

MEDIA RELEASE

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Subsidised training places reduced to a trickle in South Australia

The Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET) CEO Rod Camm has expressed his concerns about South Australia's *WorkReady* policy, which has removed student choice of training provider for 90% of funded training places.

The South Australian Minister Gail Gago announced on Friday that only 1800 training places are being offered across 46 projects state-wide in 2015-16 to enable people to complete a qualification and obtain a job.

Additionally, only 1800 places under the *JobsFirst* program offer choice to students and employers. For all other funded training places students and employers have no choice but to go to TAFE, at up to 3 times the cost.

"This is ineffective and inequitable use of public funds in a state with the highest unemployment rate in the country," Mr Camm said.

"The Government has effectively defaulted on the commitment it has been giving to the sector and to the federal government for the past six months that most of the remaining training places under the *JobsFirst* program would enable students and employers to choose the training provider that best meets their needs," he explained. "For students, this means that the course of their choice may not be available, or that they will have to travel further to attend their preferred course, if it's offered at all."

A recent survey conducted by ACPET revealed that as a result of the government's *WorkReady* policy, up to 54 training providers expect to close their doors by June next year involving a loss of at least 1100 jobs.

"The loss of so many skilled staff means that there may not be a viable sector left to meet the training demand necessary to build an ailing state economy," Mr Camm added.

ACPET has called on the Commonwealth Government to examine this additional information about how taxpayer funds allocated under the National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform are being administered by the South Australian government. In particular, how student and employer choice are being denied and how training organisations are having to lay off experienced staff at a time of very high unemployment.

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