

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Reduced funding results in drop in student numbers**

Approximately 200,000 fewer Australians participated government-funded training in 2015 according to figures released yesterday by the National Centre for Vocational Education and Research (NCVER).

Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET) Rod Camm said student numbers dropped by 10.7 per cent over 2014, reflecting reduced funding available for vital workforce skills development.

“If governments, State and National, want to support innovation and reduce unemployment then we must see greater investment in education and training, and a recognition of the valuable contribution of private training providers,” he said.

The NCVER figures also showed the largest decline in participation in government-funded training was for people aged between 15 – 19 years.

“It is particularly alarming to see a fall in participation of 9.5 per cent for this young cohort which possibly reflects the fall in apprenticeships and traineeships numbers over recent years due to subdued economic circumstances and reduced government funding,” Mr Camm said.

“Our apprenticeship system is in crisis and these figures are further evidence that we must reinvigorate the apprenticeship and traineeship system in Australia to support our young people to develop skills they need for a career, and that we need for future economic prosperity.”

Mr Camm said the NCVER figures also provided further evidence of the need to maintain contestability and choice in the training market.

“The number of students attending TAFE and other government providers declined by 17.1 per cent over the year compared with a decrease of just 5.1 per cent of government-funded students studying with private providers,” he said.

“Even with the five per cent reduction, just under half of government-funded students chose private providers to deliver their training. Any future government policy must consider the essential contribution of good quality training providers and support student choice.”

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