



MEDIA RELEASE

Student choice should motivate Senate to pass higher education reforms

The Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET) welcomes the report of the Senate Education and Employment Committee on the Higher Education and Research Reform Amendment Bill 2014 released earlier this week and has called on the Senate to pass the Bill in the interest of student choice and improved quality.

“Student choice is actually what drives the success of high quality providers, regardless of whether they are private or public,” ACPET’s new CEO Rod Camm said.

“It’s a principle that is now supported by most governments across the country, as well as students and employers alike.”

Mr Camm said it was disappointing that Labor and the Greens continued their outdated and negative attitude towards private education that included blanket statements about an unknown portion of private providers rorting the system or providing low quality education.

“There is compelling evidence that student choice, supported by high quality standards and a strong regulatory regime, is the best way to ensure the highest quality higher education sector in Australia. Attacking student choice by presenting a distorted view of the system and undue criticisms of high quality providers is not,” he said.

“ACPET supports action taken against the small portion of poor providers who damage the reputation of our industry for the majority and who ACPET is committed to weeding out. The extraordinary meeting of key education peak bodies and industry today will inform a targeted response to any inappropriate behavior by providers or agents.”

Mr Camm said ACPET would continue to work with governments and regulators to ensure Australia’s tertiary education system is focused on quality, diversity and improved student outcomes.

“Ultimately, it is students, not bureaucrats, who are best placed to choose the qualification and the college that meets their needs,” he said.

Mr Camm highlighted that private providers were subject to the same regulatory requirements and auditing arrangements as public universities.

“Examples of rorting and poor quality should be reported to the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA).”

He said it was time private students were afforded the same opportunity of access to the Commonwealth loan scheme to support them in their study and that any horse trading to pass the legislation should not overlook or defer this important aspect.

“It’s time Australia’s higher education policies supported an innovative, high quality and adaptive system driven by student demand,” Mr Camm said.

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