Tertiary education conference highlights South Australia’s innovation, leadership; Warns of threats to State’s international education sector

Adelaide plays host to Australia’s largest gathering of private tertiary education and training experts today and tomorrow in a conference expected to highlight the innovation and diversity of private sector education and training.

The Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET) National Conference brings together almost 400 delegates from industry, academia, politics and government to highlight the latest developments, thinking, opportunities and challenges for tertiary education.

ACPET CEO, Claire Field, said it was fitting that this year’s ACPET National Conference was being held in South Australia, where the State’s leadership on training reform had led to a 43% increase in training enrolments and 69% increase in enrolments at Certificate 3 level or above.

“Alongside Victoria, South Australia has been a trailblazer in implementing skills reforms that offer learners a genuine choice of training provider, with other States now following this example elsewhere in the country.” Ms Field said.

“While no big reform is easy, the evidence on those reforms is clear that they lead to more people taking up the opportunity to train, increased job prospects opportunities for higher level study.”

Ms Field said the ACPET conference would also highlight growing challenges for the international education sector, which presented a real threat to the South Australian economy, where the sector contributes $863 million each year.

“International education is South Australia’s largest services export and 6th largest export overall. It’s bigger than tourism and cars,” she said.

“In the last fifteen years South Australia has become an international education leader, with the number of international students in the state growing by 500% to more than 28,000.”

“But that leadership is threatened, with the most expensive and inflexible student visas in the world, a complex and stifling regulatory system and a reluctance by the Federal government to aggressively promote Australian education abroad combining to turn potential students away.”

“If South Australia is to continue to benefit from a thriving international education sector, its vital that we get the policy settings right. We’re looking to State and Federal Governments to help us achieve that.”

Media Invitation:
What: ACPET National Conference
When: Thursday 29th August to Friday 30th August
Where: Adelaide Convention Centre
Who: Political speakers include:
• Independent Senator Nick Xenophon
• South Australian Minister for Employment, Higher Education and Skills, Grace Portolesi MP
• South Australian Shadow Minister for Education, Families and Training, David Pisoni MP
• Minister for Employment, Skills and Training Brendan O’Connor MP
• Shadow Minister for Employment Participation, Sussan Ley MP
Conference program: www.acpet2013.com.au
Contact: To arrange interviews or media access call Ben Eade on 0406 641 881