Reform vital to Queensland’s economic future

The Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET) today heralded the Queensland government’s commitment to reform the state’s training system. ACPET CEO, Claire Field, served as a member of the Queensland Skills and Training Taskforce which provided advice to the government on reforms needed to modernise the state’s vocational education and training (VET) system.

The final report of the Taskforce was provided to the Queensland government on 5 November and made recommendations on:

- a vision for Queensland’s VET system
- greater industry engagement in the VET system
- the role and purpose of TAFE Queensland, and
- changes to apprenticeship and traineeship arrangements.

In releasing the government’s response to the Taskforce’s report today, the Minister for Education, Training and Employment, the Hon John-Paul Langbroek MP, committed the government to delivering on the changes recommended by the Taskforce, with 35 recommendations supported in full, and five supported in principle.

"Minister Langbroek is to be commended for committing to the reforms needed to improve the effectiveness of VET delivery in Queensland," Ms Field said.

"In the last decade numerous reports and reviews have been commissioned into the Queensland training system. All of them have recommended change. The Premier and Minister are to be congratulated for being prepared to act. Implementation of any reform is difficult. There is no doubt that the VET reforms the government has committed to will also be difficult. The reality is reform is vital for the health of training in Queensland."

"The evidence shows that for every government dollar available for vocational education and training in Queensland, less is spent on actual training delivery than the national average. In addition, even when the funds are available for training delivery, the average cost of that delivery is substantially higher in Queensland than the national average" said Ms Field.

"While Queensland is a large state with a geographically diverse population, the cost of training delivery is too high. Compared to the rest of Australia, too much government funding is spent on administering the current system, and too little on training delivery. Reform is essential to meet the skill needs of the state."

"ACPET congratulates the government on their commitment to introduce a student entitlement to training from 1 July 2013, with 100% of funds for training delivery purposes to be fully contestable by 1 July 2014. This is a major step forward for greater flexibility and efficiency in VET in Queensland."

"ACPET is also pleased to see the government commit to develop a five year plan for VET in Queensland, and to be transparent in funding for TAFE Queensland by clarifying its role and purpose."

"The additional $86 million committed by the Minister for an extra 10,000 apprenticeships, combined with changes to harmonise Queensland's apprenticeship and traineeship arrangements, positions Queensland well for the future."

Claire Field is available for comment: 0411 240 671