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### **ACPET calls for an end to constant Victorian VET funding changes**

The Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Council for Private Education and Training, Claire Field, has called on the Victorian government to rethink its latest cuts to funding for providers under the Victorian Training Guarantee.

“The changes announced today cut funding to providers simply for complying with government policy. The changes come, as previous changes have, with no notice to the sector; and they serve to penalise those providers who were doing the ‘right’ thing – ie those who had set fees which the government thought were reasonable. These changes lock providers into an extremely difficult six months as they try and provide a quality education to their students with less funding from government”, said Ms Field.

Ms Field noted that, “unlike the Victorian government, which is establishing a pattern of changing funding arrangements with little notice to the sector, providers have a legal obligation to students who have already enrolled in courses commencing from 1 July 2014. Providers are unable to charge these students the higher fees that the government wants them to, because students who have already completed their enrolment paperwork have already paid their enrolment fees. That means that, as with previous changes, the provider must deliver the same level of quality with much less funding”.

“ACPET calls on the government to provide certainty and stability for students who have already completed their enrolment for Semester Two study in 2014. The government should continue to provide funding at existing rates for students who have already taken an enrolment decision. The government also needs to give providers the ability to charge higher fees for Semester Two for students yet to enrol – to ensure cuts to government subsidies don’t have a detrimental impact on quality”, said Ms Field.

“In principle, ACPET supports students making a financial commitment towards their studies through a student fee. While it is pleasing that the government has belatedly recognised that people make better decisions when they have to make a personal contribution towards their study, it is extremely disappointing that once again providers are being punished by how this change is being implemented.”

“In the lead-up to the 2014 Victorian state election – I call on the government to honour existing funding rates for students already enrolled for Semester Two 2014 and to rule out making further overnight funding changes should they be re-elected in November. I call on the Opposition to also rule out making overnight changes like this should they be successful at the election”, said Ms Field

“What our learners, employers, the Victorian community and VET sector need is certainty in VET funding. Changes to amend or improve the system must be well thought through and planned. They cannot be imposed on the system overnight”, said Ms Field.

Ms Field said “the positive in today’s announcement is the opening up of eligibility to Victorians to receive government support for two qualifications at each level under the Victorian Training Guarantee, rather than the current limit of one funded qualification per level.”