MEDIA STATEMENT
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Greens need reskilling on training

Greens Senator, Lee Rhiannon, has demonstrated her ignorance of Australia’s vocational education and training (VET) sector in an unnecessary attack on private institutions, according to the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET).

ACPET CEO, Claire Field, said funding reforms to provide students with greater choice is encouraging more students into vocational education and training, with clear benefits for students, employers and the economy. She branded Rhiannon’s assertion that private VET institutions offered lower quality services than publicly-funded VET institutions as ignorant and offensive.

“TAFE institutes are an important part of the sector. Many of ACPET’s members are proud to work in partnership with TAFE institutes to offer students greater choice and diversity in their study options,” Ms Field said.

“But the fact is, TAFE providers account for just 26% of the full-time equivalent students in the country, while 74% – that’s 1.4million FTE students – are in private vocational education and training institutions.

“Increasingly, students are opting to study at private vocational institutions that offer the kind of high quality, flexible and industry-responsive training that best suits their needs.

“Since contestable, demand-driven funding for vocational education and training was introduced in Victoria, the state’s training market has grown by 17%,” Ms Field said. “And it’s not only high quality private providers that are experiencing growth. Victoria’s TAFEs have also had increases in student numbers.

“Ms Rhiannon ought to check her facts before making attacks on private education providers, which only serve to show how little she understands the VET sector.”

Statistically, students that complete a VET qualification in a private institution are more likely to gain employment than those who study at TAFE and report higher rates of satisfaction.

“Recent data from the National Centre for Vocational Education Research shows that more students at private institutions reported that their training was relevant to their current job than those studying at TAFE,” Ms Field added.

“A diverse, high quality and industry-responsive vocational education and training sector is crucial to sustained productivity and employment growth in Australia.

“But the road to regulatory reform is made all the more difficult by inaccurate assertions such as Ms Rhiannon’s, which seek to deepen outdated divisions between private and public institutions.”

Claire Field is available for comment.

Media contact: Trish Bancroft 02 8280 8116