

MEDIA RELEASE

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Micromanagement of VET system is not the answer to VET FEE-HELP woes

The Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET) has expressed concern at media reports that problems with a poorly implemented VET FEE-HELP program may see the federal government setting prices for qualifications funded through the program.

“There have been some real problems with VET FEE-HELP that the federal government is moving to address. But that doesn’t mean there needs to be another knee-jerk reaction that sees the government micromanaging the prices for individual qualifications,” ACPET CEO Rod Camm said.

“It’s very difficult for governments to ‘pick winners’ and start setting prices for course delivery that reflect the diverse needs of students and industry. Government needs to be very cautious with such an approach,” Mr Camm said. “If the government is too prescriptive there won’t be any innovation and flexibility in delivery. That would take us back 20 years and significantly limit student choice.”

ACPET believes the government should engage quality providers with a proven track record of providing students with excellent training to address the problems and ensure a better scheme is designed.

“This was a fundamental failing of VET FEE-HELP and is a large reason as to why there are so many problems with this scheme today. Some commentators appear to be trying to design a scheme based on the worst providers. That makes little sense as poor providers must be excluded from the program.”

The organisation also believes the Government should play a role in making sure students have good information about providers including their pricing, delivery strategies, course completions and outcomes, but that further administrative and compliance requirements will simply add to the burden on providers and departmental officers.

“Micromanagement of training will simply tie up good providers and divert attention and resources from the priority of supporting quality training and weeding out poor performers.”

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