MEDIA RELEASE
Friday, November 18th, 2011

Private Training Providers Ready to Deliver for NSW Business

The Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET) has backed the NSW Business Chamber's call for a more flexible and demand-driven vocational education and training (VET) system in New South Wales, with the education peak body saying its members stand ready to work with industry to put NSW back in Australia's top spot for productivity growth.

ACPET CEO, Claire Field, said the Business Chamber's call for greater competition between public and private education providers in NSW is in the best interests of students, industry and the broader community alike, adding that ACPET's members have a strong track record of delivering training in close partnership with NSW business.

"The business community of NSW has spoken, and ACPET's members are listening," Ms Field said.

"We're ready to compete fairly with public training providers so that students have the opportunity to choose the education provider that's right for them. What we need now is for the NSW Government to follow the lead of the Council of Australian Governments and invest in a demand-driven NSW VET system."

Ms Field said the Premier State has been one of the slowest growing states in Australia for too long, and some part of the blame for that must rest with an out-of-date VET sector that limits the choice and diversity of training available to students.

Meanwhile, greater competition in Victoria and Western Australia have increased training participation and contributed to economic growth in those States.

"In the last 12 months, Victoria has seen 23% growth in government funded enrolments related to industries experiencing shortages, including health, social assistance and construction," Ms Field said.

"As well, the demand led system is creating more opportunities for Victoria's disadvantaged communities to develop important vocational and job ready skills, with a 26% increase in enrolments from culturally and linguistically diverse students, 22% increase for students with a disability and a further 16% increase by Indigenous students."

In its own submission to the NSW Government's review of the VET system, ACPET argues that demand-driven funding should be the cornerstone of a new VET system for NSW in order to build the most highly-skilled workforce in Australia and increase the number of young people participating in education, training or employment.

"Ambitious funding reforms informed by strong industry consultation and accurate, accessible labour market data, coupled with a comprehensive information campaign so that students understand the choices available to them, are the best ways for the NSW government to increase training participation and get productivity back on track," Ms Field said.

"I want to see my home State of NSW back in the economic driver's seat for the nation, so I urge the NSW Government to invest in a training sector that puts diversity, choice and responsiveness to industry and students first."

Media Contact: Ben Eade 0406 641 881