MEDIA RELEASE
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ACT Government Strips Students of Transport Concessions

More than 500 students in the ACT have been stripped of public transport concessions by the Territory Government because they are studying with a private vocational education and training (VET) providers.

In recent changes to public transport rules, the ACT Government has deemed that only students at the Territory’s higher education providers and TAFEs are entitled to cheap fares, forcing students undertaking accredited courses at private VET colleges to pay full fare for travel.

Claire Field, CEO of the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET), said today that she was extremely concerned about the backflip on concessions for private VET students, and had sought a meeting with the Chief Minister to resolve the matter urgently.

“All full time students in accredited courses deserve access to public transport concessions, regardless of whether they choose a private or public institution for their studies,” Ms Field said.

“Students in the ACT have a choice between traditional TAFE institutes and high quality private training providers in which to undertake skills training that is vital to the Territory’s industry and economy. But the ACT government is punishing those students that choose a private college.”

“It’s discriminatory and it’s out of step with the efforts of the Federal Government and most States and Territories to extend travel concessions to all students fairly and equally,” she said.

Travel concessions for international students have been a persistent concern for ACPET, along with international student representatives, with the Federal Government recently pressuring Victoria and NSW to join other States in making concessions available for international students across Australia.

But Ms Field said the ACT Government had gone one step further to deny travel concessions to not only international students, but also full time domestic students.

“This discriminatory and outdated stance flies in the face of the ACT’s vision to promote and profile tertiary education as a foundation to the Territory’s knowledge and innovation future,” Ms Field said.

“I call on the Territory Government to reconsider its position and extend travel concessions to all full time students in accredited tertiary courses.”

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