Positive steps with *Skills for All* changes – but more to be done

The Australian Council for Private Education and Training today welcomed the changes announced by the South Australian government to its *Skills for All* funding for vocational education and training, while also urging the government to act on all recommendations of the recent report of the South Australian Training and Skills Commission, *Skills for Jobs*.

Chief Executive Officer of ACPET, Ms Claire Field, said “changes to *Skills for All* funding and recent comments by the Minister for Employment, Higher Education and Skills, the Hon Grace Portolesi, show the government is listening to the concerns of providers and understands the need for reforms to critical aspects of the *Skills for All* funding model.”

“ACPET, and the independently owned training providers we represent, have given substantial feedback to the government on mechanisms needed to improve the *Skills for All* policy settings. Today’s announcement shows that the government recognises the concerns of providers. We are also pleased that the Minister has publicly confirmed that the use of ‘caps’ to limit student enrolments was a blunt instrument which was unacceptable” she said.

“We support the government’s decision to introduce price banding to the *Skills for All* funding model and to make the subsidies paid for different qualifications transparent.”

“ACPET also supports the introduction of eligibility criteria for government subsidised places, but we are concerned at the funding being allocated for disadvantaged jobseekers in the new arrangements. The government must commit to closely monitor the impact of these changes on enrolments from unemployed learners and those from disadvantaged backgrounds and act swiftly if the eligibility criteria and funding changes prove to be too restrictive. We are concerned that at a time of rising unemployment in South Australia, the changes will have unintended consequences for jobseekers”

Ms Field suggested that “the lessons from the introduction of skills reforms in both South Australia and Victoria is that the policy principle is right, but governments have found the implementation much more challenging than they had expected.”

“*Skills for All* has provided training opportunities for thousands more people by allowing them the choice of training provider. Overwhelmingly when offered a choice people choose an independently owned institution which offers the tailored and flexible training they expect.”

“The challenge of managing this significant increase in demand for training remains a challenge in South Australia. ACPET believes the reforms in the *Skills for Jobs* report of the Training and Skills Commission must be implemented to provide more certainty for providers (both public and private) and allow government, industry and the community to continue to have confidence in the quality of the training being delivered in South Australia.”

“*Skills for All* is a big reform, one of the largest reforms in the history of South Australia. The government is to be congratulated for embarking on it, but they cannot rest on their laurels. More needs to be done”, said Ms Field.

Claire Field is available for comment: 0411 240 671