

Approved by:	Board of Directors	Date approved:	24/2/2015	Next review:	23/02/2019
Document No:	4P08	Version No:	1.1		
Supporting documents	1P06 Privacy Policy 1P07 Quality Policy 2P01 Marketing and Advertising Policy 4P01 Grievances, Complaints and Appeals 4P03 Enrolments Policy 4P05 Training and Assessment Policy 4P06 Fees and Charges Policy 4P07 Refunds Policy 4F12 Student Handbook				
References & Legislation:	The Australian Consumer Law Competition and Consumer Act 2010 National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 NSW Department of Industry Smart and Skilled Consumer Protection Strategy NSW Department of Industry Smart and Skilled NSW Quality Framework Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015				

1. Purpose

WEA Illawarra aims to provide quality accredited vocational education and training, and formal and non-formal learning opportunities which support the needs of individuals, business, industry and the wider community.

This policy satisfies the requirements of Standards 1, 4, 5, 6 and 7.3 of the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015*, and provides information to learners regarding their learner consumer rights and WEA Illawarra's fee protection mechanisms. The policy also meets the requirements of the NSW Smart and Skilled Fee Administration Policy and Consumer Protection Strategy.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all currently enrolled and prospective students in WEA Illawarra accredited and non-accredited education, training and assessment courses and programs. The policy includes specific information for students participating in NSW Smart and Skilled programs.

3. Definitions

Accredited courses – education, training and assessment programs which provide a nationally recognised qualification in accordance with the Australian Qualifications Framework

ASQA – The Australian Skills Quality Authority, the national VET Regulator

Non-accredited courses – education, training and assessment programs which do not lead to a nationally recognised qualification

Smart and Skilled - a reform of the NSW vocational education and training system, providing eligible students with an entitlement to government-subsidised training up to and including Certificate III qualifications or government funding for higher-level courses (Certificate IV and above) in targeted priority areas. Approved Adult and Community Education (ACE) providers, such as WEA Illawarra, receive Community Service Obligation (CSO) funding to provide Foundation Skills and other training for disadvantaged students and regional and remote communities that need assistance to access training under the Smart and Skilled entitlement program.

VET Quality Framework – the ASQA Vocational Education and Training Quality Framework, comprising the Standards for National VET Regulator (NVR) Registered Training Organisations, the Fit and Proper Person Requirements, the Financial Viability Risk Assessment Requirements, the Data Provision Requirements, and the Australian Qualifications Framework.

VET – Vocational Education and Training

4. Policy

WEA Illawarra is committed to ensuring that it is compliant with relevant legislation and regulations that protect the rights of consumers. WEA Illawarra has appropriate systems and procedures in place to ensure the transparency of its business operations and to ensure the delivery of education, training and assessment programs meets the Standards for Registered Training Organisations and other applicable quality frameworks for vocational education and training.

WEA Illawarra protects consumers by:

- Undertaking ethical and accurate marketing and advertising of its services;
- Providing clear, accurate and timely information to students and prospective students about its services;
- Providing quality education, training and assessment services;
- Protecting the fees paid by students in advance of services being delivered;
- Implementing fair and transparent complaints and appeals processes;
- Protecting personal information;
- Implementing a system of continuous quality improvement.

4.1. Ethical and accurate marketing and advertising

WEA Illawarra ensures that its advertising materials promote the organisation as a professional, ethical and non-discriminatory place of learning. Accurate and realistic information is provided to potential students about WEA Illawarra's services, facilities and potential outcomes of undertaking its education, training and assessment programs.

Full details regarding how WEA Illawarra ensures ethical and accurate marketing and advertising can be found in the Marketing and Advertising Policy (2P01).

4.2. Information to students

Accurate, timely and clear information and advice is provided to students and potential students regarding WEA Illawarra's education, training and assessment courses and programs so that students can make an informed choice about the services relevant to them. The enrolment and induction process ensures the student can choose a suitable training pathway, free from discriminatory barriers.

Full details regarding how WEA Illawarra ensures students are provided with the necessary information to make informed choices can be found in the Enrolments Policy (4P03).

4.3. Quality education, training and assessment services

The Australian Consumer Law provides consumers with certain rights when purchasing services. WEA Illawarra provides students with a guarantee that its services will be:

- provided with due care and skill;
- fit for the purposes requested; and
- provided in a reasonable timeframe if one is not set.

The services students receive should be of a standard or quality that could be reasonably expected from a competent education and training service provider. Therefore, WEA Illawarra will comply with all legislative requirements and guidelines relevant to the provision of education, training and assessment services, including compliance with the ASQA VET Quality Framework. WEA Illawarra keeps the student at the centre of service delivery and undertakes consultation to determine community, client and industry expectations regarding education and training services.

Full details regarding WEA Illawarra's commitment to quality services can be found in the Quality Policy (1P07) and Training and Assessment Policy (4P05).

4.4. Fee protection mechanisms

The *Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015* state that where a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) requires a prospective or current learner to prepay fees in excess of \$1,500, the RTO must use a fee protection measure approved by the VET Regulator.

WEA Illawarra will only accept a maximum of \$1,500 per student in course fees prior to course commencement. Where further fee instalments are required to be paid throughout the duration of the course, the maximum amount at any given time will not exceed \$1,500 in advance of services delivered. This fee protection measure is approved by ASQA.

Full details regarding WEA Illawarra's administration of fees, charges and refunds can be found in the Fees and Charges Policy (4P06) and the Refunds Policy (4P07).

4.5. Complaints and appeals

Despite the best efforts of WEA Illawarra to provide quality services to its students and corporate clients, complaints may occasionally arise that require a formal resolution. WEA Illawarra will ensure it has documented procedures in place to deal with any grievances, complaints and appeals in a fair, efficient and transparent manner. These procedures will be made known to students, prior to the commencement of their course. Full details of WEA Illawarra's mechanisms for handling complaints and appeals can be found in the Grievances, Complaints and Appeals Policy (4P01).

4.5.1. The NSW Smart and Skilled Programs

WEA Illawarra has appointed a Consumer Protection Officer who can assist students with any concerns they have regarding their training. All students participating in a Smart and Skilled Program will also be provided with this Consumer Protection Policy and details of the Consumer Protection Officer.

Where a student participating in a Smart and Skilled Program has made a complaint to the Consumer Protection Officer, and the student believes the matter remains unresolved, the student may seek assistance from Training Services NSW Department of Industry. WEA Illawarra will provide all Smart and Skilled Program participants with details of the Smart and Skilled website and contact telephone number. Participants will also be provided with the NSW Smart and Skilled Consumer Protection Strategy which gives students information regarding their rights and options for making a complaint or providing feedback about their training.

4.6. Protecting personal information

WEA Illawarra collects and administers a range of personal information for the purposes of providing and marketing its education and training services. WEA Illawarra is committed to protecting the privacy of personal information it collects, holds and administers.

WEA Illawarra recognises the essential right of individuals to have their information administered in ways which they would reasonably expect – protected on one hand, and made accessible to them on the other.

Full details regarding WEA Illawarra's compliance with privacy law and the Australian Privacy Principles can be found in the Privacy Policy (1P06).

4.7. Continuous quality improvement

WEA Illawarra is committed to the provision of high quality vocational education that meets the needs of industry, employers and individuals. WEA Illawarra complies with the *Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015*, other relevant legislation and funding provider guidelines.

To ensure continual compliance and high quality service provision, WEA Illawarra is committed to an integrated, continuous improvement process which reviews and evaluates our education, training and assessment services, student services and administration and governance systems. Where opportunities are identified to improve our services, WEA Illawarra will take the corrective action required.

Full details regarding WEA Illawarra's commitment to continuous quality improvement can be found in the Quality Policy (1P07).

5. Implementation

This policy will be made available to prospective students and corporate clients via the Student Handbook located on the WEA Illawarra website or on request. Students enrolled in accredited courses will be provided with this policy during their induction. All staff will have access to this policy via the WEA Illawarra network.

6. Responsibilities

The WEA Illawarra Board is responsible for adopting and reviewing this policy.

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for nominating WEA Illawarra's Consumer Protection Officer.

The Consumer Protection Officer is responsible for the implementation of this policy, for monitoring changes to relevant legislation, and for advising on the need to review or revise this policy as and when the need arises.

Version	Date Approved	Approved By	Brief Description
1.0	24/2/2015	Board of Directors	Creation of original document
1.1	16/3/2015	QRG	Minor edit of document to remove reference to 1P16 Continuous Improvement Policy which has been removed as a separate policy and incorporated with 1P07 Quality Policy.
1.1	23/2/2018		Updated links and amended Dept of Education & Communities to Dept of Industry