funding Agreement.

**Sub-clause** means, when used in this document, the numbered clauses appearing under each of the eight Standards.

**Training Plan** means a program of training and assessment that is required under an Apprenticeship/Traineeship Training Contract.

## Abbreviations

ANTA	Australian National Training Authority
AQTF	Australian Quality Training Framework
GTO	Group Training Organisation
NQC	National Quality Council - formally known as National Training Quality Council (NTQC)
STA	State/Territory Training Authority
VET	Vocational Education and Training



## Section 3: The Standards

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### **Standard 1:**

#### **Systems for group training services including management of hosting**

The GTO has systems in place to plan for and provide quality group training services to apprentices, trainees and host employers.

1.1 The GTO shall conduct an internal audit of its compliance with the Standards and the policies and/or procedures in sub-clause 1.3 at least annually adopting a continuous improvement approach to the self-assessment.

1.2 The GTO shall have effective systems to demonstrate the demand for its group training services, industry support and responsiveness to industry need, and to:

- manage and track hosting, including demonstrating how the host and the GTO will discharge their responsibilities for compliance with the Standards and with legislative and regulatory requirements;
- manage recruitment, placement, welfare and career support of apprentices and trainees;
- rotate apprentices and trainees as appropriate; and
- monitor training.

1.3 The GTO shall document, authorise, implement and review policies and/or procedures, as required by the Standards, for ensuring quality group training services consistent with the organisation's scale of operations.

1.4 The GTO shall document in a publicly available code of practice or similar document the service level requirements for staff providing group training services to apprentices, trainees and employers, including information from its policy on complaints handling and resolution, and shall keep records of each complaint and its resolution and review.

1.5 The GTO shall identify relevant group training operational data and shall be able to demonstrate how these data are used to plan and monitor performance of the GTO and in the improvement of services to employers, apprentices and trainees.

1.6 The GTO shall collect and analyse stakeholder and client feedback and satisfaction data on the services it provides as the basis for continuous improvement to its policies and procedures.

**Standard 2:****Compliance with Commonwealth, State/Territory legislation and regulatory requirements**

The GTO ensures that compliance with Commonwealth, State/Territory legislation and regulatory requirements relevant to its operations is integrated into its policies and/or procedures and that compliance is maintained.

2.1 The GTO shall have a documented process for:

- identifying relevant Commonwealth and State or Territory legislation and related regulations applicable to its operations;
- integrating these requirements, and changes to these requirements, into the GTO's policies and/or procedures; and
- ensuring that staff are made aware of their obligations, related to their duties with other staff, hosts, apprentices and trainees, under such legislation and regulatory requirements, and for reviewing compliance.

**Standard 3:****Effective financial management procedures**

The GTO has effective financial management procedures in place.

3.1 The GTO has effective documented management procedures in place to:

- ensure that the GTO's financial management policy and/or procedures are maintained and reflect actual practice within the GTO;
- ensure staff and members of board or other governing body of the GTO receive any necessary professional development or updates to ensure skill levels needed for their roles in the development and implementation of financial management policy, procedures and reporting including income recognition procedures, debt management, methods of costing services and cost recovery and payroll;
- monitor and report on compliance with its financial management policy and/or procedures, for review as a basis for improvement; and
- ensure probity is maintained for all financial matters.

3.2 The GTO's accounts shall be certified, at least annually, by a qualified accountant with membership of Certified Practising Accountants Australia, the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Australia or the National Institute of Accountants or otherwise registered as an auditor with the Australian Securities and Investment Commission and, on request, the report shall be made available to the STA that has recognised the organisation.

3.3 The GTO shall obtain, and make available if requested by the STA, a full audit report from a qualified independent accountant with membership of Certified Practising Accountants Australia, the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Australia or the National Institute of Accountants or otherwise registered as an auditor with the Australian Securities and Investment Commission within 60 days of request.

3.4 The GTO shall ensure that it has insurance cover appropriate to its activities, including insurance for workers compensation, public liability, professional indemnity, building and contents.

#### **Standard 4:**

##### **Effective administrative and records management procedures**

The GTO has effective administrative and records management procedures in place.

4.1 The GTO shall document, implement and review policies and/or procedures to:

- assure the accuracy, integrity, confidentiality and security of records during their storage, archiving and disposal; and
- achieve document control by requirements to demonstrate authorisation, version control, amendments and back-up of electronic records.

#### **Standard 5:**

##### **Effective corporate governance**

The GTO has appropriate structures and processes for decision making, accountability, and control of that GTO.

5.1 A GTO shall be an incorporated entity recognised by the appropriate Government agency.

5.2 The GTO shall document:

- the ownership, structure and control of the GTO;
- name and experience of members of the board or other governing body, name, role and responsibilities of Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Chief Finance Officer (CFO) and other senior managers;
- key provisions for decision making and accountability including delegation of authority to the CEO and matters reserved for the board where it exists; and
- terms of reference of the board, council or advisory committee and members selection and induction procedures, including clarification of obligations and responsibilities.

5.3 The CEO shall ensure that members of the board or other governing body approve any amendments to 5.2 and staff are advised.

5.4 The GTO shall have a current plan for its business that:

- is based on the strategic directions of the GTO;
- includes projected profit and loss and cash flows;
- is consistent with its scale of operations;
- takes account of the risk management plan;
- considers key stakeholders needs; and
- is approved, reviewed and updated annually by the board or other governing body.

5.5 The GTO shall document and implement a risk management plan approved by the board or other governing body covering the identification, assessment and monitoring of risk including safeguarding its assets, compliance with the *National Standards for Group Training*, and contractual arrangements with host employers and hosted apprentices and trainees.

5.6 The CEO or the Chair of the board or other governing body shall inform the STA in writing or email of changes in circumstances where this may affect the ongoing employment status of all of the apprentices and trainees of the organisation, as soon as the GTO becomes aware of the situation and before any date that the GTO intends to cease operations. This requirement shall be noted in the role statement of the CEO and in the other terms of reference of the board or other governing body.

5.7 The GTO shall have a plan for ensuring that training and tools are provided to support board members with their corporate governance responsibilities and shall review and update this plan annually.

### **Standard 6:**

#### **Access and equity**

The GTO applies access and equity principles to its operations.

6.1 The GTO's policies and/or procedures shall incorporate a statement on how access and equity principles or legislation were considered in the development of its access and equity policy and/or procedure.

6.2 The GTO shall:

- develop and implement an access and equity policy that refers to the GTO's resources on equity and or any formal link with one or more organisations with relevant specialist equity skills; and articulates strategies and staff responsibilities to improve outcomes for individuals facing barriers to participation and achievement in training and employment;

- review the policy on a periodic basis to comply with new legislation and contemporary practice with respect to individuals facing barriers to participation and achievement in training and employment;
- include information on the access and equity policy in induction kits or equivalent for employers, apprentices and trainees; and
- ensure staff are trained in and comply with the GTO's access and equity policy.

### **Standard 7:**

#### **The skills of GTO staff**

Each member of the GTO staff who is involved in the provision of group training services is skilled for the functions they perform.

7.1 The GTO shall develop, document and implement a policy and/or procedures for the:

- recruitment;
- induction; and
- ongoing development

of each member of its staff who is involved in the provision of any aspect of group training service.

7.2 The GTO shall ensure that staff recruited are competent to carry out the duties of the position they are employed to fill, or that they are provided with adequate training to fulfil these competencies.

7.3 The GTO shall encourage and provide relevant opportunities for the professional development of staff on the vocational education and training system, with particular emphasis on the requirements for apprenticeships and traineeships, working with equity clients and working with other local networks.

7.4 The GTO shall maintain up-to-date records of qualifications, skills and experience of staff in management, payroll and field officer functions.

7.5 The GTO shall monitor and provide feedback to staff on their performance.

7.6 The GTO shall ensure that their staff are aware of or hold a qualification in Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) principles.

## **Standard 8:**

### **Ethical practice**

The board, council or advisory committee of the GTO and its management and staff behave ethically in the provision of group training services.

8.1 The GTO shall disseminate clear and accurate information about its services and operations to each host employer, apprentice and trainee.

8.2 The GTO shall document, in a code of practice or similar, a statement on ethical practice within the GTO which has been approved by the board, council or advisory committee of the GTO for its own conduct and for the conduct of its management and staff, in the provision of group training services including in its relationships with other GTOs and shall monitor compliance with the code.

8.3 The GTO shall ensure that its clients and stakeholders have access to a document on how the GTO manages conflict of interest within its group training function and across other functions within the organisation or in related organisations.

8.4 The GTO's marketing and advertising plans and/or materials shall be accurate, define how key stakeholder relationships are managed and demonstrate that permissions, conditions and copyright requirements have been met.

# Appendices

## Appendix I: State and Territory Contacts

### New South Wales

Department of Education and Training  
Locked Bag 53  
DARLINGHURST NSW 2010  
Tel: (02) 9266 8405 Fax: (02) 9244 5399  
[www.det.nsw.edu.au](http://www.det.nsw.edu.au)

### Victoria

Office of Training and Tertiary Education  
Department of Education and Training  
GPO Box 266D  
MELBOURNE VIC 3001  
Tel: (03) 9637 2791 Fax: (03) 9637 3220  
[www.otte.vic.gov.au](http://www.otte.vic.gov.au)

### Queensland

Department of Employment and Training  
Queensland  
Division of Training  
Locked Mail Bag 527  
GPO BRISBANE QLD 4001  
Tel: (07) 3237 0155 Fax: (07) 3235 4345  
[www.det.qld.gov.au](http://www.det.qld.gov.au)

### Western Australia

Department of Education and Training  
Level 2, 151 Royal Street  
EAST PERTH WA 6004  
Tel: (08) 9264 4792 Fax: (08) 9264 4853  
[www.training.wa.gov.au](http://www.training.wa.gov.au)

### South Australia

Department of Further Education,  
Employment, Science and Technology  
GPO Box 320  
ADELAIDE SA 5001  
Tel: (08) 8463 5564 Fax: (08) 8463 6634  
[www.dete.sa.gov.au](http://www.dete.sa.gov.au)

### Australian Capital Territory

Department of Education and Training  
Office of Training and Adult Education  
PO Box 985  
CIVIC SQUARE ACT 2608  
Tel: (02) 6205 7033 Fax: (02) 6205 7045  
[www.decs.act.gov.au/services/training.htm](http://www.decs.act.gov.au/services/training.htm)

### Northern Territory

Department of Employment, Education  
and Training  
GPO Box 2925  
DARWIN NT 0801  
Tel: (08) 8901 1313 Fax: (08) 8901 1326  
[www.nt.gov.au/deet](http://www.nt.gov.au/deet)

### Tasmania

Department of Education  
Office of Post Compulsory Education  
and Training  
GPO Box 169B  
HOBART TAS 7001  
Tel: (03) 6233 7137 Fax: (03) 6234 6806  
[www.opcet.tas.gov.au](http://www.opcet.tas.gov.au)

## Appendix 2: Useful Resources

Australian Quality Training Framework. – AQTF Overview 2005.

Australian Quality Training Framework. – Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2005.

Australian Quality Training Framework Changes Booklet – A guide to the changes to the Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2005.

Australian Quality Training Framework Standards for State and Territory Registering/Course Accrediting Bodies 2005.

Australian Quality Training Framework Evidence Guide for Registered Training Organisations and Auditors 2005.

Bridging Pathways - Revised blueprint for the national plan of action for increasing opportunities for people with a disability in vocational education and training 2004.

Bridging Pathways - Revised National Strategy for increasing opportunities for people with a disability in vocational education and training 2004.

Directors' Induction and Due Diligence Kit including Corporate Governance Updates Nos. 1-8: Terry Kilmister, Broadworks International, Sydney 2005.

Group Training a unique employment and training service 2002.

National Code of Good Practice for New Apprenticeships, Australian Government, DEST.

National Standards for Group Training Organisations 2006.

National Standards for Group Training Organisations - Resources Handbook 2006.

Partners in a Learning Culture – The Way Forward - Australia's National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy for vocational education and training 2000-2005.

Partners in a Learning Culture – The Way Forward - A blueprint for implementing the National Strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in vocational education and training 2005.

Shaping our Future – Australia's National Strategy for Vocational Education and Training 2004-2010.

Training and Assessment Training Package (TAA04), Innovation and Business Skills Australia Ltd, Melbourne 2004.