Reflections on 500 editions of National Monday Update

It is really with very fond memories and some pride that I write this message to congratulate ACPET on 500 editions of NMU. The ACPET I joined in the late 1990s was a very different organisation to the one that exists today. Growing from a group of around 180 members to the more than 1000 diverse institutions that make up ACPET today is a reflection of the vision and drive of the many board members, staff and dedicated committee members who have contributed to ACPET over the past 30 years.

In 1995, we had a small office in York St and the seeds of a vision to change the role, mission and impact of ACPET as an education peak body. Key to this was the decision of the board to make a rather bold and in hindsight, financially daring decision (we only had the resources to fund this role for 1 year initially) to appoint our first truly professional CEO. With the appointment of Tim Smith in 2000, we also made the decision at the time to increase our participation in both industry lobbying and government engagement by basically taking the fight to the government rather than passively accepting their decisions. Key to this was the establishment of state offices and specialist committees supported by the appointment of quality staff. The was also a major change in our board function with a focus to be proactive in our engagement with all levels of government in order to work with them to achieve the best results for our members as well as the industry at large.

Obviously, this was a successful strategy and the list of significant ACPET driven initiatives and achievements is far too long to mention here but a few stand out as defining moments. These include the establishment of the TAS schemes, introduction of Fee Help for private providers, participation in nearly all major government and industry panels and boards that affected our sector as well as a growing reputation as the leading peak body for private providers in Australia. This has been reflected in the continued industry regard of the ACPET annual conference.

On a personal note, I have been privileged and honoured to meet and work with senior government and industry leaders, sit on the ACPET Board for more than 10 years with so many talented and dedicated professionals that I am now proud to call my friends. It is also incredibly rewarding to see the seeds of a vision back in the late 1990s become a truly inspiring and influential organisation that is ACPET today. Congratulations to Martin, Claire and all the board and staff on achieving another major milestone and many thanks for your continued hard work and service.

Mark Lucas