



2018 Client and Stakeholder Research

FINAL REPORT



January 2019

Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority Level 4 Casselden 2 Lonsdale Street Melbourne VIC 3000

Attention: Vera Rourke, Manager, Communications

Dear Vera,

Please find enclosed the 2018 Client and Stakeholder Research Final Report.

We are pleased to report that both the quantitative and qualitative fieldwork progressed smoothly, and yielded considerable insights into the experiences of those interacting with the VRQA.

As in previous years, the response rate to the education providers survey was very high (67%, up from 64% last year), meaning that that the results are statistically robust, and can be relied on as a true indicator of the sentiment across these stakeholders. Surveys of apprentices and trainees, along with their employers, had predictably lower response rates (due to the lower engagement of these groups), but offer valuable insights nonetheless. This year saw the inclusion of consultations with the home education community, including a survey of home educators, with a very robust 25% response rate. Qualitative respondents, too, were generous with their time, and generally appreciated the opportunity to provide input into this work.

Thank you for your guidance and input throughout.

If you have any queries regarding the report, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Beşt regards,

Josephine Foti

Director

Josh Flack Partner













Take outs and opportunities: Schools and RTOs

Take outs



Satisfaction and Effectiveness

Continued high levels of satisfaction and perceived effectiveness. Analysis reveals different levers for driving perceived effectiveness between schools and RTOs

Sector Differences

A gap still exists between schools and RTOs. Results suggest that the differences between VET and school sectors has narrowed

Plateau Effect

Sentiment amongst schools has plateaued, and in some cases fallen slightly

Improved Awareness

Evidence of improved awareness amongst employer and apprentices and trainees (A&Ts)

Opportunities



Satisfaction and Effectiveness

Tailor communications and interventions based on the identified touchpoints

Sector Differences

Continue to work hard engaging with the VET sector

Plateau Effect

Slide 3

The school figures are extremely high – but maintaining these will require continued effort and improvements. And effective communication of these improvements

Improved Awareness

Scope to build further. Greater understanding of the training contract is likely to lead to better outcomes for industry and apprentices / trainees





Research Objectives

Wallis conducted research to determine:

Knowledge

Client and stakeholder understanding of the VRQA and its functions



The level of client and stakeholder awareness of the VRQA and its functions

Expectations

Client and stakeholder expectations

(including types of support expected and valued)



How clients and stakeholders would like to engage with the VRQA

Delivery

Areas for improvement in VRQA performance in engaging clients and stakeholders

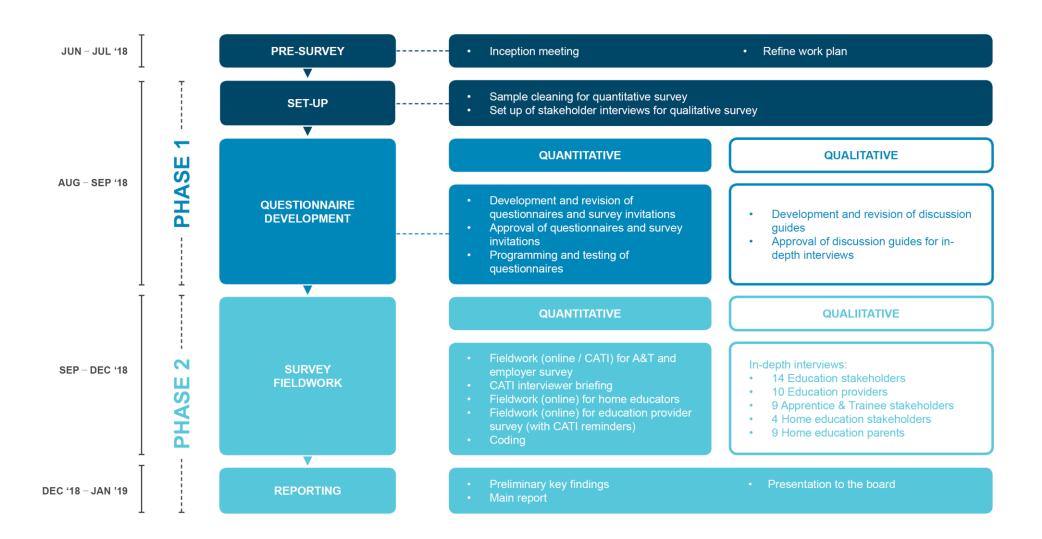


How clients and stakeholders would like to receive communication from the VRQA



Understanding of levels of and shifts in satisfaction amongst clients

Methodology

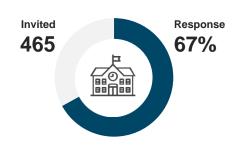


Note: All fieldwork (both qualitative and quantitative) was conducted in Victoria.



Field Results

Quantitative results



Education providers (n=310) Interview length 12 minutes (online)

Invited 2630

Apprentices & trainees (n=172)

Interview length

6 minutes (online)

7 minutes (CATI)

Response 7%

2571

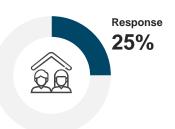
Invited



Employers (n=170)

Interview length 6 minutes (online) 7 minutes (CATI)

Invited 3500



Home Educators (n=891) Interview length 6 minutes (online)

Qualitative results



14 **Education** stakeholders



10 Education providers



9 Apprentice & trainee stakeholders



4 Home **Education Stakeholders**

Response

7%



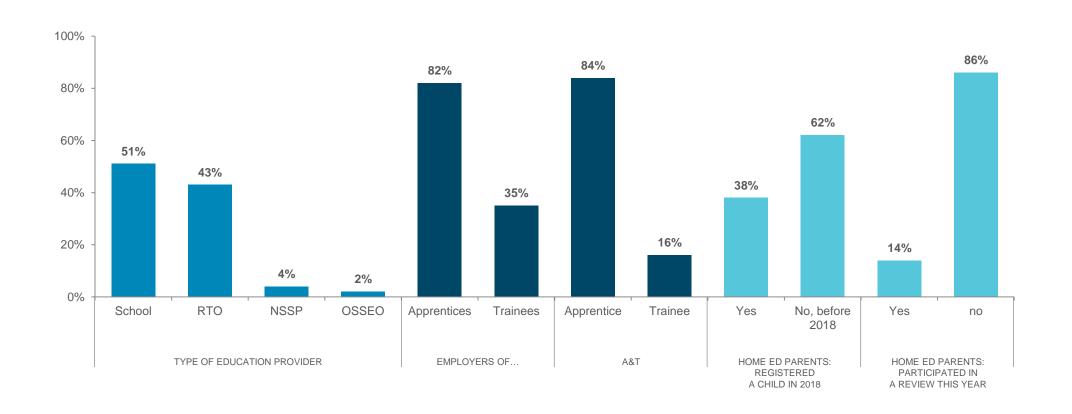
9 Home Education **Parents**





Population Demographics

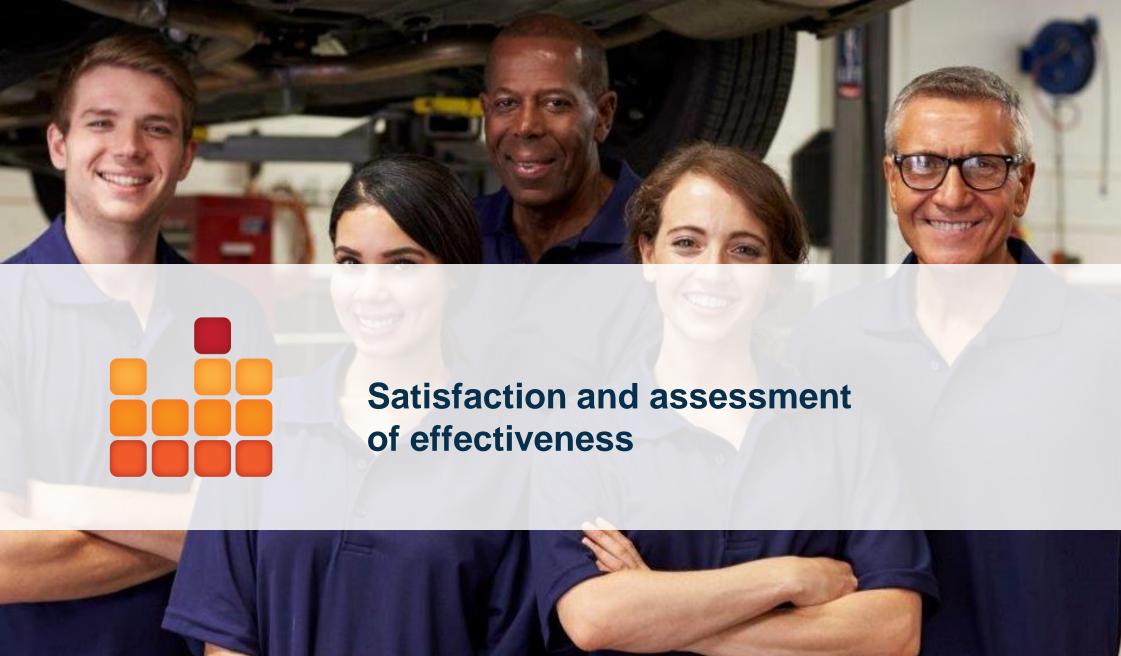
The education provider survey was completed by mostly schools and RTOs, in even proportions



Base: Education Providers (n=310); Employers (n=170); Apprentices/Trainees (n=172), Home Educators (n=891)



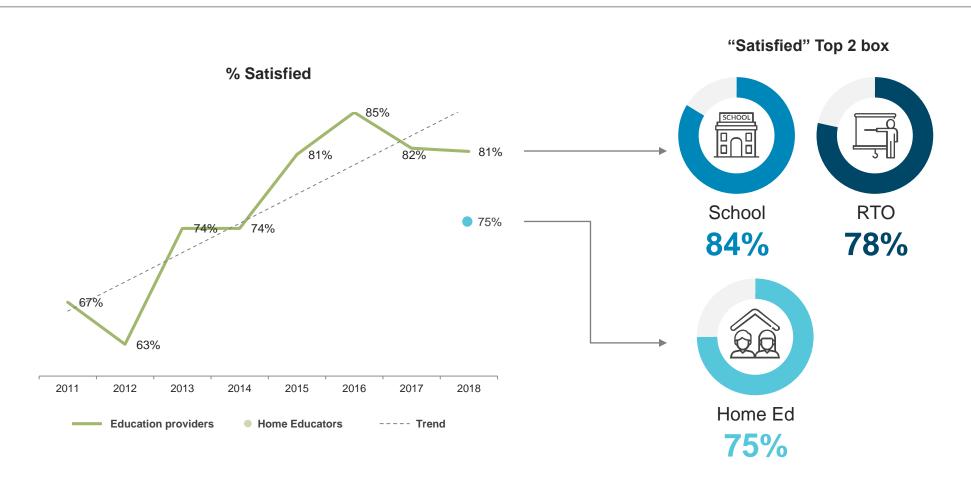






High levels of overall satisfaction among education providers – though results have plateaued

Strong initial result from home educators



EPS10: Overall, how satisfied are you with the VRQA and its services over the last 12 months? **Base:** n=310 **HE14:** Overall, how satisfied are you with the VRQA and its services over the last 12 months? **Base:** n=891





Clients note understanding, promptness and ease as key reasons for high levels of satisfaction

Negatives were few, but tended to relate to specific situations

Our experience has been like a game of guessing what the regulator wants We are undergoing a whole school **School** based on whim and political pressure. review and they have been very good Both unhelpful and non professional... with communication, direction and 83.7% Our relationship with VRQA wasn't clarity. always this way. SCHOOL SCHOOL **RTO** 6.3% 78.5% Prompt, accurate information and You need to actually come out and talk always a person on the other end of the to the RTOs and see what they are Home Ed phone who can assist and support. actually doing. RTO RTO 75.8% It's a simple process to register and staff are very courteous and helpful. I'm confident this would be the same if we I have submitted my review and have not received a reply or evaluation. were in a review process. HOME EDUCATOR HOME EDUCATOR % Dissatisfied % Satisfied

EPS10B: What is the main reason for your [satisfaction/dissatisfaction]? **Base:** n=135





Schools and RTOs perceive VRQA as an effective regulator

Slightly less positive responses from schools in 2018



Highly effective

School

51% 42%

RTO



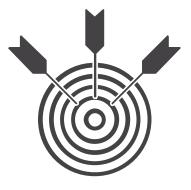
Fairly effective

School

45%

RTO

51%

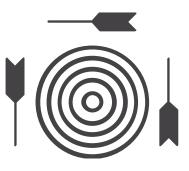


Not very effective

School 4%

RTO

5%



Not at all effective

School

RTO

0%

2%



I have always found the VRQA aware of issues facing schools and they undertake their difficult role with a very professional approach. When there is an issue, the staff will provide sound advice.





A previous involvement by the VRQA with my school had involved the VRQA taking up an obviously vexatious claim by a parent in a manner that placed all responsibility for the issue on the School right up to the point that the VRQA said that the School had no case to answer. [This] gave no impression the VRQA understood, far less supported the School conducting its business to support its students.

SCHOOL

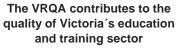
EPS9: Thinking about how effective the VRQA has been in performing its regulatory function, would you rate the VRQA as being... **Base:** n=310





Education providers continue to recognise the important role filled by VRQA: contributing to quality, and continuous improvement, in educational outcomes

Continuing difference between schools and RTOs: Results were very consistent with 2017





School RTO **87%**

RTO

The VRQA engages appropriately with the regulated community



School RTO **84% 80%**

The VRQA improves the quality of VET outcomes in Victoria



RTO **83%**

The VRQA promotes and encourages continuous improvement of registered training organisations



RTO

86%

Fully agree

Mostly agree



When I've had to contact them, I've found them very helpful. If I've phoned them and they didn't know the answer, then they've gotten back to me fairly quickly with the answer.



Every time I've spoken to individuals at the VRQA they've always been very supportive and very helpful, and not the scary audit type people that they are painted out to be sometimes.

Slide 13

SCHOOL



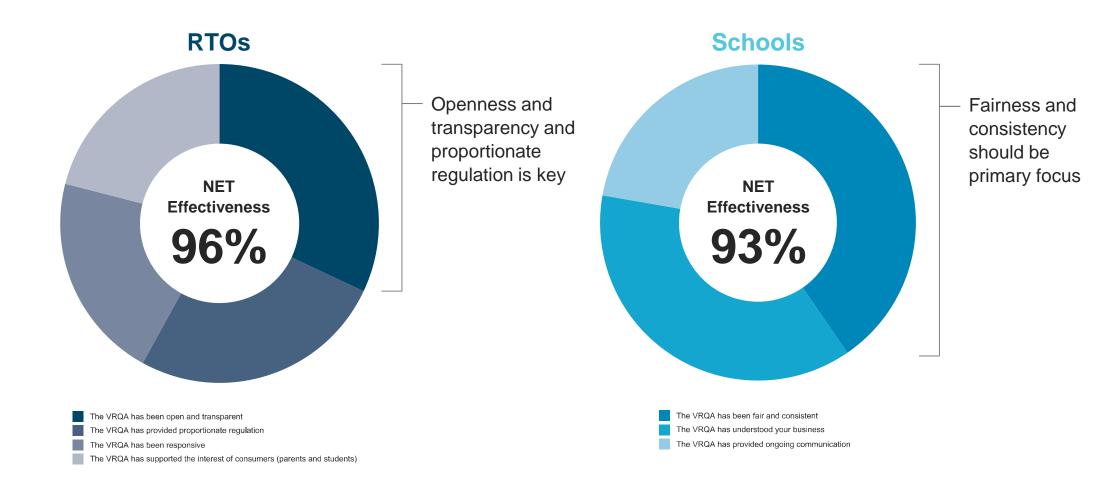
... Tell them (the VRQA): Never underestimate the value of the work they do.

SCHOOL STAKEHOLDER

EPS8: Thinking about VRQA's regulatory work, to what extent do you agree with the following? Base: n=310



Fairness and consistency is key for schools in perceiving VRQA as effective. Openness and transparency is key for RTOs



EPS7–9 / 7–10: In the past 12 months, to what extent do you agree that the VRQA's performance aligned with each of the following? Thinking about how effective the VRQA has been in performing its regulatory function, would you rate the VRQA as being... / Overall, how satisfied are you with the VRQA and its services over the last 12 months? / Base: All (n=310)





Awareness of the VRQA across employers and A&Ts has increased since 2017

38%















Aware of the **VRQA** and what it does































Employer



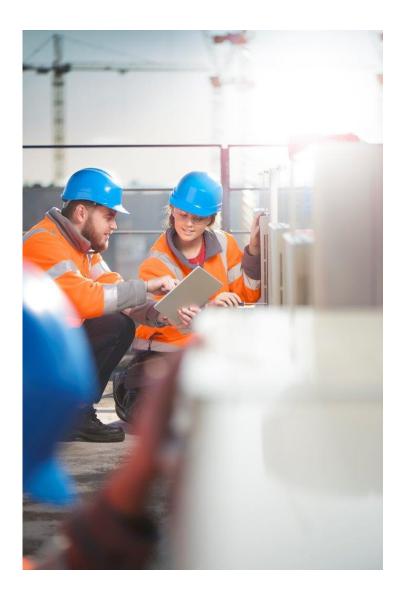
Apprentices & Trainees



ATE1: Are you aware of the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) and the role it plays? Base: Employers (n=170); A&Ts (n=172)



Case study: Potential benefits to be gained in improving awareness of VRQA and their role in overseeing the training contract





Situation

- Perception that many A&Ts and employers are not fully aware of their Training Contracts, and the existence and role of the VRQA
- Perception that the VRQA will only get involved if there's a serious issue with the apprenticeship / traineeship



Impacts

- Parties may not be adequately aware of the full benefits of A&T training: the responsibilities for employers, and the support provided for apprentices/trainees
- Sub-optimal outcomes: non-completion of apprenticeships/traineeships (loss to the industry)



Opportunities

- Greater role for the VRQA in educating employers and apprentices of the obligations of their training contract
- Earlier intervention

Slide 17

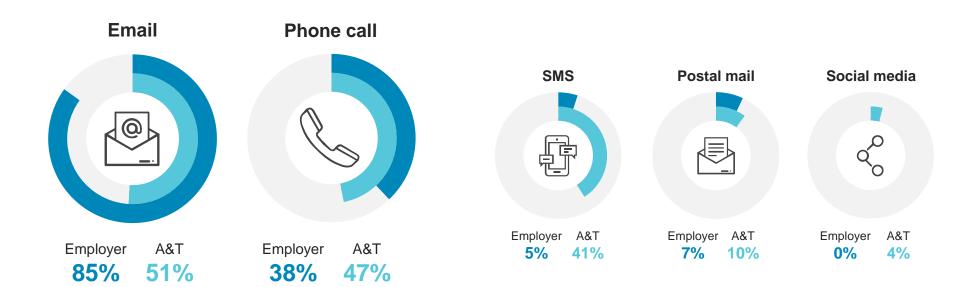
Use intelligence collected to influence wider policy reform





Email and telephone contact are the preferred methods of communication for A&Ts and employers

Employers prefer email communication while A&Ts are open to SMS as well



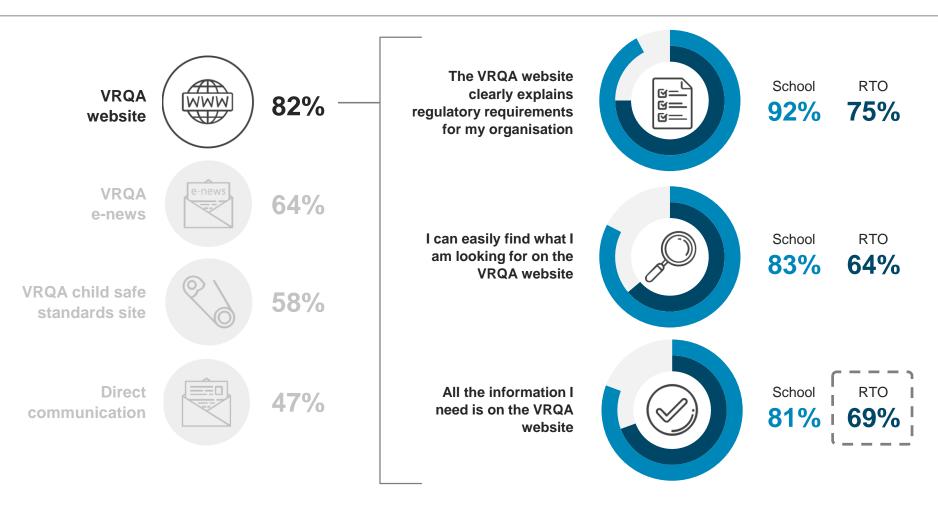
ATE9: If VRQA was to get in touch with you, what are your preferred methods of communication for them to use?

Base: Employers (n=170) / A&T (n=172)



The VRQA website remains the 'go-to' resource, and is well regarded

Fewer RTOs feel all the information they need is on the website (80% in 2017)

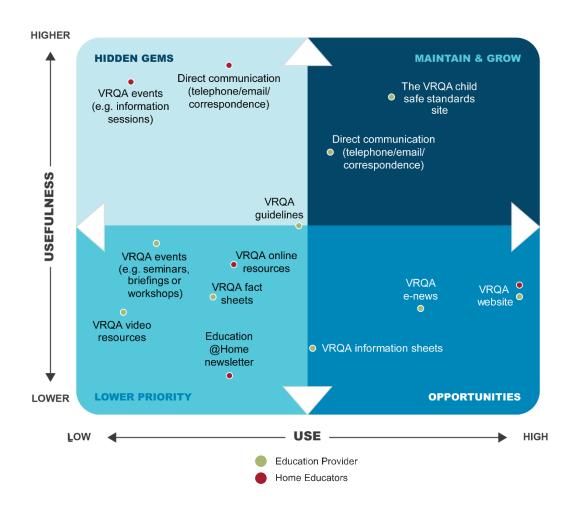


EPS2A: Which of the following VRQA publications/communications have you accessed/used in the past 12 months? **EPS3:** Thinking about the VRQA website, to what extent do you agree with each of the following statements? **Base:** All (n=310)





Opportunities exist for the VRQA website for both educators and home educators





Opportunities

For educators, VRQA e-news and VRQA website continue to be an opportunity, due to relatively high use.

For home educators, the VRQA website is the key opportunity.



Hidden gems

Again, for educators, VRQA guidelines are a hidden gem: with relatively higher usefulness and relatively lower usage scores

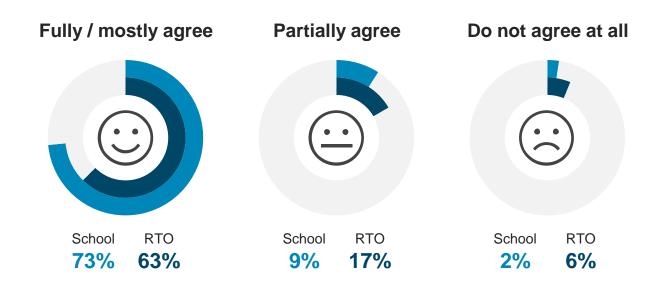
For home educators, interactions with VRQA, through events or directly, are highly valued by the community, though relatively less utilised.

EPS2A: Which of the following VRQA publications/communications have you accessed/used in the past 12 months? **EPS2B:** How helpful have you found the following VRQA publication/communication? **Base:** All (n=310)



High levels of agreement that VRQA events keep education providers up to date

Positive shift - more schools fully/mostly agree (69% in 2017)





Over the years, when there's been changes to courses, the VRQA has had briefings, and I did find the briefings very good, but I haven't heard of any for a few years now. The briefings are very worthwhile ... They're an opportunity for collaboration with others and an opportunity to ask questions face to face, especially when there are changes.

COMMUNITY RTO

EPS4: To what extent do you agree that VRQA events (e.g. seminars, information briefings or workshops) keep you up to date with the information you need for your operations in the sector? **Base:** All (n=310)







Customer service remains a strength across both schools and RTOs

Slight drop in 'engaging effectively with stakeholders' from schools (75% in 2017)

Providing timely information about regulatory changes/general directions



School RTO **74%**

Providing sufficient contact information so that I (or my organisation) can contact/recontact a VRQA staff member if necessary



School RTO **75%**

Providing staff who are courteous and helpful



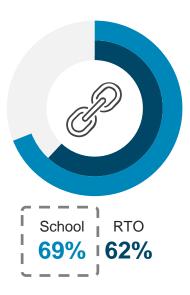
School RTO **82% 84%**

Providing timely, quality advice about my sector to my organisation



School RTO **76%**

Engaging effectively with stakeholders, like my organisation, in the regulation of the sector



Ratings of excellent or good

EPS5: Please rate the VRQA's performance on each of the following items... **Base:** All (n=310)





Areas identified for improvement from those providing 'poor' ratings

A lack of two way engagement, proactivity and operational communications were identified by a small number

Lack of two-way engagement





It may be my own shortcoming, however, I don't remember ever being invited to a session where our views are sought on the regulation of the sector.

SCHOOL



I/We have never been asked for input so the engagement is only one way.

RTO

More proactive communication





VRQA fails in its communication with RTOs in regards to expected requirements from RTOs. VRQA should have a direct communication mechanism with education & training organisations rather than rely on its website for communications.

RTO



ASQA runs yearly info sessions to present systemic quality and compliance issues across the sector, and to discuss good practices. This is something VRQA should adopt.

RTO

Communication follow-up





I have had occasions when it has taken 4 months plus to get an email reply.

RTO



I have written to VRQA since assuming my role and also sought a meeting to establish professional dialogue, till today I have not heard back from VRQA.

SCHOOL

EPS5b: You mentioned that the VRQA's performance was poor on the following attribute(s). Please provide further details or examples on how the VRQA's performance has been poor **Base:** n=33

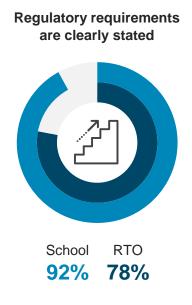


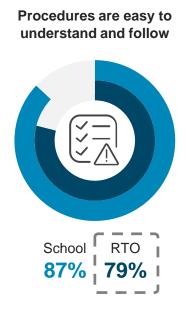


Most agree that VRQA operational processes are straightforward

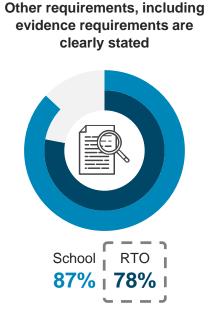
Improvements for RTOs regarding ease of following procedures and evidence requirements (75% and 74% in 2017)







Slide 26



EPS6: To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements relating to the VRQA's processes? **Base:** All (n=310)



Case Study: Potential improvements to assist new principals





Situation

- New principal, with no opportunity for handover from the previous principal
- Support network at the principal level not well established
- New principal needs reliable guidance, and has the problem of the 'unknown unknowns' in relation to VRQA requirements



Impacts

- High level of stress
- Wasted time for the principal in preparing for compliance review
- Wasted time during the review
- Lack of readiness for the compliance review



Opportunities

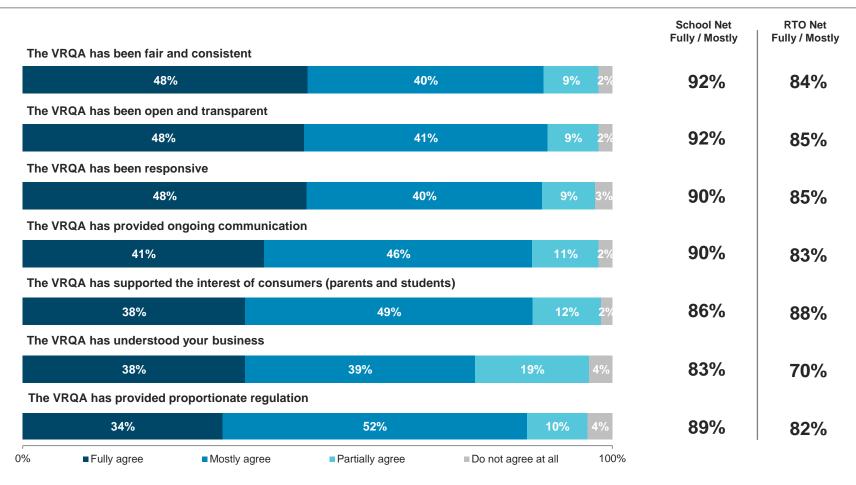
- Welcome pack for new principals, congratulating them on new role and outlining the VRQA's role, website, and child safe standards information
- Review information sessions: review format and content. Provide new principal component at session
- Provide compliance insights for sector



I had to learn by snooping!

Education providers give overwhelmingly high ratings of VRQA performance: schools remain more emphatic in this assessment

Almost half of the education providers 'fully agree' that the VRQA is 'fair & consistent', 'open & transparent', and 'responsive'



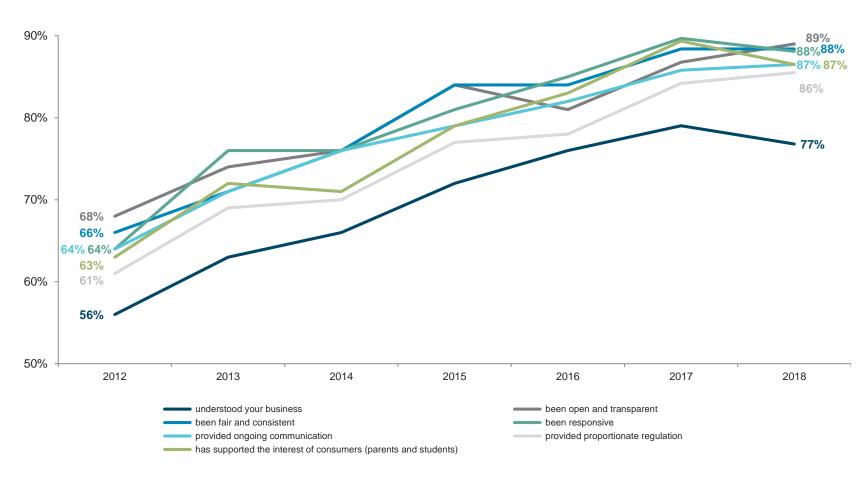
EPS7: In the past 12 months, to what extent do you agree that the VRQA's performance aligned with each of the following?

Base: All (n=310)



Strong scores have been maintained across all service measures

'Understood your business' is still a service aspect requiring attention



EPS7: In the past 12 months, to what extent do you agree that the VRQA's performance aligned with each of the following? **Base:** All (n=310)







High levels of engagement and participation with child safe standards continue









































9 out of 10 schools agree:

- Governing body actively engaged with the CSS
- Our school community is actively engaged in the CSS
- CSS helped highlight the need for a culture of child safety at our school
- The materials and support from the VRQA have been helpful for our school in adopting the Child Safe Standards

4 out of 10 schools

require further help or support from VRQA

EPS 12: Thinking about VRQA's work on the Child Safe Standards, to what extent do you agree with the following? **Base:** Schools only (per Q1) (n=159)



Opportunities for VRQA to provide further practical support





















4 out of 10 schools

require further help or support from VRQA

Examples of good practice



More effective if instead of words on paper schools provided concrete examples of how they implement the standard.



Assistance in developing protocols and procedures and sharing good practice in regard to International Students.

Continuing / ongoing support



Helping inform on any relevant changes in legislation. Provision of clear 'to do' action lists.



On going guidance about good ideas other schools are utilising to achieve culture change

Seminars and briefings



On going staff briefings from VRQA would be extremely powerful.



Important to maintain an ongoing set of child safe seminars, to ensure the issue is kept alive in schools.

Slide 32

Make compliance as simple as possible



Easily accessible information that makes compliance as simple as possible.

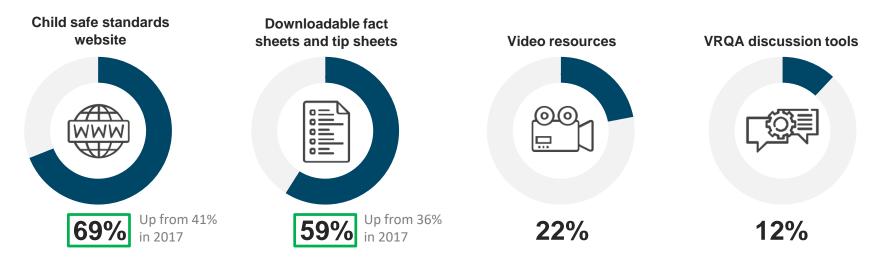
EPS 13: What kind of further support does your school require from the VRQA in implementing the Child Safe Standards? **Base:** Those who at least partially agreed that their school requires further support from the VRQA in implementing the Child Safe Standards (Q12E = 1-3) (n=74)

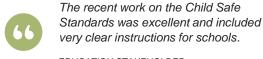




Substantially more education providers found the CSS website and downloadable fact sheets helpful compared to 2017

These sentiments echoed by stakeholders and principals

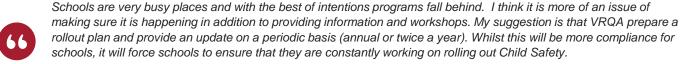




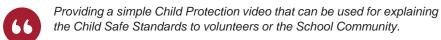
EDUCATION STAKEHOLDER

My job would be excruciatingly difficult without them. They tell me exactly what I need to know.

EDUCATION STAKEHOLDER



SCHOOL PRINCIPAL



Slide 33

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

EPS 14: Which of the following VRQA resources have been helpful for your school in the implementation of the Child Safe Standards?

Base: Those who at least partially agreed that the materials and support from the VRQA have been helpful for their school or RTO in adopting the Child Safe Standards (Q12b = 1-3) (n=158)







Home Education sector: Overall feedback was very positive

Three key strengths emerged



Reaching most parts of Victoria to meet face to face – understanding perspectives of the community.

Genuine relationship building



... the obvious effort at forming a supportive environment for home educators...

HOME EDUCATOR



Flexibility

Processes - accommodating to Home Education needs



From what I understand, there are several options for how a review can be conducted... I think this is a pretty flexible and fair approach...

HOME EDUCATOR



Communication

Regulation interpreted and rolled out pragmatically.



Efficient, courteous communication and good information sessions.

HOME EDUCATOR



Home educator challenges and opportunities



- Fear of unknown VRQA an unknown entity which then resulted with some experiencing high levels of anxiety
- Some have children with special needs and not confident that the VRQA is able to deal with their circumstances
- Some had negative experiences with the VRQA in the past and had their minds made up
- Ideological opposition: Those who believe that the VRQA is intervening when they shouldn't



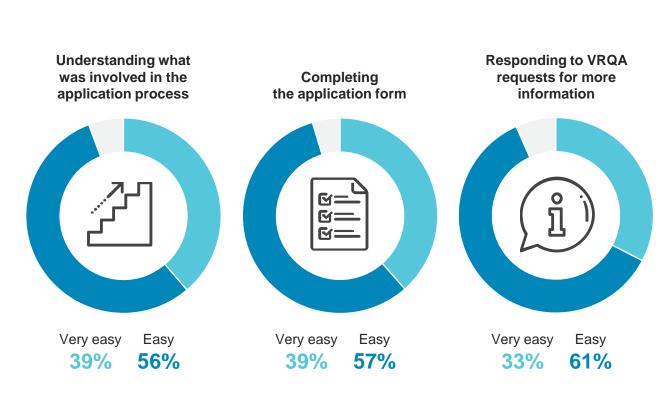
OPPORTUNITIES

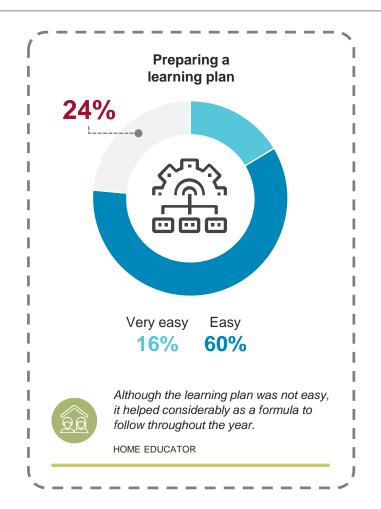
- Leverage on those who had positive experiences
 use as case studies
- Networking and word of mouth is very important for Home Educators – important to continue to use key stakeholder networks to promote the good news stories
- Important to use balanced language which is non-authoritarian

Slide 36

Registration process: VRQA processes were well received by most

Around a fifth found preparing the learning plan difficult





HE2: How did you find the following VRQA processes? **Base:** n=339



Review process: Most described the process as straightforward

VRQA staff were a standout in terms of making the process seamless

Approximately 1 in 7 (14%) were involved in a home schooling review this year

















Easy

55%

Very easy

29%



Accessing







Responding to VRQA

HE4: Did you participate in a VRQA home schooling review this year? Base: n=891 / HE5: How did you find the following VRQA review processes? Base: n=123



VRQA Reviewers were highly regarded for their understanding and supportiveness



The reviewer understood our position and reasons for home-schooling and was accepting of those.

HOME EDUCATOR



I did a face to face review and the reviewer was very kind and easy to talk with.

HOME EDUCATOR



I am thankful that the reviews are so open and accommodating to all styles of home-schooling and I hope that this will continue into the future.

HOME EDUCATOR



The helpful communication with <NAME>! She was supportive and understanding! Pay rise for <NAME>!

HOME EDUCATOR



I was affirmed, encouraged and supported by the reviewer.

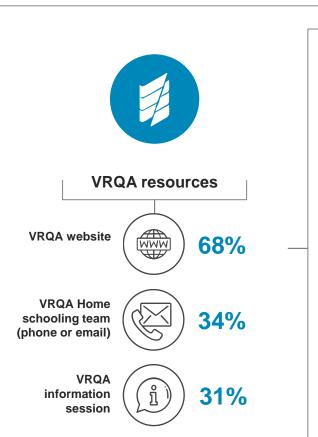
HOME EDUCATOR



Slide 39

Review process: VRQA resources were utilised significantly during the process

The Home Education Network was also a key support during the review process.





Review was easy to complete Phone conversation with reviewer was friendly and understanding of our circumstances.

HOME EDUCATOR



The process of preparing for review was well explained and VRQA provided plenty of helpful information.

HOME EDUCATOR



Watching the roadshow I knew that the review process was not daunting.

HOME EDUCATOR



Thank-you for working so well with HEN and providing many and varied templates on the website to help parents when creating learning plans and preparing for review

HOME EDUCATOR



Other home education networks

Home Education Network



54%

Victorian Home Education Advisory Committee



10%

Other home education support group



7%

HE6: Where did you go to for support or information through the review process?

Base: n=123





Case Study: Home educator satisfied with the VRQA





Situation

- Home educator has had positive interaction with the VRQA during 2017-2018.
- When respondent has had a query about regulation, she has phoned or emailed the VRQA, and always finds the VRQA to be very responsive as well as friendly and helpful.
- Respondent is considering transitioning her daughter to school in the future, and feels it would be helpful to have more information about alternative schools available, as she is unlikely to consider a mainstream school.



Impacts

- Respondent welcomes regulation by the VRQA.
- Respondent has found that regulation and having to submit a learning plan
 has focussed her home-schooling preparations. She appreciates that this
 has had a positive effect on the quality of the education she provides her
 daughter.



Opportunities

- Provide information to those considering the transition from home education to a school, including information about alternative schools.
- Provide access to the VRQA State Register as well as stakeholder (ISV, DET and CECV) school locator tools.



There was some anxiousness preceding reviews, but high levels of confidence subsequently



I was not confident that the assessors had an understanding of the different ways a child can be educated and that "home schooling" would be compared to the "state school design".

HOME EDUCATOR



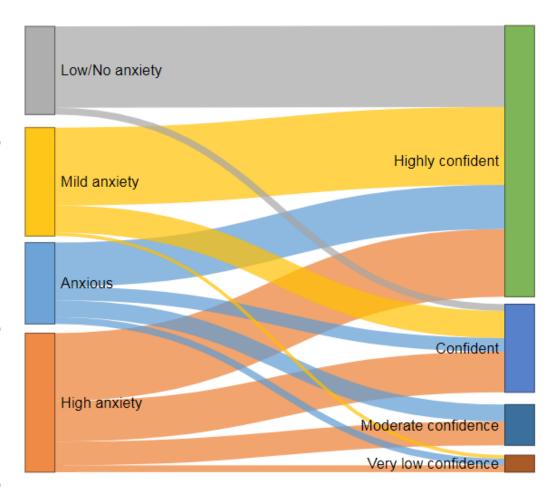
Although I am extremely competent at what I do here with my children and document our studies well, the pressure of having to prove as such to a complete outsider within a certain timeframe... was stressful.

HOME EDUCATOR



At that point there were no specific guidelines, I didn't know what to expect... So I was really worried that it would be really hard to comply with expectations.

HOME EDUCATOR





The review was very thorough, all areas of learning were covered and very good feedback and advice given back to me which was very encouraging and helpful.

HOME EDUCATOR



I had a phone review and the reviewer gave me feedback that my review would meet the criteria. I was also informed at that time about what to expect regarding the waiting times and official email confirmation, so I was not anxious about that..

HOME EDUCATOR



My review officer was wonderful and amazing. He was actively looking for ways to fit our style of learning into the curriculum. He could see that our environment was learning rich and was more than willing to talk to my son.

HOME EDUCATOR

HE7: On a scale of 1-10, where 1 = extremely anxious, and 10 = completely calm, how did you feel leading up to the review? **HE8:** On a scale of 1-10, where 1 = completely lacking in confidence, and 10 = completely confident, how did you feel after the review? **Base:** n=123





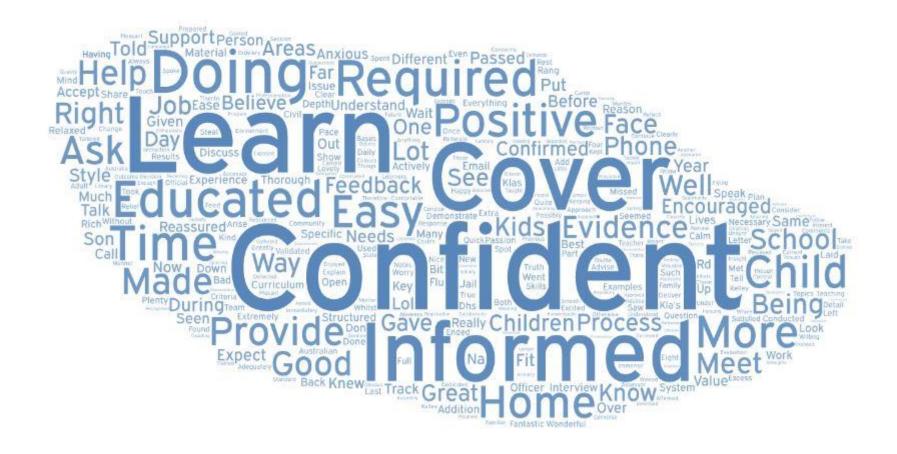
Sentiment analysis: Reasons for anxiousness pre-review



HE7B: Why did you feel so <anxious/calm>? **Base:** n=123



Sentiment analysis: Reasons for confidence post-review



HE8B: Why did you feel so <confident/lacking in confidence>? **Base:** n=123



Review Process: Most appreciated the VRQA's flexibility and empathy during the process

Clarity of communication was also was also valued by most.

Understanding and accommodating your home education approach or family circumstances



Excellent Good **27%**



My request to change the month of our review was granted without question.

HOME EDUCATOR



From what I understand, there are several options for how a review can be conducted ... I think this is a pretty flexible and fair approach to monitoring home-schooling.

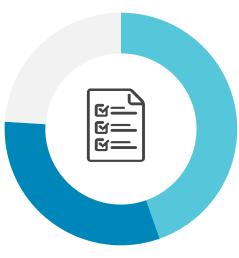
HOME EDUCATOR



Having flexibility in the review process (not just having one set way, but being able to choose whether you email, phone, or have a visit) made it less stressful.

HOME EDUCATOR

Providing you with a clear information of what is required at review



Excellent Good 45% 31%

HE9: Please rate the VRQA's performance on each of the following items. **Base:** n=123





Areas for potential improvement



I'd like it to be more detailed and actually access the quality of education being delivered.

HOME EDUCATOR



The response time to my review was excessively long. I had to email them multiple times to find out if I had passed. Once I knew I had passed the review I had to email them a few times to find out where my official notification was. I am expected to submit my review to them by the due date but they have NO timeline of response to me. It was extremely frustrating.

HOME EDUCATOR



Lodging a desktop review via email is pretty much impossible due to the administrative limits on the server.

HOME EDUCATOR



A quicker response after our review was handed in would alleviate some anxiety... just a basic reassurance that we did ok.

HOME EDUCATOR



It would be more helpful to know how much information the VRQA wants in a review, instead we are left to guess.

HOME EDUCATOR



Frankly, I feel it's not in depth enough - I'd happily have covering more information and asking for more evidence that you (the applicant) are capable in teaching your child.

HOME EDUCATOR

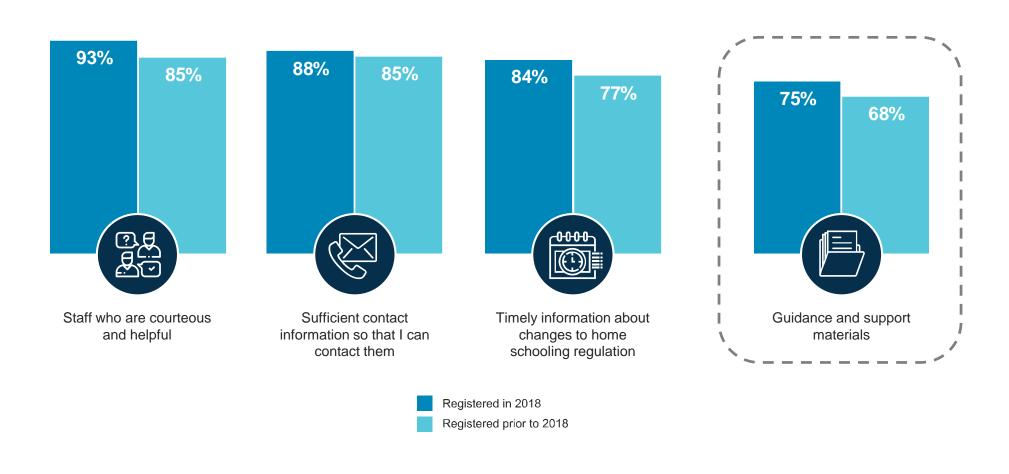
HE9B: Are there any other comments you'd like to make about the VRQA's review process? **Base:** n=123





Very high ratings of VRQA performance, with an opportunity to enhance support materials

Those who registered a child in 2018 were even more positive



HE12: Please rate the VRQA's performance in providing ... **Base:** n=891





High levels of overall satisfaction with the VRQA

Those with recent interaction with the VRQA tended to be more satisfied

Overall Satisfaction with VRQA 76%





HE14: Overall, how satisfied are you with the VRQA and its services over the last 12 months? **Base:** n=891



Primary levers for improving satisfaction among home educators

