Media Release

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Time for genuine consultation with industry on non-trade apprenticeship and traineeships

The latest release of NCVER quarterly early trend estimates data on Apprentices and Traineeships has shown an alarming decline in training in the non-trade areas from 71,000 at March 2012 to 31,000 in March 2013.

“Non-trade apprenticeships and traineeships provide employment in a range of vital industries, including aged care, child care, and health. They also provide crucial opportunities and structured training for Australia’s retail sector and for people pursuing job opportunities in business administration and clerical roles”, said Ms Claire Field, Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Council for Private Education and Training.

“The significant drop in people starting non-trade apprenticeships and traineeships is directly attributable to a change in government policy announced in last year’s Federal Budget”, Ms Field said.

“At the time ACPET cautioned that such a move would have a significant impact on apprenticeship and traineeship numbers. That impact is now being felt.”

“Historically government has provided modest financial support to employers, to assist them to meet the costs of providing nationally recognised training to their staff. The government’s own research shows that this support plays a key role in opening up training opportunities for newly employed workers. At a time when the trend data shows unemployment is on the increase, the government must work with employers and training providers, to ensure all workers have access to the training opportunities they need”, Ms Field stated.

Acknowledging that the budget situation remains tight, ACPET’s Chief Executive, Claire Field urged the government to sit down with the key players in the sector to review the evidence of the impact of the recent changes and agree a cost-effective way forward.

“To avoid further declines in the level of training in these crucial industries, it’s time for the government to meet with industry and engage in genuine dialogue about the impact of the changes that were made,” said Ms Field

“Australian prides itself on its egalitarian nature. Privileging workers in some occupations over those in others sits poorly with that egalitarian spirit. We must strike the right balance between fiscal responsibility and a framework that encourages workers in retail, aged care, child care, health and other industries to continue to participate in training”, said Ms Field

Claire Field is available for comment: 0411 240 671