

## **ACPET welcomes new and stronger \$1.5 billion skills fund**

The Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET) is pleased that the 2017 Federal Budget includes funding for a new \$1.5 billion *Skilling Australians Fund*.

ACPET CEO Rod Camm said he welcomed the commitment to funding apprenticeships and traineeships through the new *Skilling Australians Fund*.

“ACPET welcomes the establishment of this new permanent fund, as well as new eligibility criteria such as matching funding from states,” Mr Camm said.

“It’s important that states and territories maintain their funding efforts as we’ve seen substantial cuts to funding in most states and we hope that the eligibility criteria of this new fund will help drive that funding into skills and training.

“I thank Minister Birmingham for recognising the need to ensure that we have a vocational education and training sector that is able to respond to the needs of students, industry and the economy by investing in this new permanent fund,” Mr Camm said.

“A properly skilled workforce that is equipped for the future, is a key economic driver and we welcome this announcement,” Mr Camm said.

“ACPET is committed to working with industry and governments to adapt the proven apprenticeship pathway to meet the needs for higher level qualifications in the economy.”

“We note that \$1.2 billion of the \$1.5 billion *Skilling Australians Fund* will be derived from a new levy on businesses employing foreign skilled workers. We urge the government to commit to funding this initiative even if expected revenue from this levy falls short.”

“Skills and training is too important. Industry, governments and students must have certainty.”

Nationally, government funded enrolments have dropped 10% from 2014 to 2015 alone. While apprenticeship and traineeship commencements are at near two-decade lows.

“ACPET believes that in order to meet the needs of industry and students, we must have a national approach to skills and training.”

The budget also provides \$60 million over two years for an *Industry Specialised Mentoring Program* to provide mentoring to people working in industries undergoing structural changes. The program will be “*targeted at but not limited to apprentices from regional areas, retrenched workers, long-term unemployed and mature-age people.*”



“This is a positive step and we welcome the additional support that this in-training program will deliver along with the AASN.”

“This new permanent fund makes both state and federal governments accountable by delivering outcomes as well as funding for the VET sector.”

“ACPET looks forward to working with the Federal Government and the states and territories on the successful implementation of this new permanent fund for skills and training,” Mr Camm said.

Ends.

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