MEDIA STATEMENT
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ACT training sector to benefit from new skills agreement

The Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET) has congratulated the Australian Capital Territory Government for signing up to the Prime Minister’s “Skills for All Australians” reforms at last week’s COAG meeting, with the peak body saying the Territory’s economy and industry will be the better for it.

The reform package, first announced by Prime Minister Gillard last month, will see the ACT’s Vocational Education and Training (VET) students receive guaranteed government subsidised training to Certificate 3 level, a HECS-style loan scheme for students at Diploma and Advanced Diploma level, and greater choice between private and public institutions through new contestable funding arrangements.

ACPET CEO, Claire Field, said opening up the ACT’s training sector to competition between providers was in the best interests of students, institutions and employers alike, and she added that similar reforms in Victoria and South Australia have already been implemented with great success.

“The time is right for the ACT Government to implement vital skills reforms, which have been proven to deliver increased student numbers, greater student satisfaction and a more industry-responsive training sector,” Ms Field said.

Ms Field said private and not-for-profit vocational training providers in the ACT already had a good track record of delivering employment related training, and opening up the Territory’s training sector to a more diverse range of providers would allow students to choose between a greater range of high quality providers.

“The ACT’s private VET providers have an outstanding record of getting graduates jobs, with 86.7% of students in employment related training getting a job when they complete their studies,” Ms Field said.

“Private providers are also performing well at meeting the broader equity and access goals of training, with 82% of female graduates gaining employment, along with 84.3% of those who speak a language other than English at home and 55.5% of those with a disability were employed.”

“The COAG is right to push for consistent national training reforms that are good for students, employers and governments alike. The added incentive of more than $145 million in funding for the ACT Government to introduce the reforms make this a real win-win for the Territory: a better training sector and more federal funds to operate it.”

“I applaud the ACT Government for tapping into the potential of a high quality, diverse and contestable training sector,” Ms Field said.

Claire Field is available for comment.
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