

SUMMARY

The 2008 Australian Government Review of Australian Higher Education (Bradley Review) concluded that tertiary skills were linked to economic and social progress and that Australia needed to remain competitive internationally. Among the Review's recommendations for higher education reform was the suggestion that the Government adopt a framework for higher education accreditation, quality assurance and regulation featuring an independent national regulatory body responsible for regulating all types of tertiary education.

In response to the findings of the Review, the Australian Government embraced its future vision through making an unprecedented investment in our universities and tertiary education system to drive comprehensive reform across the post-compulsory education and training sector. This includes two ambitious participation and attainment targets:

- That by 2020 - 20 per cent of higher education enrolments at the undergraduate level will be of people from a low SES background; and
- That by 2025 - 40 per cent of all 25 to 34 year olds will hold a qualification at bachelor level or above.

These targets are being teamed with a new student centred funding system whereby the Government will fund a Commonwealth supported place for all undergraduate domestic students accepted into an eligible higher education course at a recognised public higher education provider. The Government is committed to enabling the sector to grow in response to demand from students and the needs of the community for more graduates. The new system will encourage universities to respond to student demand and will encourage greater diversity to attract students.

As part of this reform, new quality and regulatory arrangements were adopted by the Government to ensure that students receive a high quality education from Australia's higher education institutions and that Australia's international reputation as a quality provider of tertiary education is protected.

It is within this new higher education landscape that Professor Bradley will provide attendees with an overview of the establishment of the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA). The presentation will outline how TEQSA will operate and the principles upon which it will be established, including the adoption of risk based and proportionate regulation and a standards based approach. Professor Bradley will also describe how TEQSA will also engage and share best practice with its international counterparts, and once operational, will establish links with international quality and accreditation agencies wherever possible and appropriate.

TEQSA will be a national regulator which will ensure consistency across all jurisdictions in Australia. Professor Bradley will outline the transition to TEQSA and how it will build on the strong foundations of the Australian Universities Quality Agency and State and Territory Government Accreditation Authorities to bring together regulation and quality assurance in one agency.

In parallel to the establishment of TEQSA is the development of the *MyUniversity* website. The website will allow students to make decisions about where to study on the basis of robust information about the quality of education provided at each institution.

The establishment of TEQSA will bring with it new challenges and new perspectives. Areas that require resolution over the coming months will be explored such as the establishing legislation, developing the policy underpinning TEQSA's approach to regulation, and developing teaching and learning standards.