Students to have a greater choice in vocational training

The Australian Council for Private Training and Education (ACPET) welcomes the introduction of a truly competitive Victorian vocational market that will offer the same support to a student whether they choose to study at a TAFE or a private training provider.

In a budget that identifies a refocusing on vocational training rather than reform, the Minister for Higher Education and Skills, Peter Hall has admirably navigated a balanced approach that will offer real consumer choice while endeavouring to realign funding to address industry skills shortages.

ACPET supports Minister Hall's statement that the Victorian VET system “has changed significantly through the introduction of an individual entitlement to a subsidised training place”. ACPET CEO Claire Field commented that while this model is supported “it is essential that governments do not generate uncertainty in the sector and confuse students through knee jerk reactions to what skills the government decides may or may not be a priority.”

The government has also published a course subsidy list which advises how courses are subsidised by the government. ACPET acknowledges that while it is of no surprise that courses undertaken under an apprenticeship receive the highest subsidy, there will be some concern as how funding support for other courses has been decided.

Ms Field added that “it is confusing to providers and students alike when, for example, courses such as a Diploma of Fitness now attracts government funding for the princely sum of $1 per hour, while other courses such as a Certificate in Circus Arts receive over four times that amount”.

ACPET is also pleased to note a stronger commitment by the government in monitoring provider performance and also market trends, although the introduction of yet another tier of compliance through the establishment of a VET Rapid Response Team which “reflects a concern by the Victorian government as to the capacity of the existing state and national regulatory authorities” Ms Field said.

ACPET congratulates the government on providing additional support for regional Victorian training initiatives and calls for additional training support for communities throughout Victoria. One area ACPET would like explored would be opening up existing TAFE facilities to private providers, either as partners in training or to optimise usage of these taxpayer funded facilities” added Ms Field.

Claire Field is available for comment.
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