



Australian Government

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency

Encouraging excellence through regulation

IPoE Forum

*Scholarly excellence in the age of
compliance*

13-16 November 2017

Anthony McClaran
Chief Executive Officer

TEQSA



Overview

- TEQSA – who are we and how do we work?
- How we regulate
- The sector we regulate
- International focus
- Our model – its influence and its limitations
- Working with the sector

Who are we and how do we work?

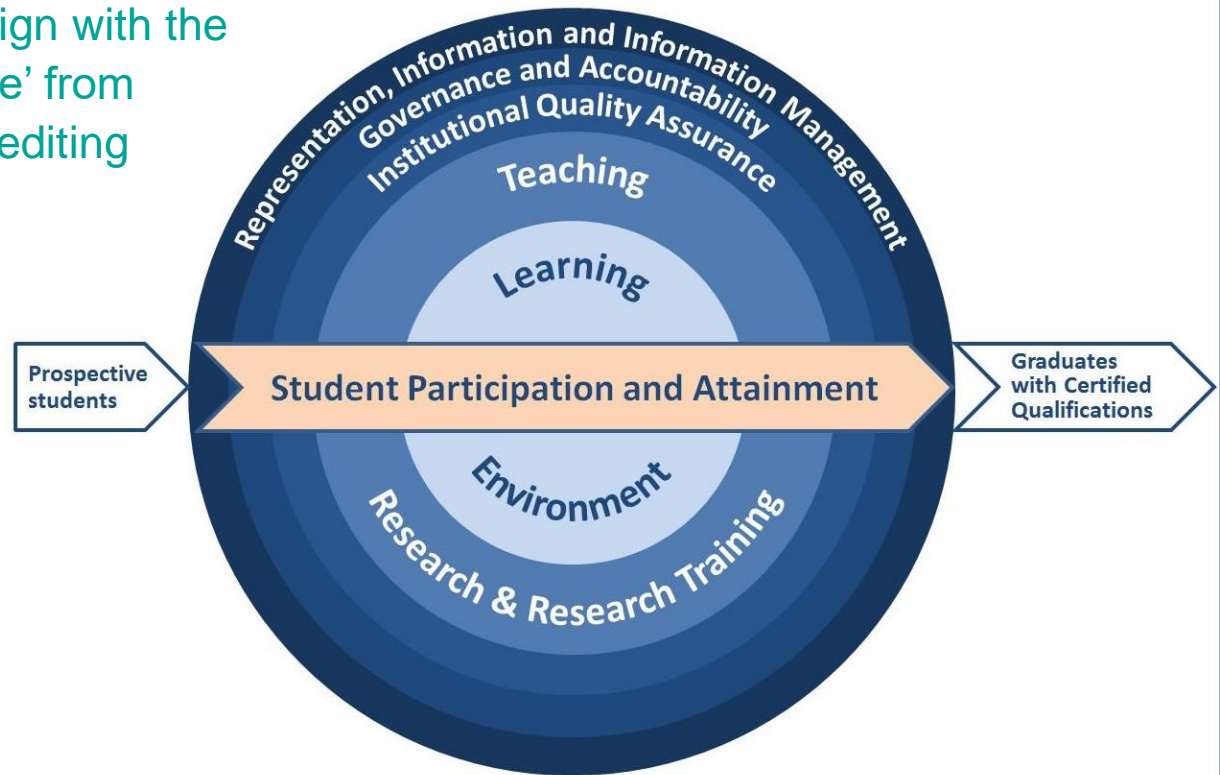
Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011

Established us as an agency and sets out clear objects which include, amongst others, to:

- Provide for national consistency in the regulation of higher education.
- **Protect and enhance** Australia's:
 - reputation for quality higher education
 - international competitiveness in the higher education sector
 - excellence, diversity and innovation in higher education.

Higher Education Standards Framework 2015

Structured to align with the 'student lifecycle' from admission to crediting of award



Higher Education Standards Framework 2015

All embracing – applies to the whole sector, not just publicly funded providers

- The standards apply to all providers who deliver courses that lead to regulated higher education award.
- While all providers must demonstrate their adherence to the HES Framework, we assess in the context of each provider's circumstances.
- The standards are applied flexibly with regard to differences in teaching methods, modes of delivery, etc.

The standards are not intended, or applied, to limit 'excellence diversity and innovation'

Our focus on compliance

All providers must comply with the HES Framework at all times.

- HES Framework enables providers to internally monitor the quality of their higher education provision.
- Regular assessments of providers compliance with the HES Framework are undertaken.
- Providers must notify us if they are in danger, or have breached, any of the HES Framework's requirements.



How we respond to regulation

A risk-based approach

When exercising our regulatory powers, we are guided by the following principles:

- 1. Regulatory necessity**
- 2. Reflecting risk**
- 3. Proportionate regulation**

These principles require us to **focus our efforts on where harm is apparent or imminent.**

Risk as a regulatory approach

Regulators, under unprecedented pressure, face a range of demands, often contradictory in nature: be less intrusive – but more effective; be kinder and gentler – but don't let the bastards get away with anything; focus your efforts – but be consistent; process things quicker – and be more careful next time; deal with important issues – but don't stray outside your statutory authority...

Malcolm K Sparrow.

*The Regulatory Craft. Controlling Risks,
Solving Problems and Managing Compliance.
2000*

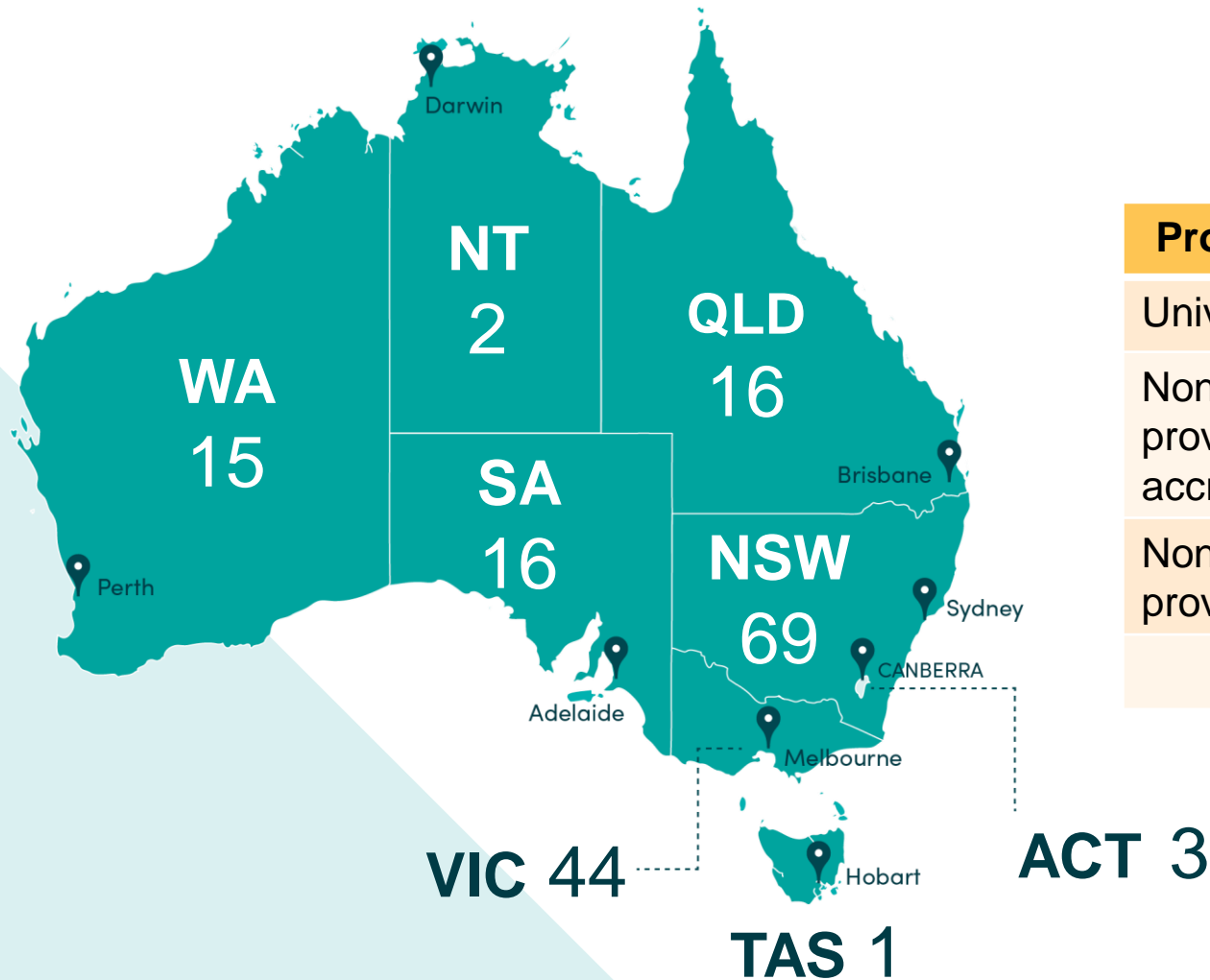
Risk as a regulatory approach

A risk-based approach to regulation means regulatory activity is directed **where it is needed**

- Guided by our *Risk Assessment Framework*.
- Reduces regulatory burden by using risk assessments to inform differentiated approach to evidence and reporting requirements.
- The first KPI of our Regulatory Performance Framework calls for our regulation not to ...**unnecessarily impede the efficient operation of higher education providers.**

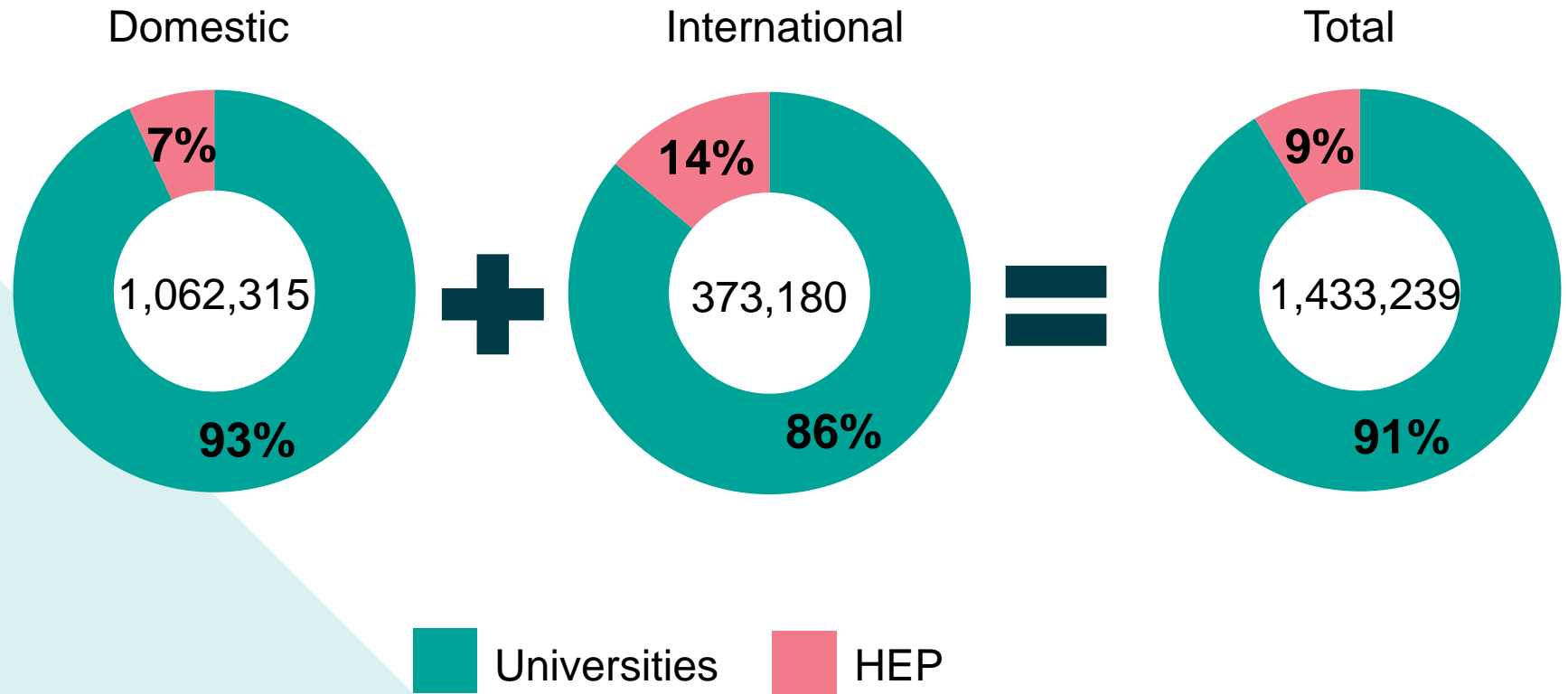


The sector – what it looks like



Provider category	Total
University	43
Non-university provider with self-accrediting authority	11
Non-university provider	112
Total	166

The sector – where the students are



Our international focus

Higher education has become an international affair

- A key object of the TEQSA Act calls for us to protect and enhance the Australian higher education sector's international competitiveness.
- We are members of key international quality groups such as:
 - **International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE)**
 - **Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN)**
 - **Quality Beyond Boundaries Group (QBBG).**



International partnerships

Key partnerships with our international counterparts

- We have formal memberships with **19** international quality assurance agencies/groups.
- Key partnership with **QBBG** drives our international engagement and creates dialogue between like-minded agencies.
- International regional initiatives: APEC project and the QA of online learning.

Influence of the risk-based approach

Developments in the UK

- 2013 QAA adopts **risk-based approach** in provider review.
- 2017 UK parliament passes Higher Education and Research Act.
- 2018 new statutory regulator, **Office of Students**, will be operational.
 - Set to operate as a **risk-based regulator**.
 - aims to address the need for:
 - simpler
 - less bureaucratic
 - less expensive system of regulation.
 - Set to explicitly champion the student, employer and taxpayer interest in ensuring **value for their investment** in higher education.

Limitations of the risk-based approach

Risk-based approach is not without its limitations

- HES Framework is threshold based – lack of information about differential quality.
 - Some providers implement the standards more effectively than others.
- **Some providers feel that we pay too much attention to their operations, or are not proportionate to the risks being managed.**

2016 TEQSA Stakeholder survey.

- Still not sufficiently student-centric:
 - Need to provide more opportunity for students to be involved at all levels
 - Student advisory board to be formed
- The challenge of systemic risk.
- **No evaluation of teaching excellence.**

Working with the sector

We're increasingly providing advice and guidance on critical, sector-wide issues

- **Admissions Transparency Implementation**
 - Producing and implementing the TEQSA specific aspects of HESP's Admissions Transparency Implementation Plan.
- ***Characteristics of Australian Higher Education Providers and their Relation to First Year Student Attrition***
 - For the first time, looked at attrition rates of all higher education providers (and all levels of study) and the provider level characteristics that may be linked to higher levels of attrition.
- ***Good Practice Note: Addressing Contract Cheating to Safeguard Academic Integrity***
 - For the first time, provided named examples of best practice in tackling breaches of academic integrity and contract cheating.



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Anthony.McClaran@teqsa.gov.au

 @AnthonyMcClaran

www.teqsa.gov.au



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