



**September 29, 2016**

## **Time for a fair dinkum VET complaints system, providers say**

Australia's leading private training providers have called for a genuine reporting and complaints mechanism for the nation's VET students after revelations the telephone hotline set up to support them had failed.

The Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET) said the reported findings of a KPMG study into the National Training Complaints Hotline supported its long-held position that the training industry needed an ombudsman to deal with student grievances.

ACPET CEO Rod Camm said the phone hotline did not have sufficient awareness among students, and did not have the authority to deal with many of the complaints it received.

"ACPET is disappointed, but not surprised, by the reported findings of the KPMG investigation of the National Training Complaints Hotline," Mr Camm said.

"From the outset, ACPET has seen the need for an industry ombudsman to deal with the many issues that have come to light relating to VET FEE-HELP and the actions of a small number of low-quality providers.

"This position was subsequently supported by the Labor Opposition, providing a perfect opportunity for a bi-partisan solution with industry backing.

"Sadly, politics has prevented this from happening and, as a result, students still need to navigate an incomprehensible framework of hotlines and state-level ombudsmen and advocates.

"While the industry needs to play an important role, it is our view that a national training ombudsman should be enacted by the Federal Government to ensure it has the gravitas and legal authority needed to get the job done.

"Hopefully the opportunity has not passed by, and I note the concept was canvassed in the recent VET FEE-HELP re-design consultations. We urge the Federal Government to view this report as the chance to tackle this problem again, and to include the creation of a training sector ombudsman as a key part of its policy response.

"Students deserve a better avenue for having their complaints resolved, and the vast majority of providers also deserve the protection of knowing that those who do the wrong thing will be weeded out."

[ENDS]

**Rod Camm is available for interview. Please phone the SAS Group on 07 3221 9222, or directly on 0409 484 051.**