

MEDIA RELEASE

23 June 2016

Access to training under threat for disadvantaged students

Students from disadvantaged backgrounds risk being shut out of training under policy announced by the Australian Labor Party, according to the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET).

ACPET CEO Rod Camm said that students whose only access to diploma level training was through student loans faced being shut out once more if proposed arbitrary caps on loan amounts were introduced.

“Under Labor’s proposed \$8,000 cap on training loans, many students from disadvantaged backgrounds will be turned away from training because they cannot afford to pay up-front fees,” he said.

“Our members are concerned that, for many disadvantaged students, the threat this election is not just to choice, but their ability to access any sort of diploma level training at all.”

Mr Camm said access to Government-supported loans provided opportunities for all Australians to undertake diploma level training required to secure jobs, or provide a pathway for further study.

“Private higher education and training providers support people to undertake a wide range of education and training, whether they are older Australians looking to upskill or students from rural and remote areas,” he said.

“For example, private training providers support more than 50,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students every year in both fee-for-service and publicly subsidised training, many of whom are undertaking tertiary study for the first time.”

Mr Camm said ACPET members also had a long history of helping people for whom English is a second language get the skills they need to secure a job in Australia.

“More than 130,000 students from non-English speaking backgrounds chose private training for their government-funded training in 2014 compared to 117,000 through the public training system,” he said.

Diploma level study is used by many people as a pathway to further study at universities and higher education institutes.

“Australia’s private higher education and training providers play an essential role in helping people from all walks of life to develop the skills they need,” Mr Camm said.

“These students should not be penalised by any policy reform that removes their ability to afford the course and provider that best suits their needs. **Student Choice Counts** this election.”

www.studentchoicecounts.com

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