



January 14, 2016

Re: Submission to NSW Property Training Review

Dear Panel Members,

We are making this submission as a leading Australian screening and verification company. We hope to provide the panel with additional context with which to assess the core questions around training in this consultation paper, especially around the effective communication of new educational standards to the marketplace.

RISQ Group is currently working in and around the property services industry and has been very active in developing a service provider verification tool. The new tool will enable consumers to immediately trust that a given provider has all requisite certifications. The tool is called KNOWN and it is in advanced trials across several digital platforms. You can learn more about it here: www.risqgroup.com/KNOWN. While to date, we are focused on service providers such as tradespeople (e.g. plumbers and electricians), our business expertise stretches from national security vetting to education to finance, and we often work with established industry bodies to provide verification services to members, as well as to create efficient screening work flows.

For this reason, we think we believe we are positioned to add an additional dimension to questions 1.1, 1.2, 4.1 and 5.2 raised in this paper. Rather than address each individually, we would like to offer a general perspective built around a single basic principle. That basic principle is that screening and verification must be considered as part of the life-cycle that operates relating to training and education, and which forms the basis of the improvements that you are currently contemplating.

Australia is in the midst of an employment shift, particularly as the resource sector continues to decelerate. This shift will see a substantial enlargement of the paraprofessional employee cohort. This group will increasingly be consumer facing, especially as digital platforms grow to connect providers directly with consumers.

As a result of this shift, the question of how qualifications and certifications are quickly, accurately and truthfully conveyed as part of the provider-consumer transaction will be paramount. As the consulting paper acknowledges, there is already "little apparent consistency" regarding educational requirements for property agents across jurisdictions. It is not a stretch to say the same lack of consistency applies to publicising education credentials.

It is critical that as educational standards are improved and clarified, that an efficient and transparent way of transmitting individual verifications to the marketplace is also found, or the credibility of the property management industry will suffer and consumers will not benefit from an improvement of standards. In fact, to quote from



the consultation paper, "The primary reason governments prescribe educational standards is to address a consumer detriment or risk." For this reason, we believe that it is imperative to consider how these educational standards will ultimately be transmitted and perceived in the marketplace lest consumer detriment persist or even worsen because of poor verification processes even in the face of higher education standards.

Given how important competition principles are in balancing government overreach, after-the-fact screening and verification, consistently applied throughout the employment life cycle, will serve to prevent marketplace abuses (such as credential misrepresentation) that may prompt even greater future regulatory action.

We would also suggest that the application/accreditation processes itself should be reviewed for potential streamlining. According to industry sources, while training can be completed in as little as two days, it often takes six weeks for the OFT to process the application. The adoption of improved screening tools can reduce this lag time and get people into gainful employment faster, benefitting providers, consumers and the wider economy.

We are happy to speak at greater length on this subject and/or present the screening and technological context relevant to the current discussion.

Thank you.

Kind regards,
Nick Roberts,
CEO RISQ Group

www.risqgroup.com