MEDIA STATEMENT
Friday, December 3rd, 2010

Private Education Peak Body Launches Social Inclusion Strategy

The Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET) will today launch a Social Inclusion Statement, which outlines ACPET’s support for an inclusive tertiary education system that does not exclude or unfairly disadvantage potential learners.

Launching the strategy in Queensland on International Day of People with a Disability, ACPET’s Queensland Executive Officer, Michael Hall, said the Statement provides guidance to ACPET, its members, and the broader tertiary education sector about the principles the sector must uphold if it is to deliver benefits to all Australians.

"When people lack certain resources, opportunities or capabilities, they are unable to participate in education and training, work or other activities that connect them to their society," said Mr Hall.

"While in some areas the tertiary education sector is leading the community to break down these barriers, there is still work to be done to make Australian education inclusive to all people."

"We must do better to address low attainment levels amongst indigenous students and students from regional or remote Australia; to address lower employment outcomes for graduates with a disability compared to graduates without a disability; and to address the particularly low proportion of migrant and refugees students in Australia."

Mr Hall said that private training institutions provide 65% of training activity nationally, making it critical that ACPET plays a significant role in furthering the social inclusion agenda.

"ACPET’s Social Inclusion Statement helps us to rethink the way we run our training and education businesses; to show us where we are leading and where we can do better."

"It is my great pleasure to launch ACPET’s Social Inclusion Statement, and to endorse wholeheartedly the principles upon which it is based."

The ACPET Social Inclusion Statement is underpinned by six principles, which are:

1. An integrated approach creating a socially inclusive culture in which differences are recognised, understood and supported in all aspects of work, products and services.
2. Strengthening capacity of the tertiary education system to respond to a diversity of clients.
3. Supporting policies and practices that strengthen social inclusion and challenging those that privilege certain groups.
4. Flexibility, resources and support provided at the point of delivery.
5. Consultation - ACPET seeks the advice of its members and other stakeholder partner organisations to strengthen its capacity to contribute to an inclusive tertiary education system.
6. Continual evaluation of policies and products on diversity.

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