15 February 2013

USI Submissions
Unique Student Identifier Taskforce
VET Reform Division
Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education
PO Box 9839
Canberra ACT 2601

ACPET Input into Unique Student Identifier Consultation

The Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET) welcomes the opportunity to provide advice to the Unique Student Identifier Taskforce.

In the past decade the private training sector has been beset by unending change, which has imposed significant regulatory burden on training providers. This burden has a financial impact and ultimately increases the cost of delivering training. The latest suite of reforms, in the form of the National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform reached by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in April 2012, which included the Unique Student Identifier (USI) is supposed to deliver new opportunities for learners and greater efficiency for government. These reforms will however once again increase the regulatory and administrative burden faced by training providers.

ACPET acknowledges that the intent of the USI is to ensure that every student who undertakes nationally recognised vocational education and training (VET) in Australia will be able to access their enrolment and achievement record from a single authoritative source. It is however ACPET’s view that the Commonwealth Government needs to closely consider and account for the potentially significant impact that the implementation of the USI will have on training providers.

ACPET is also concerned that there seems to be little cohesion around the implementation of the multiple reform measures (MySkills, USI and full TVA) that were agreed to as part of the National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform. ACPET believes that a coordinated approach to introduce these initiatives is required. A coordinated approach should closely focus on close engagement with private training providers who are most affected by the changes. Without a coordinated approach private training providers are likely to view the introduction of these initiatives as government once again imposing multiple rounds of regulation upon the training sector without fully understanding the intent of the changes and the benefits for students. The resulting concern in the sector may lead to ongoing issues with implementation amongst training providers.

The Standing Council on Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment agreed in November 2012 to provide financial support to providers to adapt to the additional data collection and
reporting changes. It is of concern to ACPET that details of this support are yet to be announced.

ACPET recommends that:

- cohesion is needed in communicating and introducing the suite of reform initiatives agreed to as part of the National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform; and
- the level of financial support that will be provided to training providers to aid with transition to new requirements must be announced.

Yours sincerely

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