

MEDIA RELEASE

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TAFE report highlights the benefits of a diverse provider network

A TAFE-commissioned report into the trends in VET provision highlights the increasingly important role that a diversified mix of providers is playing in delivering skills training, according to the national industry body, the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET).

ACPET CEO Rod Camm was responding to the release of the report, *Trends in public and private VET provision: participation, financing and outcomes*.

“Facts and genuine evidence are critical to underpin a debate about Australia’s future skills framework. It is clear from the report that private providers are playing an increasing role in meeting the skill needs of the workforce and economy,” Mr Camm said.

“As the report highlights, when given a choice, students and industry are increasingly choosing a private provider to address their skill needs. It’s such a strength to have a genuine mix of public, private and other providers across the country responding to student and industry needs. The picture for TAFE unfortunately is one of decline and a real need for reform.

“In regard to total VET activity private providers provided training to 2.03 million students in 2014, more than double TAFE. In those key Certificate III qualifications that are the typical entry qualifications for many industries, private providers delivered 44 per cent of activity compared with 35 per cent for TAFE.

“Outcomes are important, and private providers delivered 32 per cent of all completions compared with 23 per cent for TAFE and 16 per cent for community and enterprise based providers.

“And the big message from the report is that unemployed people have the best chance of getting a job following training with a private provider. For subject completers who studied with private providers, employment outcomes are more than 10 per cent greater than TAFEs. This reflects the strong links private providers have with industry and employers.

“While TAFE is delivering the majority of training in some trade areas, private providers are growing their share. Of course this growth is restricted by state and territory governments that lock up underutilised expensive TAFE facilities paid for by taxpayers that could be used to train more tradespeople.

“Access to these facilities and funding arrangements that provided some continuity would give private providers the ability to deliver more trade training.”

Mr Camm said he was a supporter of the needs of TAFE but it was unfortunate that TDA sought to somehow blame TAFE’s decline on issues with the VET-FEE-HELP program, rather than focussing on the need for industrial relations and delivery reform and reducing the need for government protection.

“Funding for VET FEE-HELP does not impact on government funded programs for TAFE or private providers. And it certainly doesn’t impact on the training students and industry pay for. The slide in TAFE activity simply reflects the choices students and industry are making to get the best possible outcome.”

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